

**Ahmadiyyat**  
**or**  
**The True Islam**

By  
Ḥadrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad<sup>ra</sup>

Islam International Publications Ltd.

احمدیت یعنی حقیقی اسلام

**Ahmadiyyat or The True Islam**  
(English Translation)

Translated from Urdu into English by:  
Ch. Muhammad Zafrullah Khan

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First Published in 1924 followed by several Urdu and English  
editions  
Present Edition 2007

Published by:  
Islam International Publications Ltd.  
Islamabad  
Sheephatch Lane  
Tilford, Surrey  
UK GU10 2AQ

Printed in UK at:  
Raqeem Press  
Tilford, Surrey GU10 2AQ

ISBN: 1 85372 982 5

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Promised son<sup>ra</sup> of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi<sup>as</sup>; the manifest Sign of Allah, the Almighty; the Word of God whose advent was prophesied by the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> and the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> as well as the past Prophets; a Star in the spiritual firmament for the like of which the world has to wait for hundreds of years to appear; the man of God, crowned with a spiritual halo from which radiated such scintillating rays of light as would instil spiritual life into his followers and captivate and enthral those who were not fortunate to follow him; an orator of such phenomenal quality that his speeches would make his audience stay put for hours on end, come rain or shine, deep into the late hours of the nights while words flowed from his tongue like honey dripping into their ears reaching the depths of their soul filling them with knowledge and invigorating their faith; the ocean of Divine and secular knowledge; the Voice Articulate of the age; without doubt the greatest genius of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; a man of phenomenal intelligence and memory; an epitome of the qualities of leadership; the one whose versatility cannot be comprehended—Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad<sup>ra</sup> (1889-1965), Muṣliḥ Ma‘ūd (the Promised Reformer) was the eldest son and the second successor (Khalīfa) of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. He took charge of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at at the young age of 24 when the Jamā‘at was still in its infancy and nourished it to its maturity for more than 50 years with his spiritual guidance, prayers, blood, tears and toil. Not only did he fortify the foundations of the Community laid down

by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, but expanded the structure of the Jamā‘at by initiating various schemes, organizations, and programs taking his inspiration from the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> and under Divine guidance. His foremost concern, to which he devoted all his life, was to fulfil the mission of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>—the daunting task of spreading the message of true Islam in its pristine purity to the ends of the world. To achieve this, he initiated the *Tahrīk-e-Jadīd* through which spread, and continues to spread, the community’s missionary work all over the globe. His acute intelligence, keen intellect, deep and extensive scholarship and above all his God-given knowledge enabled him to produce a vast corpus of writings, speeches etc. His oeuvre is so vast that it will take many years to see the light of publication.

When the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> fervently prayed to God to grant him a Sign in support of Islam, Allah gave him the good tidings about this son of his and said:

**"...He will be extremely intelligent ... and will be filled with secular and spiritual knowledge ... Son, delight of the heart, high ranking, noble; a manifestation of the First and the Last, of the True and the High; as if Allah has descended from heaven. Behold a light cometh. We shall pour our spirit into him..." [Revelation of 20<sup>th</sup> February 1886]\***

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\* Translation from Urdu by Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan in his English translation of *Tadhkira*—the book containing dreams, visions and verbal revelations vouchsafed to the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. [Publisher]

# CONTENTS

<b>PUBLISHERS' NOTE</b> _____	<b>I</b>
<b>FOREWORD TO THE PRESENT EDITION</b> _____	<b>IV</b>
<b>PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION</b> _____	<b>VI</b>
<b>HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT</b> _____	<b>5</b>
<b>DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE MOVEMENT</b> _____	<b>9</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD BE THE PRINCIPAL OBJECT OF RELIGIOUS CONFERENCES</b> _____	<b>33</b>
<b>THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTS OF RELIGION</b> _____	<b>36</b>
<b>THE FIRST OBJECT OF RELIGION</b> _____	<b>39</b>
THE ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF GOD _____	39
RELATION OF MAN TO GOD _____	62
THE WAY BY WHICH MAN CAN EXPRESS HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD _____	67
THE MEANS WHEREBY MAN CAN ATTAIN TO GOD AND THE PRACTICAL REALIZATION OF THIS OBJECT IN THIS LIFE _____	86
<b>THE SECOND OBJECT OF RELIGION</b> _____	<b>164</b>
MORALS _____	164
DIFFERENT STAGES OF MORAL QUALITIES _____	196
WHY ARE GOOD AND BAD _____	205
MORAL QUALITIES SO CALLED? _____	205
MEANS OF ACQUIRING GOOD MORALS AND OF AVOIDING EVIL ONES _____	210
<b>THE THIRD OBJECT OF RELIGION</b> _____	<b>234</b>
SOCIAL ASPECT OF ISLAM _____	234
RELATIONS BETWEEN THE RULERS AND THE RULED. _____	264
MASTER AND SERVANT _____	264
THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE ISLAMIC STATE _____	271
THE DUTIES OF SUBJECTS _____	277
RELATIONS BETWEEN MASTER AND SERVANT _____	278
THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR, AND THE POWER AND AUTHORITY OF OFFICIALS _____	281
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS _____	293
RELATIONS BETWEEN THE FOLLOWERS OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS _____	304
<b>THE FOURTH OBJECT OF RELIGION</b> _____	<b>306</b>
LIFE AFTER DEATH _____	306
THE NATURE OF THE REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS OF THE LIFE AFTER DEATH _____	316
WHERE AND IN WHAT FORM WILL THE PUNISHMENTS AND REWARDS OF THE NEXT WORLD MANIFEST THEMSELVES _____	325
WILL REWARD AND PUNISHMENT BE EVERLASTING? _____	333
WILL THERE BE ACTION IN HEAVEN OR WILL IT COME TO AN END? _____	334
<b>THE EFFECT OF THE TEACHINGS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH<sup>AS</sup> ON HIS FOLLOWERS</b> _____	<b>339</b>
<b>INDEX</b> _____	<b>361</b>



## Publishers' Note

The name of Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, the Holy Prophet of Islam, has been followed by the symbol <sup>sa</sup>, which is an abbreviation for the salutation (ﷺ) *Ṣallallāhu ‘Alaihi Wasallam* (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The names of other Prophets<sup>as</sup> and messengers are followed by the symbol <sup>as</sup>, an abbreviation for (ﷺ) *‘Alaihissalām/ ‘Alaihimussalām* (on whom be peace). The actual salutations have not generally been set out in full, but they should nevertheless, be understood as being repeated in full in each case. The symbol <sup>ra</sup> is used with the name of the Companions of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and those of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. It stands for (رضي الله عنهم) *Raḍī Allāhu ‘anhu/ ‘anhā/ ‘anhum* (May Allah be pleased with him/with her/with them). <sup>rh</sup> stands for (رحمته) *Raḥimahullāhu Ta‘ālā* (may Allah's blessing be on him). <sup>at</sup> stands for (يؤيده الله تعالى) *Ayyadahullāhu Ta‘ālā* (May Allah, the Al-Mighty help him).

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

- ا at the beginning of a word, pronounced as *a, i, u* preceded by a very slight aspiration, like *h* in the English word 'honour'.
- ش *th*, pronounced like *th* in the English word 'thing'.
- ه *h*, a guttural aspirate, stronger than *h*.
- ك *kh*, pronounced like the Scotch *ch* in 'loch'.
- ذ *dh*, pronounced like the English *th* in 'that'.
- ص *ṣ*, 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 —َ— (like *u* in 'bud');

*i* for —ِ— (like *i* in 'bid');

*u* for —ُ— (like *oo* in 'wood');

**Long vowels by:**

*ā* for —َ— or َ (like *a* in 'father');

*ī* for \_ —ِ— or —ِ— (like *ee* in 'deep');

*ū* for ' —ُ— (like *oo* in 'root');

**Other:**

*ai* for \_ —ِ— (like *i* in 'site')<sup>♦</sup>;

*au* for ' —ِ— (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. If in Urdu and Persian words 'e' is lengthened a bit more it is transliterated as 'ei' to be pronounced as 'ei'

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<sup>♦</sup> In Arabic words like شَيْخ (Shaikh) there is an element of diphthong which is missing when the word is pronounced in Urdu.

in 'feign' without the element of diphthong thus 'کے' is transliterated as 'Kei'. For the nasal sound of 'n' we have used the symbol 'n'. Thus Urdu word 'میں' is transliterated as 'mein'.\*

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

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

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

## Publishers

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\* These transliterations are not included in the system of transliteration by Royal Asiatic Society. [Publishers]

\*\* Concise Oxford Dictionary records Quran in three forms—Quran, Qur’an and Koran. [Publishers]

## Foreword to the Present Edition

*Ahmadiyyat Ya 'nī Ḥaqīqī Islam* by Ḥaḍṛt Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad<sup>ra</sup>, Khalīfatul Masīḥ II, the then head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamā'at is an extended version of a short paper, also written by the author, to be read in *The Conference of Living Religions Within the Empire* held in 1924 in London, England. Both the short paper and book were translated from Urdu into English by Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan. The English version of the book was first published under the title *Ahmadiyyat or the True Islam* in 1924 along with the original Urdu edition. Since then several editions of both have been published.

The book, after discussing distinctive features of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamā'at and the principle objectives of religion, deals with the whole gamut of Islamic teachings from the existence and nature of God and man's relationship with Him to life after death and in between extensively covers Islamic teachings about social, international and inter faith relationships in their various aspects.

The book is an exhaustive study of Islam in pristine beauty as well as an introduction to Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamā'at. It is as relevant today as it was when first published and is a powerful tool to counter the hostile propaganda against Islam in particular and fundamental religions themes in general. It is very much hoped that it will remove the doubts of many and inspire them with a new zeal for a serious and unbiased study of the

original teachings of Islam given to mankind for its guidance and salvation more than fourteen hundred years ago by Allah through the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>. It is also hoped that it will invigorate and strengthen the faith of true believers.

Mirza Anas Ahmad  
M. A. M. Litt. (OXON)  
Wakilul Ishā‘at  
4th October, 2007

## Preface to the Third Edition

In 1924, *The Conference of Living Religions Within the Empire* held a historic session in London. Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad, Second Successor of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, and the then Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement, was invited by the Conveners to represent Islam. *Ahmadiyyat or the True Islam*, grew out of a paper which the Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement had undertaken to prepare for the Conference.

As the paper took shape it increased in size, and, as such seemed the purpose of God, the author allowed it to assume its present dimensions. A shorter paper was later prepared to be read in the Conference. The work was also published at the same time so that a systematic and more detailed exposition of Islam, as reinterpreted in our age by Ḥaḍrat Ahmad, the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, should become available to those interested in the study of Islam.

In this treatise the author has exhaustively dealt with such important and vital subjects as the Conception of God, His relation to man and the means of its expression, and the realization and attainment of Communion with God. He has discussed the teachings of Islam on morals and has illustrated the means provided by Islam to acquire good morals. Under social aspects, the author has explained Islamic teachings about different relationships in various spheres within the family, the community, between partners in business, between government and the people, between different nations and States, etc. He has set out the Islamic point of view regarding the nature of the human soul and the object of its creation. The author has also explained what

Islam teaches about the life after death, the rewards and punishments of that life and the nature of heaven and hell. The fact that the author has meticulously and extensively supported and documented his representation of Islam from the text of the Holy Quran and Hadith, the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> places this unique dissertation among the most authentic works on Islam.

The book was written in Urdu and was rendered into English by the Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, formerly Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan at present President, International Court of Justice, The Hague (Holland). It is hoped that the work will fill an increasingly felt need among the students of Islam in America and other English speaking lands.

Mirza Mubarak Ahmad

Secretary

Ahmadiyya Muslim Foreign Missions,

Tahrîk-e-Jadîd Anjuman Ahmadiyya Pakistan (Regd.)

Rabwah, Pakistan



أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the accursed. In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. We praise Him and invoke His Blessings on His noble Prophet.

*With the Grace and Mercy of Allah.*

*He alone is the Helper.*

## Ahmadiyyat

or

## The True Islam

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ - الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ -  
مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ - أَيُّهُ نَعْبُدُ وَ أَيُّهُ نَسْتَعِينُ - وَ أَيُّهُ  
نَدْعُو أَنْ يَهْدِينَا إِلَى الصِّرَاطِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ - صِرَاطِ  
الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ - غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ  
وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ - اللَّهُمَّ يَا رَبَّ الْهَمْنَا مَا يَكُونُ فِيهِ  
رِضَاكَ وَارْزُقْنَا تَقْوَاكَ وَصَفِّ خَوَاطِرَنَا وَنَقِّ  
أَفْكَارَنَا وَجِرِّءْنَا عَلَى مُقَابَلَةِ الشَّرِّ وَ دَوَاعِيهِ  
وَشَجِّعْنَا عَلَى مُخَالَفَةِ الْخَنَاسِ وَ مَسَاعِيهِ -

We render countless thanks to Allah, the Most High, Who has endowed us with powers and capacities whereby we can attain to the highest plane of progress,

and has equipped us with the wings of perception and knowledge whereby we can fly into the heights of the spiritual heavens, and Who, seeing our shortcomings and weaknesses, has revealed to us the secrets of spiritual remedies and has sent to us, to heal our ills, spiritual physicians, who have cured us and conferred on us added strength and power. Again we render grateful thanks to Allah, the Most Compassionate, Who infused His Love into our hearts and then made us happy with His meeting; Who caused us to taste the cup of His Love and then made us drink deep from the cup of Union; Who, in this age of Darkness, when seekers after Truth were groping blindly in the gloom, caused the Sun of His Knowledge to appear, and raised His Messenger and Prophet, Ḥaḍrat Ahmad<sup>as</sup> in the East, and dispelled the darkness of doubt and misgiving with the rays of His Light. He then caused the breeze of His Grace to blow and the clouds of His Mercy to pour forth life-giving rain, so that all parched lands be refreshed, and the world become one smiling garden of Purity and Righteousness after it had been a barren wilderness so that men should draw the breath of Life and Happiness after they had become rotten and dead.

We invoke blessings on His Holy Prophet, Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, through whom was caused to flow that Fountain which shall never run dry and through whom were opened the Gates of Divine Knowledge which shall never be shut on those who seek.

Lastly, we pray to Allah, the Most High, that He may be pleased, in the fulfilment of His Divine Promises, to guide the world towards Truth and Righteous-

ness, and enable it to accept the Truth so that Peace may reign on Earth, and strife and discord may vanish and men may attain to true happiness which can only be found in Union with God. Amen!

I must next give expression to the pleasure that I feel on finding that God has, in fulfilment of His Word which He had revealed in the Holy Quran over thirteen hundred years ago, enabled the conveners of the Conference of Religions in London to collect all of us together in this Gathering. I have in mind the following verses of the Holy Book:

وَالصَّفَّاتِ صَفًّا ۚ قَالُوا هَذَا زَجْرًا ۚ فَالْتَلَيْتِ ذِكْرًا ۚ إِنَّ إِلَهُكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ ۚ  
رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ رَبُّ الْمَشَارِقِ ۚ إِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ  
الدُّنْيَا بِزِينَةٍ ۚ وَالْكُوكِبِ ۚ وَحِفْظًا ۚ إِنَّ كُلَّ شَيْطَانٍ مَّكْرُومٌ ۚ

'To bear witness to the fact that Truth shall prevail in the end, I call attention to the gatherings in which people shall sit in rows, and to the committees which shall convene such gatherings, and which shall not permit anybody to infringe another's rights, and the persons who shall read papers on the beauties of the different religions; the efforts of all these will lead but to one conclusion—that God is One, the Lord of the Heavens and of the Earth and of all that is between them, the Lord of the East as of the West. We have adorned the nearest spiritual heavens with stars, charging them to guard the Truth from the attacks

of all those who lead astray, and those who have renounced allegiance to God.<sup>1</sup>

I now turn to the subject on which I have been asked to address you, viz., the Ahmadiyya Movement. Before I discuss its purely religious aspects, I deem it advisable to make a brief reference to its history and its present extent and strength.

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Şāffāt, 37:2-8.

## History of the Movement

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> (1835-1908), in March 1889, when he was about 54 years of age. Ahmad<sup>as</sup> belonged to a noble and ancient Mughal family of the Punjab which had migrated to India from Samarkand in or about the reign of the Emperor Babar. The first ancestor of Ahmad<sup>as</sup> to come to India was Mirza Hādī Baig who, says Sir Lepel Griffin in his *Punjab Chiefs*,

'was appointed Qazi or Magistrate over seventy villages in the neighbourhood of Qadian which town he is said to have founded, naming it Islam-pur Qazi from which Qadian has, by a natural change, arisen. For several generations the family held offices of respectability under the Imperial Government and it was only when the Sikhs became powerful that it fell into poverty.'

The headquarters of the Movement were established by Ahmad<sup>as</sup> at Qadian, a small town in the Punjab (India), to which he belonged, and which is situated at a distance of about 11 miles to the north east of Batala, a railway station on the N. W. R. system. In spite of the violent opposition offered to him by the followers of every religion in India and the unsympathetic attitude of the Government officials towards him in the beginning, the Movement founded by him continued to make steady progress in all parts of India, so that at the time of his death, which occurred in May 1908, his followers

could be counted by hundreds of thousands, and the Movement had spread into the neighbouring countries of Arabia, Afghanistan, etc.

After the death of Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup>, my revered teacher Ḥaḍrat Maulawī Nūr-ud-Dīn<sup>ra</sup> was elected the spiritual head of the Movement, and on his death, which occurred in March 1914, I was elected to succeed him.

It may not be out of place to mention here that, as was the case in the early days of Islam, the Ahmadiyya Community is guided and governed by a spiritual head, who is elected by the Community. It is not necessary that the head of the Community should be, in any way, related to the holy founder of the Movement, as, for instance, his first successor was not related to him either by blood or by marriage, nor, on the other hand, is it necessary, that the Head of the Community should not be related to the holy founder of the Movement, as, for instance, I have the honour to be his son.

By this time the Movement has spread to almost all parts of the world and its members number over half a million, the majority of whom are to be found in India (and Pakistan) and the countries adjacent to it. Owing, however, to the violent opposition and persecution to which the members of the Movement are subjected, many people, who have accepted it at heart, are unable to join it openly, and such persons are to be found in large numbers among the Sikhs, the Hindus and the various sects of Islam.

People of all ranks and classes i.e., those belonging to the self-styled higher castes, as well as those belonging to the so-called low castes have joined the Movement. For instance, during the last two years about three thousand persons, who had originally been members of certain low castes in the Punjab and the United Provinces have joined the Movement, and this number is being added to every month. Similarly, several hundred low-caste people in the Hyderabad State have been under the instruction of the Movement during the last year.

Followers of the Movement are to be found in every province of India, and in both the Pashto speaking and Persian speaking parts of Afghanistan.

Of the countries to the south and east of India, members of the Movement are to be found in Ceylon, Burma, the Malay States and the Straits Settlements. Two papers, in the Malay and English languages, are issued by the members of the Ahmadiyya Community in Ceylon.

There is no regular mission in China, but a book named, *The Muslim World*, printed at Istanbul in Turkish, written by a famous traveller, Sheikh Abdur Rashīd Ibrāhīm, who is one of the learned men of Qazan and is a member of the Russian Parliament, mentions that members of the Movement are to be found in that country also, although those in the interior have not yet been able to establish connection with the headquarters of the Movement at Qadian.

Several people in the Philippines and Sumatra have also joined the Movement.

Of the countries to the north and west of Pakistan members of the Movement are to be found in Bokhara, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Syria.

In Africa, regular communities have been formed in Egypt, Zanzibar, Natal, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, Nigeria and Morocco, and also in the island of Mauritius. A paper in the French language is issued by the Movement from Mauritius.

In Europe the Movement has so far found adherents only in England and France.<sup>2</sup> The English mission was established about ten years ago.

In America a mission was established only three years ago where hundreds of Americans have accepted and are continuing to accept Ahmadiyyat. A quarterly journal is issued by the Movement from Chicago. The Movement has also spread to Trinidad, Brazil, and Costa Rica in South America.

Australia also shares this great blessing, and, relying on the Word of God, we firmly believe that the rest of the world, before long, will also participate in it.

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<sup>2</sup> Since the last publication of this book, the Movement has established many Missions in various parts of the world.

## Distinctive Features of the Movement

A question that suggests itself at the outset is, what purpose is the Ahmadiyya Movement meant to serve in the presence of such a diversity of religions and movements that already exist. I shall, therefore, discuss this question first. Every person who believes in any of the revealed religions, must also believe that God has, at different times, sent various Prophets to the world, and that no nation has been left without a Messenger of God. The spiritual evolution of mankind is due entirely to this class of persons, and but for them there would have been nothing but darkness in the world. In the Holy Quran, God says:

وَأَنَّ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ أَلْحَلَّا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ

'There has been no people unvisited by a Warner.'<sup>3</sup>

Historical research and archaeological discoveries confirm us in this belief, which is proving a great factor in promoting unity among nations, and for which all credit is due to the Holy Quran, because this truth was first proclaimed by that Book. If we try to discover the object for which these Prophets were sent, we shall find that the cause of their advent has always been the spiritual corruption of mankind and the cessation of all direct relations with God. These Prophets always appear like rain-laden clouds which refresh and requicken the

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<sup>3</sup> Al-Fāṭir, 35:25.

earth after a long season of drought. They are, as it were, God's answer sent down from Heaven to the cries of those who seek after Him. They are like the horn blown by the hunter who spots the quarry, to collect together his scattered companions. The world is called by them back to the Truth; and commences its march towards its real goal under their direction.

We hold the belief that this succession of Prophets will continue in the future as it has done in the past, for reason repudiates a permanent cessation of it. If mankind is to continue to pass through ages of spiritual darkness, ages in which men will wander away from their Maker; if from time to time men are to be liable to go astray from the right path and to grope in the thick darkness of doubt and despair in their efforts to regain it; if they are to continue their search after the light in all such ages and times, it is impossible to believe that Divine torch-bearers and guides, should cease to appear; for it is inconsistent with, *Rahmāniyyat*, the mercy of God, that He should permit the ill but should not provide the remedy, that He should create the yearning but should withdraw the means of satisfying it. To imagine so would be to offer an insult to the Fountain-head of mercy and compassion, and to betray one's spiritual blindness.

We believe that the world was in these days in sore need of a guide and preceptor who should point out the way to God, and should lead us, out of doubt and misgiving, to belief and certainty. If mankind was ever in need of a Prophet, it is much more in need of one

today, when religion has become an empty phrase and truth is, as it were, dead.

At the present time, with respect to their attitude towards religion, men may be divided into three classes. First, those who deny the need of religion and either repudiate God altogether, or believe in Him just as they believe in rivers and mountains, for this belief does not in any way affect their daily lives. If they were to decide that there is no God, their mode of life would undergo no change whatever, for their belief in God has nothing to do with their acts and conduct. Such people have sometimes gone so far as to declare that they cannot surrender their independence even to God and that they cannot damage their self-respect by praying to, and humbling themselves before, Him.

The second class of people are those who believe in God and His attributes, but they are in the predicament of a thirsty man who has lost his way among the sand-hills of the desert, and who for miles and miles does not meet with a single drop of water. The more he searches for it, the fiercer becomes his thirst and the greater his agony, but his wanderings profit him not; he runs from one deluding mirage to another, but each time his disappointment augments his pain, and in the search of water he wanders farther away from it, till he arrives at the gates of death.

The third class of men are content with their lot and are satisfied with their condition, not because they believe that they have satisfied all their natural yearnings, but because they have lost courage and have

despaired of God's grace. They imagine that God's bounties were limited to those who have gone before and that they are like stepsons who cannot hope to inherit their stepfather's property. They are, therefore, content to feed on the crumbs which those, who have gone before, have left for them out of charity.

But none of these conditions is natural. The indifference of the first class of people referred to above, the fruitless efforts of the second, and the contentment born of despair of the last, are alike unavailing and unprofitable. The only thing which can profit the seekers of God is the true recognition and knowledge of Him, which dispels all gloom and removes all that separates man from his Maker and ultimately brings man into the very presence of God. Such knowledge alone can present religion to man in a shape which is acceptable and which the judgment of man can approve; and this has always been done and can only be done by a Prophet of God.

Consider therefore whether there is any religion today, whose followers claim still to possess that which was given to the world through the Prophets? Is it not true that men have either reconciled themselves to the belief that God's blessings have been exhausted on those who have gone before, or renounced religion altogether, or deluded themselves with the belief that they have arrived at the goal, only, however, like the person in a mesmeric trance, who accepts all absurdities as true which have no reality for the lookers on? If this is so, the world is as much in need of a Prophet today as it was in any previous age. That is why the holy founder

of the Ahmadiyya Movement has taught that the door of revelation has ever remained open and will continue to remain open, and that the present age bears emphatic testimony to the need of a Prophet. But we do not base our belief on the testimony of the age alone; we are also supported by the testimony of the previous Prophets.

We find that all religions contain prophecies concerning the advent of a Prophet in this age. The Hindus are awaiting the advent of the *Nehā Kalank Avatār*, which has been foretold in their scriptures; the Christians are awaiting the second advent of the Messiah; the Muslims are looking forward to the appearance of the Mahdi and the Promised Messiah; the Zoroastrians believe in the coming of *Mesio Darbahmi*, etc., etc. If the advent of Prophets had ceased for the future, how could all these people have agreed on the single fact that a Prophet, whose advent had been foretold, would arise. One peculiar feature of these prophecies is that there is a great deal of similarity between the various signs detailed by different religions indicating the appearance of the promised Prophet. All these prophecies indicate the time of that Prophet by foretelling the spread of evils, multiplication of diseases, falling of stars, eclipses of the sun and the moon, recurrence of wars, etc. Again, it is foretold that these promised Prophets will propagate the truth throughout the world, and that the true religion will manifestly triumph over all other religions in an unprecedented manner. Now, on the one hand, the actual fulfilment of the signs contained in these prophecies show that they cannot be false, and, on the other, the appointed task of all the promised Prophets makes it

impossible that at one and the same time all these Prophets should cause their respective religions to triumph over all the others.

The conclusion, therefore, is unavoidable that all these prophecies refer to one and the same person who shall, by means of his spiritual powers, gather together men of all faiths, and guide the nations of the world along the right path. These prophecies also show that whereas the promised one shall be the same for all religions, he shall possess such peculiar distinctions that every nation shall accept him as its own. He shall be so related to India that the Hindus will be able to accept him as their *Nehā Kalank Avatār*; he shall be so related to the Zoroastrians that they will be able to accept him as their *Mesio Darbahmi*; he shall be so related to the Muslims that they will be able to claim him as their *Mahdi*; and he shall be so related to the Christians that they will be able to recognize in him the Messiah. This can happen only if he is related to different peoples in different capacities. For instance, he may be connected with one by religion, with another by race, and with a third his relations may be social or political, so that every nation will be prepared to acknowledge him as its own.

Our belief is that all these things are to be found in the holy founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, *Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad*<sup>as</sup> whom God raised for the reformation of the present age. He claimed to be the Messiah for the Christians, the *Mahdi* for the Muslims, *Krishna* or the *Nehā Kalank Avatār* for the Hindus, and *Mesio Darbahmi* for the Zoroastrians. In short, he was

the promised Prophet of every nation and was appointed to collect all mankind under the banner of one faith. In him were centred the hopes and expectations of all nations; he is the dome of peace under which every nation may worship its Maker; he is the opening through which all nations may obtain a vision of their Lord; and he is the centre at which meet all the radii of the circle. It is ordained, therefore, that the world shall find peace and rest only through him. Being a Persian by race he was the promised one of the Zoroastrians; being an Indian by birth he was the promised one of the Hindus; being a Muslim by faith he was the promised one of the Muslims; and having come in the spirit and power of Jesus<sup>as</sup>, bringing remedies for the reformation of the social evils prevailing in Christian countries—evils, which have laid an intolerable burden on the backs of the Christian nations—having been born under a Christian Government, and also having defended the honour of Jesus<sup>as</sup> against the attacks which have been levelled at it for hundreds of years, he was entitled to be recognized as the promised one of the Christians.

All prophecies of previous Prophets were fulfilled in his person and at his hands. When the time for the fulfilment of these prophecies drew near, God informed him of it and thus showed that in him alone were these prophecies to be fulfilled. It had been said that the promised one would appear in the East and so it came to pass.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, it had been said that before the coming of the Messiah false prophets would appear and

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<sup>4</sup> St. Matthew (24:27) and Isaiah (41:2).

so it came to pass, i.e., before Ahmad<sup>as</sup> announced himself, several persons claimed to be Messiahs, the claims of some of whom well-nigh deceived the wise. Then there were, as had been foretold, wars and pestilences and famines, and in the end was fulfilled that mighty sign which is described in general words in the Bible and in the Jamaspi, the book of the Zoroastrians, as the darkening of the sun and the moon, but which is described in more detail in Islamic books. It had been specified in these books that at the time of the advent of the Mahdi, the sun shall be eclipsed on the second day of the days of its eclipse, and the moon shall be eclipsed on the first of the nights of its eclipse during the month of Ramadan. It had been particularly stated that this sign had not been appointed for any other claimant. This prophecy has also been fulfilled, and its fulfilment has set the seal of truth on Ahmad's<sup>as</sup> claim to be the Mahdi and the Messiah. These eclipses occurred in 1894 in the month of Ramadan on the dates which had already been foretold, and although many persons had claimed to be the Mahdi or the Messiah before him, this conjunction did not occur during the time of any one of them.

In his time was also witnessed that most extraordinary phenomenon which had been foretold in earlier scriptures, but which had never been experienced before. It had been said that in the time of the promised one, there would be peace, that children would play with snakes and lambs with wolves, but that there would also be wars; in other words, that peace and war would exist side by side. We find that this startling spectacle is presented by the world on every side today. Patriotism,

on the one hand, has in most countries put an end to oppression and strife which were only too prevalent in earlier days and has enabled states to put their respective territories in order, and, on the other, international relations are in a state of confusion, causing one nation to live in constant dread and suspicion of another, and international jealousies are at their height.

Besides these prophecies, detailed prophecies concerning the advent of the promised one are given in Islamic books, all of which have been fulfilled. Some of those may be mentioned here. It was foretold, for instance, that in the time of the promised one a new method of transport would render camels useless. This has been fulfilled by the introduction of railways. It was written that news would be carried instantaneously from one part of the world to another. This has been fulfilled by the invention of the telegraph and wireless telegraphy. It was written that women would increase in number and would be employed in large numbers for the sale of goods, that women's dress would leave exposed those parts of the body which were formerly thought fit to be covered. It was written that three great powers would wage war with three other great powers, and that the victorious three would occupy Constantinople, but that a man would run away from Constantinople to Asia Minor, and would wage a war and would recover his territory. It was written that the Christian nations would be supreme everywhere that Arabia would be severed from the Turkish Empire, and that separate governments would be established in Iraq, Syria and Egypt. It was written that a certain people would shorten the months,

the Islamic law would be disregarded, gambling would increase; large police forces would be required; women would dress like men; working classes would come into power; the rich would grudge charity to the poor; Islamic governments would be destroyed; religious condition of Arabia would become deplorable; inanimate objects would speak (this refers to the invention of the gramophone, radio, television, etc.); new modes of conveyance would be invented (this refers to airplanes, etc.). It was written that land lying between two seas, on one side of which there was coral and on the other pearls, would be cut, and thus the seas would be joined and a large number of vessels would pass through the opening. This refers clearly to the Suez and the Panama canals. Again it was written, that books and newspapers would be published in large numbers; several discoveries would be made in astronomy; irrigation canals would be cut out of rivers which would consequently run dry; mountains would be blown up; travelling would increase; in some countries the aboriginal inhabitants would be wiped out; immolation of widows and similar other ancient customs would be abolished by the state. It was foretold that the promised one would suffer from two maladies, one in the upper part of his body and the other in the lower, that the hair of his head would be straight, that he would be wheat-coloured, that he would suffer from a slight stammer in his speech, that he would belong to a family of farmers, that, while talking, he would occasionally strike his hand against his thigh, that he would appear in a village called Kada, and that he would combine in himself the office of the Messiah

and the Mahdi. And so it has turned out to be. Ahmad, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, suffered from vertigo and diabetes; he had straight hair, was wheat-coloured, and occasionally stammered in his speech. He had the habit of striking his hand against his thigh while giving a discourse, and belonged to a family of landowners. He was a resident of Kadian or Kade as Qadian is popularly called. In short, when we consider all these prophecies collectively, we find that they apply to no age but to the present, and to no person but to Ahmad<sup>as</sup>. It appears clearly that the present age is the age of the advent of the promised one, whose appearance was foretold by the former Prophets, and that Ahmad<sup>as</sup> is the promised one whose advent had been eagerly awaited for centuries. When we see that before most of these signs were witnessed, the holy founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, having received revelations from on High, foretold the appearance of many of these signs, as, for instance, the approach of the plague, the World War, universal earthquakes, the influenza epidemic, etc., etc., our faith and conviction are further strengthened, and we are compelled to believe, like every person who does not act thoughtlessly but considers and reflects and acts with justice, that God has fulfilled the hopes and expectations of all nations in the person of the holy founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. The clouds of His mercy have sent down showers of rain, and lands which had been parched have been watered; blessed is he who collects this water in his fields, and renouncing all manner of pride and hypocrisy holds his faith above the riches and glories of this world.

The Ahmadiyya Community is thus to be distinguished from other religious communities and sects by the fact that the members of this community, having considered the appointed signs for the advent of the Prophet and the Reformer of the latter days, have accepted the claims of Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>1as</sup>, and that unlike so many other peoples they no longer await the advent of the Messenger of the Latter Days. I proceed now to set out the object of the advent of the holy founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement as described by himself. He says:

'The task for which God has appointed me is, that I should, by removing the obstacles which have been set up between man and his Maker, re-establish in the hearts of men love and devotion to God, and by making manifest the truth, should put an end to all religious wars and strife and thus lay the foundations of abiding peace, and should acquaint mankind with the spiritual truths which it had forgotten, and should demonstrate to the world the true spiritual life which had been displaced by material desires, and should in my own life manifest those Divine powers with which man has been endowed, but which can be manifested only through prayer and devotion; and above all that I should permanently re-establish that bright and pure Unity of God purified from all polytheistic

ideas, which had entirely disappeared from the hearts of men.<sup>5</sup>

'God has filled me with knowledge so that I should warn those who have gone astray and should lead those who dwell in darkness into Light. God has sent me to reform this sad plight and to lead mankind back to His pure Unity. To this end, I have explained all things to you. I have also been sent to give to the world a firmer faith and to demonstrate to the world the existence of God; for faith has withered and belief in the life hereafter has become a fable, and the conduct of man shows that his whole trust is placed in the world and in things material, and that he has no faith in God or the life to come. Men talk of God and of spirituality but their hearts are filled with the love of this world. Jesus<sup>as</sup> had found the Jews in the same state in which I find the world today, and just as lack of faith had driven love of God from the hearts of the Jews and had destroyed their morals, the world today ceased to love God, and I have been sent to restore truth and faith and to revive the love and fear of God in the hearts of men. This alone is the object of my existence. God has informed me that heaven shall again draw nigh to the earth after it had drawn itself away. So I have come to renew these things and have been sent for this purpose.'<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Lecture on Islam*, p. 34.

<sup>6</sup> *Kitābul Bariyya*, pp.253-256.

Again, he says that he has been sent to attract men 'to truth in all things relating to belief, morals, knowledge and conduct, in such manner that they should gain special strength in all these matters.'<sup>7</sup>

Again, he says, that one of his sons shall be the liberator of captives, that is to say, nations, classes and countries, oppressed by other nations, classes and states, shall through him, be released from the bonds of tyranny and shall obtain their freedom, and God shall remove their difficulties and shall confer on them a life of peace and comfort. Again, he says that it is his duty, firstly, 'to demonstrate the truth of Islam to all nations,' secondly, 'to present to the world the true and unalloyed teachings of Islam, which are full of truth and spirituality, free from all false interpretations and irrelevant interpolations,' and thirdly, 'to bestow the light of faith on all those who, from among the nations of the earth, should be eager in their search for it.'

From all this it would appear that his mission was to preach the perfect Unity of God, to establish virtue and righteousness, to restore to the hearts of mankind the fear of God, to strengthen the relationship between man and his Maker, to lead men out of doubt and darkness into the certainty of faith, and to restore peace and calm to troubled hearts, to open the gates of spiritual knowledge, to find a solution for moral, spiritual, intellectual and practical difficulties, to relieve and succour the oppressed through heavenly means, to restore the

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<sup>7</sup> Review of Religions, Vol. 1, p.3.

rights of those who have been despoiled, to abolish war and disorder, to bring about universal peace, to collect all mankind under the banner of one faith and one creed, to propagate the truth among all nations, to purify Islam of extraneous errors and to present the true doctrines of Islam to the world, and finally to demonstrate to the world the glory of God by manifest signs.

A truly splendid mission and a glorious prospect! But has any claimant ever said anything different from this? Every one of them is bound to place before the world equally glorious prospects, for nobody would pay any attention to mere commonplace assertions. Such fine declarations are all considered the more necessary in the present age when every thing depends upon propagation and advertisement. Hence, if the claims of the holy founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement had been supported merely by such declarations, they would have deserved no particular attention and would not have been entitled to any preference over the claims of any other person. But as I shall presently show he has left us such a complete code of instructions and rules of conduct, that all sensible persons will acknowledge that by acting on them the objects of his advent, as above stated, may be easily and fully achieved.

One question, however, presents itself at this stage, and although it is not easy of comprehension, it is impossible, without understanding it, to arrive at a full realization of the true significance of the Ahmadiyya Movement. That question is this. Considering the holy founder of the Movement calls himself a Muslim and is one of the followers of Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> and asserts that his

mission is to propagate the true teachings of the Holy Quran, what special significance can be attached to the Ahmadiyya Movement? Is not the holy founder of the Movement, in that case, a mere doctor or sufi, and the Movement, itself a mere intellectual movement, of no special importance? This, however, is far from the truth, and to think so would be entirely to misconceive the scope and significance of the Ahmadiyya Movement.

We believe that Prophets are of two kinds, those who are law-bearers and those who come to interpret and establish the law and to clear away the corruptions that creep into the system of a religion owing to lapse of time. All religious systems accept this distinction, and it is well illustrated by the succession of Prophets who followed Moses<sup>as</sup>. The latter was a law-bearer and his contemporary Aaron<sup>as</sup> and his successors Joshua<sup>as</sup> and others, including Jesus<sup>as</sup>, were sent only to establish the law revealed through Moses<sup>as</sup>. Jesus<sup>as</sup> himself says, 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.'<sup>8</sup> The fact that the law of Moses<sup>as</sup> was in force in the time of Jesus<sup>as</sup> and was binding on him and his disciples is clearly borne out by the advice which he gave to his disciples and others. He says: 'The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works, for they say, and do not.'<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew 5:17

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 23:2-3

No doubt, some of the sayings and teachings of Jesus<sup>as</sup> are said to be different from the teachings of the Torah, but if we study the Torah carefully we can discover in it the basis of all that Jesus<sup>as</sup> taught. He says himself, concerning these teachings, that they are not new and are contained in the Torah. For instance, towards the close of the Sermon on the Mount, which is regarded as laying down rules of conduct not contained in the Torah, Jesus<sup>as</sup> says, 'for this is the law and the prophets.'<sup>10</sup>

In short, Prophets are of two kinds, those who are law-bearers like Moses<sup>as</sup> and those who only restore and re-establish the law after mankind have forsaken it; as, for instance, Elijah<sup>as</sup>, Isaiah<sup>as</sup>, Ezekiel<sup>as</sup>, Daniel<sup>as</sup> and Jesus<sup>as</sup>.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> also claimed to be a Prophet like the latter, and asserted that as Jesus was the last *Khalifa* (Successor) of the Mosaic dispensation, he was the last *Khalifa* of the Islamic dispensation. The Ahmadiyya Movement, therefore, occupies, with respect to the other sects of Islam, the same position which Christianity occupied with respect to the other sects of Judaism. We believe that in the Holy Prophet Muhammad was fulfilled the prophecy of Moses<sup>as</sup> which is contained in Deuteronomy (18:18), and which foretells the advent of a Prophet from among the brethren of the Israelites, who would be a law-bearer like Moses<sup>as</sup>. Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, being a descendant of Ishmael,

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<sup>10</sup> Matthew. 7:12

one of the brethren of the Israelites, was the bearer of a new law. The Holy Quran refers to the fulfilment of the prophecy of Moses<sup>as</sup> in his person in the following verse:

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولًا شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيُحْيَىٰ وَمُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ رَسُولًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا مُبْتَلًىٰ

'We have sent an Apostle to you who enforces the commandments of the law by superintending your performance of them, as We sent an apostle to Pharaoh.'<sup>11</sup>

Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, being thus the like of Moses<sup>as</sup>, it was necessary that the Messiah<sup>as</sup> of the Islamic dispensation should not only be from among his followers but should come to re-establish and propagate the Quranic law just as Jesus<sup>as</sup> came with no new law but only confirmed the Torah.

I have so far endeavoured to explain the relation of the Ahmadiyya Movement to Islam. I now proceed to explain the significance of the Movement.

I have already indicated that one of the functions of a Prophet who is not the bearer of a new law is to sift all errors and misinterpretations which may have crept into an existing religious system owing to lapse of time, and this in itself is a great task. To discover and restore that which had been lost is almost as great a task as to supply that which is new. But we believe that the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> had a much higher mission to perform. In order, however, to understand what that mission was it

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<sup>11</sup> Al-Muzzammil, 73:16.

is necessary first to understand clearly our position with regard to the Holy Quran. Unlike other Muslims we believe that the fountain of Divine knowledge contained in the Holy Quran has not been exhausted, and that the Holy Quran is a complete code. As the work of God is an unlimited treasure house of wonders which are manifested according to the needs of mankind, so should the perfect Word of God be an inexhaustible treasure of wisdom and truth which should provide cures for the moral and spiritual ailments of all times. God does not daily create new things in this world, but every created thing is full of so many virtues and mysteries, that there is not a single thing in the world concerning which it may be said that its secrets have been fully revealed and that it is impossible to discover any new property or virtue in it. Man has not yet been able to lay bare all the mysteries of the human body, let alone a complete knowledge of the virtues and properties of other things. If this is so in the case of material things which are meant to serve comparatively temporary purposes, how much more must this be necessary in the case of the perfect Word of God which relates to the spiritual world. Should we not in the case of the latter be ever prepared to discover in it new and limitless treasures of eternal truths and hidden powers? We, therefore, believe—and every sensible person will agree—that a book which claims to be the perfect Word of God must possess this indispensable quality; and if it lacks this quality, its claim to be a perfect Word of God cannot be accepted.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, addressing those who believed that the treasures of Divine knowledge contained in the Holy Quran had been fully discovered and made known by those who had gone before, says:

'Know, therefore, that the open miracle of the Holy Quran which can be demonstrated to the people of all nations and all tongues, and whereby we can convince and confute every person, whether an Indian, Persian, European, American or other, is that it is a limitless treasure of Divine truths and realities, heavenly sciences and spiritual philosophies, which are discovered in it in every age according to the needs of mankind, and which, like armed soldiers, stand ever ready to combat every new falsehood. If the Holy Quran had been limited in its meaning and interpretation, it could not be regarded as a perfect miracle. Mere beauty of diction and purity of language, even if miracles, are not matters which can be appreciated by the literate and illiterate alike. The greatest miracle of the Holy Quran is, that its treasures are inexhaustible, and a person, who does not perceive this miracle, is entirely shut out from real knowledge of the Holy Quran. Remember that this miracle of the Holy Quran is so perfect that it has in every age proved more potent than the sword. The Holy Quran contains a full and complete refutation of every doubt which is suggested by each succeeding age under the ever-changing conditions of the world, and a reply to every criticism which may be based on new knowledge and new discoveries.

No Divine truth has been put forward or can ever be put forward by a follower of any other religion, be he a Brahman, a Buddhist or an Ārya, or by a follower of any other school of thought, which truth has not already found a place in the Holy Quran. The treasures of the Holy Quran are inexhaustible, and as the wonders of the book of nature are limitless, and each succeeding age discovers fresh properties and new virtues in nature, the same is in the case with the Word of God, so that there may be no disparity between God's work and his Word.<sup>12</sup>

By pointing out this great miracle of the Holy Quran, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> has effected a revolution in spiritual matters. The Muslims certainly believed that the Holy Quran was perfect, but during the last thirteen hundred years nobody had imagined that not only was it perfect but that it was an inexhaustible storehouse in which the needs of all future ages had been provided for, and that on investigation and research it would yield far richer treasures of spiritual knowledge, than the material treasures which nature is capable of yielding. The holy founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement has, by presenting to the world this miraculous aspect of the Holy Quran, thrown open the door to a far wider field of discovery and research in matters spiritual, than any scientific discovery has ever done in the realm of physical science. He not only purified Islam of all extraneous errors and presented it to the world in its pristine purity

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<sup>12</sup> *Izāla'-e-Auhām*, pp. 305-311.

and simplicity, but also presented the Holy Quran to the world in a light which served at once to satisfy all the intellectual needs of mankind which the rapidly changing conditions of the world had brought into existence and to furnish a key to the solution of all future difficulties.

Mankind is undoubtedly being harassed by complicated social and political problems and is thirsting for spiritual knowledge. Not finding any solution of these difficulties in current religious literature, some people have become disgusted with religion itself, and others are adding to these difficulties by endeavouring to frame new codes of law. But as you will presently discover, the solution of all these difficulties has been provided for in the teachings of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. It was no doubt, contained in the Holy Quran, but a part of it was like water which had been rendered impure by the introduction of noxious matter (i.e., false and impious interpretations) and a part of it was like a fountain flowing deep under the earth, hidden from the eyes of men. He distilled the impure water and discovered the subterranean channel, and removed the veil from our eyes, and opened wide the door to a vast field of research and discovery, thus providing for the ever-increasing needs of mankind, without in the least going outside the scope of the teachings of the Holy Quran and interfering with that form of Islam which was established by the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and which it is the will of God to preserve till the end of days.

Once this is realized, it will be easy to comprehend that although the Ahmadiyya Movement believes

firmly in the Holy Quran and is a Movement of Muslims, it cannot be ranked merely as one of the sects of Islam. On the contrary it claims that it alone presents to the world the real Islam that was revealed over thirteen hundred years ago, and that its special mission is to enrich mankind with the unlimited spiritual treasures contained in the Holy Quran. The existence of this Movement is not the result of the culmination of any particular idea, nor is it the last wave of a natural current set in motion by any particular sect or school of thought. It is an entirely new current which has, on the one hand, moved rapidly back through thirteen centuries and, on the other, is pressing forward through the present into the future, supplying from the inexhaustible treasures of the Holy Quran all the new and varied needs of mankind. It is a current which has united not only the East and the West, but has also brought together the past and the future. We can now confidently assert that the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, to whom was revealed the final and perfect code of law, was an Adam for the perfection of the law, and that the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, who had been sent by God to demonstrate to the world the vast extent of the spiritual sciences and philosophies of the Holy Quran, which satisfy the needs of every age, was an Adam for the perfection of the interpretation and propagation of the law, as the first Adam was the Adam of the physical perfection of man.

It was necessary for me to dilate on this aspect of the Ahmadiyya Movement, for, as I have indicated, the Ahmadiyya Movement is not the name of any new religion. If I had proceeded to discuss the teachings and

principles of the Movement which are wholly based on the Holy Quran, without this preliminary explanation, a certain amount of confusion might have arisen and it might have been difficult to understand whether I was speaking of the Ahmadiyya Movement or of Islam. It must now be perfectly clear that Ahmadiyyat and Islam are one and the same thing, and that by Ahmadiyyat is meant that real Islam which God has manifested to the world through the promised one of the present age. It is based wholly on the Holy Quran and the law of Islam, and yet it is entirely different from the other existing sects of Islam in its teachings and its doctrines. It has first re-discovered many truths which had been altogether lost sight of, and has, secondly, for the first time, revealed to the world many new truths relating to the special conditions and needs of the present age. These truths were presented by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> who has enriched the intellectual and spiritual worlds by discovering many spiritual sciences which lay hidden beneath the words of the Holy Quran. Hence when in the course of this paper I refer to the teachings of Islam I shall be referring to the teachings which are in consonance with the point of view of the Ahmadiyya Movement irrespective of the fact, whether they are accepted by other Muslims or not, and when I refer to the teachings of the Ahmadiyya Movement, the reference will be to the teachings of Islam and not to any new doctrine or teaching.

## **What should be the Principal Object of Religious Conferences**

Before I proceed to describe the teachings and doctrines which distinguish the Ahmadiyya Movement from other religions, I wish to remark, that whatever may be the object of the conveners of the conference, in my opinion the principal object of such conferences should be to provide opportunities for the people to contrast the merits of different religions in order to be able to decide which of them can be of assistance in achieving the object for which men consider it necessary to seek and adopt a religion. Hence, although it may not be necessary, in the papers which are read here, to state and explain every rule and principle inculcated by the religion to which the paper relates, it is, in my opinion, absolutely necessary that a brief but complete outline of the basic principles of each religion should be presented in order to enable the audience to judge whether a particular religion deals with every aspect of a man's life or is confined only to a few matters of greater or less importance.

Another principle which must be insisted upon is that the representatives of each religion should explain the teachings of their respective religions and not proceed to expound their own personal views. If this principle is not observed, it would be extremely difficult for people to distinguish the true from the false. Ideas and thoughts are not material things which the followers of

different religions can keep under lock and key, for as soon as an idea is discovered or a thought is expressed it becomes common property and it is open to everybody to adopt it as his own. Hence if no means are devised to test whether a particular idea belongs to the particular religion to which it is ascribed or has been borrowed from others, it will be impossible to contrast the teachings of different religions in order to arrive at a definite conclusion as to the truth of a religion. On the contrary the result will be very undesirable, for people will run away with the idea that all religions are alike, whereas in fact a particular truth may be the property of a particular religion and others may merely be borrowers from it. The holy founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement had devised a plan which he used always to follow on such occasions, and the adoption of which would obviate the difficulty indicated above. That plan is that the advocates of each religion should support all that they ascribe to their religion by reference to the scriptures of that religion, that is, the revealed book on which that religion is based, or by reference to the explanations offered by the recipient of the revelation himself.

This would remove all risk of confusion and misunderstanding, and would clearly show which religion is perfect and which has merely borrowed from others. As this is not a condition which has been laid down by the conveners of this conference (although I hope that on all such occasions in future it will not be lost sight of, so that people may be able easily to judge of the merits of different religions) the representatives of other religions will probably not be able to keep it in view, but I shall

voluntarily submit to it. Whatever, therefore, I shall present in the name of Islam or the Ahmadiyya Movement will be taken direct from the teachings of Islam itself and will not be borrowed from other sources. I shall endeavour to support every statement made by me by reference to the scriptures of Islam; but if considerations of time and space should compel me to omit such references in any case, it would be the right of every person addressed to demand from me a reference to the particular book or passage on the basis of which I have ascribed any particular statement or doctrine to Islam.

## **The Principal Objects of Religion**

After these preliminary remarks I turn to the subject of my paper.

There are four principal objects of religion:

1- The first object of religion is to instruct man as to his source, that is to say, to furnish him with correct knowledge concerning his Maker, so that he may not be debarred from profiting from the Divine source of all power and strength, and should not remain ignorant of the object of his existence, which can be explained only by the Creator Himself. For this purpose it is necessary to explain four matters:

- (a) The person and attributes of God;
- (b) The nature of man's relationship to God;
- (c) The way in which such relationship should be expressed, and the responsibilities which are laid upon man by God;
- (d) The means whereby man can attain to God and satisfy his longing for union with Him; and the practical realization of this object in this very life so that man may pass beyond the stage of surmise and attain to certainty concerning God.

2- The second object of religion is to provide a complete code of rules of moral conduct. For this purpose, again, it is necessary to explain the following seven matters:

- (a) What are good morals?

- (b) What are bad morals?
- (c) The different stages of good morals?
- (d) The different stages of bad morals?
- (e) Why are particular morals called good or bad?
- (f) The means whereby man can acquire good morals.
- (g) The means whereby man can avoid bad morals.

3. The third object of religion is to provide a solution for the social problems which confront mankind. Man being by nature social, it is necessary that religion should lay down basic principles which should govern his social conduct whereby peace and order may be established and all orders and classes of people becoming content with their respective rights and privileges, none of them should consciously, or unconsciously, trespass against any other. A little consideration would show that rules for the government of society can be equitably framed by God alone, for no man or class of men can, owing to the intrusion of personal interests, be possessed of that breadth of outlook which is a necessary qualification for this purpose. The statement of such principles, therefore, on which human society should be based is one of the important functions of religion, and a religion which fails in this respect can hardly deserve to be called by that name. For this purpose it is necessary for a religion to throw light on the following matters:

- (a) Domestic relations, that is, the rights of relations *inter se*, this being the first stage of human society;

- (b) The rights and duties of citizens and how they may best be discharged;
  - (c) The relationship between master and servant, the rulers and the ruled, and the rich and the poor;
  - (d) The relations between the followers of one religion and those of another, and the subjects of one government and those of another.
4. The fourth object of religion is to explain the end of man, that is to say, what happens to man after his death. For this purpose it is necessary to explain:
- (a) Is there a life after death? If so, what is its nature?
  - (b) If there is a life after death, is it subject to pain and pleasure?
  - (c) If it is so subject, what is the nature of that pain and pleasure?
  - (d) Is it open to man to travel from evil to good after his death? If so, how?

A consideration of the teachings of a religion concerning these four objects can alone enable us to arrive at an estimate of the true value of that religion. I shall, therefore, proceed to explain the teachings of the Ahmadiyya Movement relating to these four objects, and hope that everyone who will consider the matter dispassionately will admit that Islam alone completely fulfils these four objects.

## The First Object of Religion

### The Islamic Conception of God

As I have stated above, the first object of religion relates to four questions, and I shall, therefore, state what Islam teaches concerning each of these questions.

The first question is, what does Islam teach concerning the person and attributes of God? Islam describes God as a Perfect Being, possessing every excellence. The opening verse of the Holy Quran runs.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

'All praise is due to Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of all the worlds.'<sup>13</sup> As God has created all things, and all things depend on Him for their sustenance, He alone deserves all praise for the beauties and excellences to be found in different things, for all these beauties and excellences are derived from God. The beauty of a scene, the charm of a voice, the fragrance of a flower, the softness of a bed, the daintiness of a dish, in short the beauty and charm of all that pleases and appeals to the senses of man, is created and bestowed by God.

The verse then proceeds: *al-Rahmān al-Rahīm* i.e., God has, out of His pure grace and bounty, created all those things the need of which was to be felt by man; for instance, light and air; fire and water; different kinds of food and medicines; timber; iron, stones, etc. He has

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<sup>13</sup> Al-Fātiḥah, 1: 2.

created so many things for the use and the exercise of man's faculties that whichever way man turns he finds enough to occupy his attention and is afforded countless opportunities of improving and perfecting his knowledge and capacities. In fact, man cannot possibly feel any need which has not been met and provided for before his birth. All this has been done under God's attribute of *Rahmāniyyat*.

Again, He has been called *Rahīm* in the Holy Quran, that is to say, He rewards all labour and effort according to its deserts. Man's effort is never wasted, and he is ever rewarded in true proportion to its merits.

Again, He is called *Mālik-e-Yaumid-Dīn*, i.e., He is the Master of the Day of Retribution. In other words, apart from the operation of the laws of nature, and the rewards and punishments which are meted out contemporaneously, He has fixed the limits of every action, and as soon as those limits are reached, final judgment is passed on each action whereby the good are rewarded, and the evil ones are punished, subject always to this, that under His attribute of *Mālikiyyat* it is always open to Him to forgive and to remit the punishment.

Again, He is called *Qadīr*, that is to say, He has fixed the nature and properties of all things. If this had not been so, there would have been constant confusion and disorder in the world and the affairs of the world would soon have come to an end. If men had not been certain about the nature, effect and properties of things, they could never have entered upon any enterprise, not knowing what it might lead to. For instance, a man who

desires to cook food lights a fire in the certain belief that fire would generate heat. If the generation of heat had not been the fixed property of fire, and the extinguishing of fire had not been the fixed property of water, if fire had sometimes generated heat and at other times had caused cold, if water had some times extinguished fire and at other times had set it alight, nobody could have derived any benefit from them, and men would have lost heart in despair and would soon have perished.

God has also been described as *'Alīm*, that is to say, He has knowledge of secret as well as of manifest things. He is aware of the secrets of a man's heart and knows all hidden things. He is acquainted with the hidden secrets of man's nature of which the latter is not even himself aware. Things buried under the earth and those placed on mountain tops are equally within His knowledge. He knows that which is past and that which is to come.

He is *Samī'*, that is, He hears everything; the slightest whisper does not escape Him and the sound of a crawling ant, and of the blood coursing through a man's veins reaches Him.

He is *Ḥayy*, that is, He is Himself alive and bestows life on others.

He is *Khāliq*, the Creator.

He is *Qayyūm*, that is, He supports the existence of others.

He is *Ṣamad*, that is, nothing can exist without His support and assistance.

He is *Ghafūr*, that is, He forgives our trespasses.

He is *Qahhār*, that is, all things are subject to His power.

He is *Jabbār*, that is, He remedies all ills and disorders.

He is *Wahhāb*, that is, He bestows favours and bounties on His creatures.

He is *Subbūh*, that is, He is free from all defects.

He is *Quddūs*, that is, He comprises in Himself all aspects of purity and holiness.

He does not sleep, nor is He fatigued. He is Eternal and Ever-existing.

He is *Muhaimin*, that is, He guards all things. It is under the working of this Divine attribute that man is guarded from evils and sufferings, of the approach of which he may not even be aware. He is very often saved from a disease or a calamity by secret influences which have been working in his favour. As soon as a disease attacks the human system, counter influences begin to destroy germs of the disease. So long as a man does not persist in acting rashly and breaking the laws of nature, he is saved from many of the evil consequences of his conduct. God says in the Holy Quran:

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ

'That is, if God were to start punishing men for all their irregularities of conduct not one of them would be spared.'<sup>14</sup>

In short, He possesses all perfect attributes and His mercy encompasses all things, as He says:

رَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ط

'My mercy encompasseth all things.'<sup>15</sup>

In other words, His attributes of anger and punishment are governed by His attributes of mercy.

He is *Aḥad*, that is, nothing is His equal; He is *Wāḥid*, that is, all things had their origin in His command and He is the first cause of all creation. Many other attributes of His are mentioned in the Holy Quran, which show that Islam teaches a perfect conception of God as possessing attributes which create love on the one hand and fear on the other, both of which are indispensable for a perfect relationship between man and God.

A moment's reflection will show that perfect unity and perfect obedience can be produced only either by love or by fear. No doubt, love is the higher and the more perfect relationship, but there is equally no doubt that some natures are affected by nothing but fear. A religion, therefore, which does not emphasize the Divine attributes both of mercy and of punishment can never be universally beneficial. In considering the

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<sup>14</sup> Al-Naḥl, 16: 62.

<sup>15</sup> Al-A'rāf, 7:157.

sources and causes of human conduct, a religion must have regard, not only to the motives which influence the more highly developed sections of society, but to the motives governing the actions of all classes and conditions of men. In fact, the higher sections of mankind are generally naturally inclined towards good. The greater part of our attention must, therefore, be devoted to those who have fallen low and have wholly forgotten their duties as human beings. This class of people, with rare exceptions, is amenable only to fear, and no moral or spiritual reform can be effected in this class unless it is faced with the prospect of loss or pain. A religion which claims to bring all mankind in direct relationship with God, must, therefore, have regard to this characteristic of human nature. In describing the attributes of God, Islam has so balanced the different attributes that no more perfect combination could be imagined which could attract and control men of widely different natures. The attributes both of love and anger have been emphasized, subject to the assurance: 'My mercy encompasseth all things,' that is, that mercy overcomes anger, for the object of the latter is to reform and not to inflict pain.

This is a supreme and perfect conception of God, and completely answers the real object of religion. Yet it is not distinctive of Islam. Most religions ascribe similar attributes to God, with slight differences. This causes superficial observers to wonder why different religions should be opposed to each other. The fallacy, however, that all religions present a similar conception of God, arises from the fact that most people, when

considering this question lose sight of the workings of human nature. It is a characteristic of human nature that it accepts or rejects certain things as a matter of course, without any external aid or interference. These things are said to be self-evident, and although some thinkers may not accept them as such, the mass of the people accept them without question as they become a second nature with them, and nobody can hope to obtain any support for an assertion to the contrary. One of these things which is almost unanimously accepted by mankind is that God is a Perfect Being Who is free from all defects, and no religion which asserts that God lacks perfection or is subject to shortcomings can ever hope to obtain a hearing. Therefore, there cannot be much difference between the names or attributes which various religions ascribe to God. Differences, however, arise in the manner in which the followers of different religions explain these names and attributes. The apparent agreement as to these names is not due to the fact that all religions are agreed as to the attributes of God, but to the unwillingness of the mass of the people to accept any other names in place of them. In comparing the merits of different religions, therefore, one must consider the explanations which each religion puts forward in interpreting these names or attributes.

For instance, all religions are agreed that God is the Creator of the universe and that He enables each created thing to progress within its own circle, but vast differences are revealed between the teachings of different religions with respect to this attribute of God. As I am explaining the teachings of Ahmadiyyat, I proceed

to state what Islam teaches concerning this attribute. It is obvious that this attribute means that God is not the Creator and Sustainer of any particular class or nation, but that He is the Creator and Sustainer of the whole universe, and that, so far as the attribute of creation is concerned, all men are equal and no nation can claim any particular relationship with God. He provides for the people of Asia in the same manner as He provides for the people of Europe, and He looks after the people of Africa, just as He looks after the people of America; and as He provides for our physical needs, so does He provide for our spiritual needs. On the basis of this principle, the Holy Quran, at a time when the spirit of national exclusiveness was rife, and political prejudices were at their height and the people of one country were not even aware whether people of other countries had any conception of prophethood, proclaimed:

وَأَنَّ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ

'There has been no people in the world but that God raised among them a Prophet for their guidance.'<sup>16</sup>

At another place, it says:

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ ۗ فَمِنْهُمْ مَن هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَن حَقَّقْتُ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةَ ۗ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْرِبِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

'Verily, We have sent Prophets to every nation with the message, "worship God and do not listen

<sup>16</sup> Al-Fāṭir, 35:25.

to the wicked and the rebellious," and some of them believed by the grace of God, and others remained in their error. So travel round the world and you will find that God has sent His Prophets to all nations and you will learn the end of those who had rejected the Prophets.<sup>17</sup>

It is related in one of the traditions that the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was once asked whether God had revealed anything in the Persian tongue and he replied, 'Yes, God spoke to a Prophet in Persian.'

Consider, therefore, how Islam has, by offering this explanation of the expression *Rabbul 'Ālamīn*, which is common to the followers of all religions, discovered to the world a new truth, and laid the foundations of the common brotherhood of man. Thereafter a Muslim can have nothing but reverence for the founders and leaders of other religions. For him, Krishna<sup>as</sup>, Ramchandra<sup>as</sup>, Buddha<sup>as</sup>, Zoroaster<sup>as</sup> and Confucius<sup>as</sup> are as much the Prophets of God as Moses<sup>as</sup> and Jesus<sup>as</sup>, the only difference being that as the latter are mentioned in the Holy Quran, there is a greater amount of certainty concerning them. This fact fundamentally affects the attitude of Islam towards other religions. As soon as a Muslim hears of an old religion of which he was not aware before, or learns about an old Prophet of whom he had never heard before, he is not troubled, as if another rival had appeared in the field, but welcomes the discovery as a fresh proof of the truth of Islam and a

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<sup>17</sup> Al-Nahl, 16 :37.

fresh confirmation of the teachings of the Holy Quran. Does not Islam teach that God is *Rabbul 'Ālamīn* and that His bounties are not confined to Arabia and Syria, and that as the physical sun lights up every corner of the world, so must the Word of God illumine every valley and give light to all nations?

It may here be asked, that if all religions have a Divine origin, why should we not accept all of them as true and believe that every one of them leads to God? This question has been answered by the Holy Quran in the following verses:

تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا اِلٰى اٰمِرٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ فَرَايَنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ اَعْمٰا لَهُمْ فَهٗو  
وَلِيُّهُمْ الْيَوْمَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ۙ وَمَا اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ اِلَّا  
لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اٰخْتَلَفُوْا فِيْهِ ۗ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۙ

'We swear by our Ownself, that We sent Messengers to all nations before you, but the wicked people engaged them (i.e., the nations) in other pursuits and such people are their friends today; they shall suffer a grievous punishment. And We have not revealed to thee the book but that thou mayest make clear to them that in which they had differed, and as a guidance and blessing for those who believe.'<sup>18</sup>

This verse indicates that the integrity of all previous books and teachings had become doubtful and extraneous doubts and errors had found place in them before the advent of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> so that in spite

<sup>18</sup> Al-Nahl, 16: 64,65.

of their Divine origin they had become unworthy of practice and could no longer offer the guarantee that by acting on them a man could attain to God.

Another question concerning God which it is the duty of religion to answer is, why cannot we see God if He exists? It is easy to assert that God exists, but the difficulty is to prove the various attributes of God. The Holy Quran recognizes this responsibility and furnishes proofs of the various Divine attributes. For instance concerning the last mentioned question it says:

لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ □

'God cannot be seen with the physical eyes but He reveals Himself to the eyes of man. He is too subtle to be seen by the eye of man, but He is aware of everything!'<sup>19</sup>

What a brief but comprehensive explanation! Subtle things, for instance, air, electricity, ether, etc., cannot be seen by man. How can he then see God, Who is more subtle than the subtlest thing and is not made of matter however subtle, but is Himself the creator of all things? On the other hand God knows that man is restlessly seeking His union and is impatient for His meeting. He, therefore, Himself comes to man and reveals Himself to his eyes, that is to say, manifests Himself through His powers and attributes and thus man is enabled to see Him with the eyes of reason.

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<sup>19</sup> Al-An'ām, 6:104

Concerning the proof of the existence of God, the Holy Quran says:

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ □ وَالَّذِي خَلَقَ  
الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَفُوفُ □  
الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ۗ مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَوتٍ ۗ  
فَإِجْعَلِ الْبَصَرَ ۖ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن فُطُورٍ □ ثُمَّ اجْعَلِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنقَلِبْ  
إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرَ خَاسِتًا ۗ وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ □

'Blessed is He in Whose hand is the kingdom and Who has power over all things, Who has created life and death to ascertain which of you is best in deeds. (That is to say, He has created life for actions and death for compensation, for perfect compensation could not be awarded in this life, lest faith should become a thing of no value). He is the Mighty, the Forgiving. He has created the seven heights, each supporting the other. You will find no incongruity in *Rahmān's* creation. Then look and see whether you can discover any defect, and look again and again and your look will return to you unsuccessful and fatigued.<sup>20</sup>

In other words, if one considers the entire universe, one will find that every need has been met, and the most appropriate materials for the development of every faculty and capacity have been provided. Some of the needs of the meanest worm that crawls on the earth, are being provided by a planet which is travelling billions of miles away from the earth. Let the contem-

<sup>20</sup> Al-Mulk, 67:2-5.

plation of this circle of the want and its satisfaction teach us that this universe has a Creator, Who has not omitted to foresee our smallest want and has provided the means of satisfaction of every yearning and every true desire.

Another question which is sometimes asked is, if God is a Beneficent Creator, why has He created things like wild and savage animals, worms and reptiles, pains, troubles, ailments, and pestilences, etc. Islam offers an explanation of this also. For instance, the Holy Quran says:

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ  
ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ □

'All praise is due to God Who has created the heavens and the earth and has made the light and darkness, and yet those who deny the truth associate others with Him.'<sup>21</sup>

That is to say, all things that are troublesome and are called the children of darkness, for instance, reptiles, wild beasts, poisons, plagues, etc., are also the creation of God, and their creation does not offend against the attribute of Mercy but on the contrary proves the Mercy of God. If their true nature is considered, they add to the praise and glory of God and do not in any way detract from it. Yet those who are ignorant of the nature of these things, regard their creation as derogatory to God and associate others with Him, believing that these things must have been created by some other being. See

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<sup>21</sup> Al-An'ām, 6:2.

how beautifully Islam has unveiled the truth and has explained the object of creating those things which appear at first sight to be harmful. It teaches that they have all been created for a useful purpose and that man ought to praise God for their creation. Considered in this light the whole position is reversed. Arsenic, strychnia and morphia are deadly poisons, yet how frequently are they used to relieve human distress and to combat disease? Do more men die of these poisons, or are more men saved through them? Millions of men are every year saved from the clutches of death by the use of these poisons. How can it then be said that these things are harmful or even useless? The same is the case with snakes, scorpions and other reptiles. Much attention has not yet been devoted to these creatures, but further research is bound to disclose the fact that their existence is of great value from the scientific and medical points of view. Besides, as it appears from the Holy Quran, the creation of these insects, reptiles, etc., was a preliminary to the creation of man, and they had a large share in the purification of the atmosphere of the earth. These insects and animals were in fact the first links in the creation of man. Not, however, in the sense in which evolution is generally understood in these days, but as indicating and representing the different stages of development through which the earth has passed.

Again He says:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ ۗ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ جَمْعِهِمْ إِذَا يَشَاءُ قَدِيرٌ ۝ وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِيمَا كَسَبْتُمْ أَيْنِدُنكُمْ وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ ۝ ط

'One of His bounties is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of all living things between them, and He can do away with them when He pleases, and whatever befalls you is the consequence of your own actions; and God suppresses many evil consequences of your errors.'<sup>22</sup>

In other words God has created the sun, the moon and the stars and the heavens and the earth and all that is between them to serve man, but if he fails to take advantage of them or misuses any of them and thus suffers loss or injury, it is his own fault. In many cases God averts the evil consequences of man's errors, and the evils suffered by him are not, therefore, due to God's action but to man's contravention of the laws of nature which had been devised for his benefit. Disease is also due to the action of the active and the impressible faculties with which man has been endowed. All man's progress is due to the action and re-action of these faculties and if these faculties did not exist man would not be what he is. Under a general law of nature man influences all things around him and is in his turn influenced by all of them. Whenever in this process of influencing or being influenced he contravenes any of the laws of nature he exposes himself to the attack of a disease or becomes liable to some other ill or inconvenience. God has not, therefore, created disease, but has created the law of nature which is indispensable to man's progress, and disease is the result of an infringement of this law. As this law is in itself the result of the

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<sup>22</sup> Al-Shūrā, 42 :30,31.

beneficence of God, the mere fact that disease may result from ignorance or infringement of it does not in any way detract from the perfection of God's beneficence.

As with disease, so with sin, which, again, has no independent existence. An infringement of a moral or spiritual law is termed a sin. The existence of sin, therefore, does not offend against the beneficence or sanctity of God. The names which have been used in the Holy Quran to signify sin, indicate either excess or default, none of them being an underived noun, which shows that according to the Holy Quran sin has no independent existence, and signifies merely the absence of righteousness. Excess and default are the direct result of man's action or omission, his failure to use or his misuse of God's bounties or his attempt to infringe the rights of others.

No other religious book presents God in this light. It is the Holy Quran alone which asserts and explains that the existence of these apparently harmful and injurious things does not detract from the perfect attributes of God. The Holy Quran does not merely enumerate the attributes of God; it explains and illustrates them in such detail that all doubts and misgivings vanish and a revelation of their beauty enchants the eye, compels admiration and fills the heart with the longing to love and obey. A mere enumeration of Divine attributes, however, is of no great merit.

It is sometimes objected that it is incompatible with God's mercy that children should suffer from

diseases and disorders which they have in no way earned or brought upon themselves.

The answer to this objection is contained in the above explanation, that is to say, God has made a law that all things are influenced by their surroundings, and this law is wholly beneficent. If this had not been so, man could neither have been influenced by external things nor could he have made any progress. Under the operation of this law children are influenced both for good and for evil, by their parents. They get from them both health and disease. If they could not have inherited disease they would equally have been unable to inherit the faculties and capacities of their parents, and man would have been born a mere image of stone, impervious both to good and to evil influences, and the object underlying the creation of man would have been frustrated and his existence would have been worse than that of animals.

The next question is, whether there is any compensation for the loss and suffering caused by inherited diseases and disabilities. The answer given to this question by Islam is that in measuring the spiritual progress of each person allowance will be made for every disability under which he had suffered and which had not been incurred by some fault of his own. For instance, the Holy Quran says:

'On the day of the final Retribution causes which had impeded the spiritual progress of a man

and over which he had no control will be taken into consideration.<sup>23</sup>

At another place it says:

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ

'Those of the faithful who do not strive in the path of God cannot be put on the same level with those who strive, except those whose inability is due to some natural deficiency. God will keep their disability in view.'<sup>24</sup>

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says:

'No believing men or women experience any suffering in relation to their bodies, their children or their property, but that their sins are thereby reduced and they are so purified by the suffering that by the time they appear before God, their sins have been entirely washed away.'<sup>25</sup>

Although this tradition refers particularly to the believers, the principle laid down by the Holy Quran is of universal application, and the believers are mentioned in the tradition because this explanation was given in answer to their question.

What has been described above is an apt illustration of the teachings of different religions concerning the attributes of God. Islam defines the attribute of beneficence in one way and other religions define it in quite another way. Some of them have had to import the

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<sup>23</sup> Al-A'raf, 7:9.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Nisā', 4 :96.

<sup>25</sup> *Tirmidhī*.

doctrine of transmigration of souls in order to support the beneficence of God. But even a brief consideration would show that the explanation given by Islam is perfectly reasonable and in accord with the laws of nature, whereas the doctrine of transmigration of souls is based on mere suppositions.

The working of the Divine attributes of justice and mercy also requires attention. All religions describe God both as Just and Merciful, but there is a vast difference between their respective explanations of the working of these attributes. Islam says that there is no conflict between these two attributes and that both of them can and do operate simultaneously. Mercy is not opposed to justice but is above it. The Holy Quran says:

مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ مِثَالِهَا وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَى إِلَّا  
مِثْلَهَا وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ □

'Whoever does a good deed will have a tenfold reward, and whoever does an evil thing, will be recompensed only in proportion thereto, and they will not be unjustly dealt with.'<sup>26</sup>

This shows that according to Islam it is not unjust to reward a person in excess of his deserts, but that it is unjust to inflict on a man punishment greater than he deserves.

Surely, injustice means to reward a man in a measure less than that he has earned, or to punish a man in a measure larger than that he deserves, or to give to

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<sup>26</sup> Al-An'ām, 6:161

one man that which is due to another, and God never does any of these things. All that He does is that He forgives a repentant creature who, having realized the error of his ways, gives up his evil course of life and presents himself before the throne of Divine mercy supplicating for forgiveness with a beating heart, trembling lips, streaming eyes, a head bowed with shame, a mind bursting with tumultuous thoughts, and a determination to lead a pure and unsullied life in future. God enables such a person to start on a new course of life. He is like the father whose son goes astray and comes home humbled and repentant after a long time, unable to lift his eyes to his father, who, overcome by natural affection, draws him to his breast, and does not reject him, but on the contrary proclaims his joy at the return of his son. Would this be an occasion for his other sons who had remained at home and served him, to complain of the injustice of their father?

No doubt punishment is one of the instruments of reform, but the tortures of hell are not a greater punishment than true remorse. What the fire of hell can effect in the course of a hundred thousand years, true remorse may effect in the course of a few minutes. When a man appears before God truly repentant and with a determination to lead a pure life in future, the Merciful God must take pity on him. Shall the Merciful and Forgiving Lord turn away from, and reject a servant of His who throws himself down at the door of His mercy, all remorse for the past and hope for the future? Surely, No!

Lastly, I shall refer to the attribute which is better known than any other attribute of God, but concerning which there is greater disagreement among the different religions than in the case of any other attribute, that is, the attribute of Unity. There is not a single religion in existence which teaches plurality of Gods: as a matter of principle all of them proclaim the Unity of God. Nay, the followers of one religion charge the followers of another religion with non-belief in a perfect Unity. I have seen it stated in some books written by Europeans that the Muslims are polytheists, and I am told that many people in Europe and America who are ignorant of Islamic teachings and literature, imagine that the Muslims worship the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. This indicates the general feeling that the doctrine of plurality of Gods is impossible of acceptance in this age. But notwithstanding the agreement of all religions in their professed belief in the Unity of God, everyone of them differs from the others in its interpretation of it, and many of them use the expression only as a cloak to hide their polytheistic beliefs. But Islam is wholly free from polytheistic conceptions and doctrines and has completely uprooted all beliefs and practices which even remotely suggest such ideas. It has defined and explained the doctrine of associating aught with God so exhaustively that nobody is left in any doubt concerning it.

The Holy Quran classifies *Shirk* (or association of other gods with God) into four kinds. First, a belief in a plurality of gods. Second, a belief that any other being shares, in a greater or lesser degree, in God's attributes,

irrespective of the fact whether such being is or is not called a deity. For instance, a belief that a particular person can create living things or can bring the dead to life amounts to *Shirk*, although the person to whom such attributes are ascribed be a human being. For here, there is a difference only in name, and the essence of Divinity has been ascribed to another. Third, to look upon a being other than God as worthy of worship although that being is not considered a god, nor is believed to share in the attributes of God; as, for instance, parents were worshipped in some tribes in ancient days. Fourth, to regard a human being as infallible. For instance, a belief that a particular saint or holy person is wholly free from the natural weaknesses of man and must therefore, be implicitly obeyed in all matters, however objectionable his orders may be, and practically to prefer his commands to those of God, although as a matter of belief that person is not regarded as God.

The Holy Quran indicates these four kinds of *Shirk* in the following verse:

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا  
اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ  
فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ □

'O, people of the Book, let us agree in this one matter, which both of us accept, that we worship none but Allah, Who has no partner, and that we associate with Him none in His attributes and that we prefer to Him nobody from among His ser-

vants. If they refuse, say, bear witness ye people that we submit ourselves to God in this manner.<sup>27</sup>

What a complete refutation of all kinds of *Shirk* is contained in this one brief verse! In view of what is laid down in this verse when a Muslim says he believes in one God, he means that he worships none but God, that he does not ascribe to any other being any of the attributes of God, that he considers Him free from all earthly relationships, that he believes that God is above assuming human form, that he believes that God is not subject to death or hunger or thirst, that he bows to none except God, that his hopes are centred in no other being, that he addresses his prayers to none but Him, and that although he venerates the Prophets of God, he does not regard them as anything more than human. This is what Islam teaches him and to which he holds throughout his life.

Generally speaking, all religions agree with Islam in declaring the Unity of God, but when we come to details we find that each religion differs greatly from the others.

In short, the conception of God, both in principle and in detail, which is presented by Islam is most perfect and a contemplation of it draws men to God in a manner which is not possible in the case of any other religion. Islam explains every attribute of God in detail and states the effect which each of these attributes produces on the daily life of man. It also describes the

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<sup>27</sup> Āl-e-‘Imrān, 3:65

inter-relation of different attributes and the limits of their action and reaction. Hence a complete and perfect conception of God is presented before the eyes of man's judgment, and his heart overflows with love. Other religions may share with Islam only the names of the attributes of God, but none of them shares with it the reality of those attributes. It is obvious that in judging different religions we must consider the reality and not merely the name.

### **Relation of Man to God**

I now turn to the second question relating to the first object of religion, which concerns the relation of man to God. We must remember that it is one thing merely to believe in a thing and quite another to stand in a special relationship towards it. For instance, all educated persons believe in the existence of the North and South Poles, but with the exception of a few who are engaged in polar research, nobody is specially interested in them, and a mention of the Poles does not excite any particular feeling in the minds of the general public. On the contrary the smallest thing connected with a person or thing one is interested in is apt to excite one's feelings. It is, therefore, a relevant question to ask what sort of relationship between God and man does a religion insist on? The answer to this question and the nature of such relationship would constitute a test of the truth or falsehood, and the success or failure of a religion. If a religion insists upon something which is repugnant to the majesty of God, one would have to conclude that it has no real appreciation of the attributes of God; or if it demands something which, though not objectionable,

has in no instance been complied with by its followers, one would have to infer that that religion has failed to fulfil its object. A consideration of the attributes of God, to some of which I have referred above, and which are accepted by almost all religions, would show that our real relationship is with God alone, for He is the author of our being. He has created all things necessary for our comfort, progress and success. Our future life depends upon His grace. Our parents, children, brothers, wives, husbands, friends, countrymen, governments, countries, properties, rank, honour and very lives are not closer to us than God; for all these are His gifts and He alone is the Donor. In truth, once we realize the nature of the attributes that have been described above, we cannot accept a religion as true which does not require man to put the love of God above all other things, to respect and obey Him above all earthly potentates, to be ready to sacrifice all things to His will, and not to tolerate the postponement of His commands for the sake of any other object. A true religion must require man to love God with a love greater and deeper than that bestowed on earthly objects of affection, and to think of Him and remember Him more than any other beloved. He must not be regarded merely as a part of the universe like a river or a mountain in a distant land, but must be realized as the fountain-head of all life, the centre of all hope, the cynosure of all eyes. This is exactly what Islam teaches. The Holy Quran says:

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ  
وَأَمْوَالٌ أُكْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِينُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا  
أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَكَرَبُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ  
بِأَمْرٍ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ۝

'Say, O Prophet: If your parents, and your children, and your brethren, and your wives, and your husbands, and your kinsfolk, and your property, which you have acquired with labour, and your trade the dullness of which you fear, and your homes which you love, are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and your striving in the path of Allah to gain His pleasure, you have no faith in Allah. Then wait till Allah issues a decree concerning you, and Allah does not guide the transgressors.'<sup>28</sup>

A person cannot claim to be a Muslim unless he stands towards God in the relationship described in this verse. He must be ever prepared to sacrifice every object and feeling for the pleasure of God, and must prefer the love of God to all other things.

In another verse the Holy Quran describes a sure indication of the love of God in these words:

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ

'True believers are those who remember God, standing and sitting and when lying down on their sides.'<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Al-Taubah, 9:24

<sup>29</sup> Āl-e-'Imrān, 3:192

They are so possessed by the love of God that every moment they desire to be close to God, and they are utterly lost in His contemplation and remembrance, much more than a lover is lost in the contemplation of his beloved. The remembrance of His bounties and His excellences and the desire to be near Him and the longing to become one with Him possess them every moment. Working or resting, standing or sitting, waking or sleeping, they constantly think of Him. Again, the Holy Quran says:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَّتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ ذُرَادًا تَلْبِيثًا عَلَيْهِمْ  
أَيُّتَهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

'Those alone are believers whose hearts become flooded with the fear of God whenever God's name is mentioned; and when the Word of God is recited to them their hearts are filled with faith, and they put their whole trust in God.'<sup>30</sup>

That is to say, they believe that no undertaking can be brought to a successful issue without His aid, and that all success depends upon His grace.

At this stage I desire to correct a misunderstanding which is prevalent concerning the teachings of Islam, namely, that Islam teaches a complete disregard of material means and insists merely upon trust in God. No doubt such ideas are entertained by some people, but this is not the teaching of Islam. The Holy Quran repeatedly states that God has created all things in the world for the use and benefit of man. How then, can it

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<sup>30</sup> Al-Anfāl, 8:3

be said that He requires us to disregard all material resources? At one place we are exhorted:

'In every undertaking adopt the means appointed by Me therefor.'<sup>31</sup>

Material means are also the creation of God and a proper use of them in all undertakings is absolutely necessary. Again He says, 'Collect all material necessary for success,'<sup>32</sup> and at another place, 'When you go on a journey provide for it.'<sup>33</sup>

On one occasion a man came to visit the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and the latter enquired from him how he had secured his camel. The man replied that, trusting in God, he had left it in His care. The Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said, 'This is not trust in God. Trust in God means that you should first secure the knee of the camel and then trust in God,' meaning that trust in God does not warrant disregard of normal precautions. It signifies belief that God is a living God, and that He controls the universe and that the consequences of all action are regulated by His command. He guards those who believe in Him at times when they are not even aware of danger, and constantly watches over their affairs. Trust in God is the belief that God helps His servants in their distress and helplessness and that without His aid, or in opposition to His will, material resources can avail nothing. In other words, it

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<sup>31</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:190

<sup>32</sup> Al-Nisā', 4:72

<sup>33</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:198

is an attitude of mind, and not the substitute of physical action or omission.

To continue, the Holy Quran says: 'The pleasure of God is to be put above all things.'<sup>34</sup> Man should not base his relationship with God in the hope of any reward in this life or in the life to come; his sole object should be to win the pleasure of God, for God being the true beloved, it would be an affront to His love to prefer any object or thing to His pleasure.

This brief explanation will indicate the relationship which, according to Islam, must exist between God and man. Every one who truly believes in God will agree that our relationship with God ought to be exactly of the nature described above.

### **The Way by which Man can Express his Relationship with God**

I now take up the third question. What are the ways by which man can express his relationship with God: in other words, what are the duties imposed by God on man? Each religion has answered this question differently, and in fact there is greater disagreement between them concerning this question, than with regard to the first two questions. Islam answers this question by saying that man ought to fulfil the object of his creation, that is to say, he should try to become a perfect servant of God and should constantly seek union with Him. This indeed is the only natural answer that can be given. The Holy Quran says:

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<sup>34</sup> Al-Taubah, 9:72.

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً ۖ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ  
صُورَكُمْ ۖ وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ ۖ فَتَبَرَّكِ اللَّهُ  
رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ □

هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ قَادِعُ عَوْهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ ۗ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ  
رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ □

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهِيتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَمَّا جَاءَنِي  
الْبَيِّنَاتُ مِنْ رَبِّي ۖ نَزَّأْتُ أَنْ أُسَلِّمَ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ □

'Allah is He Who has created the earth for you containing things necessary for you, He has created the heavens for your protection; He has fashioned you in a form most suitable to your requirements, He has provided you with wholesome food; that is Allah, your Lord; blessed is Allah, the Lord of the universe. He is the Living and bestows life on others, there is none worthy of worship besides Him, so call on Him and worship none besides Him. All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the universe. Say: I have been forbidden the worship of those whom you call besides Allah after I have received open signs from my Lord and I have been commanded to submit myself to the Lord of the universe.'<sup>35</sup>

These verses show that apart from the spiritual relationship existing between God and man, which has been indicated above, God also requires obedience to His commands pertaining to things material. It appears from the Holy Quran that these commands are of sev-

<sup>35</sup> Al-Mu'min, 40:65-67

eral kinds, but I shall here confine myself only to such as relate to worship, that is to say, the principal object of which is to signify man's own relationship to God and which do not directly concern other men. Islam places such commands under five categories:

- (1) *Ṣalāt*, or prayer;
- (2) *Dhikr*, or remembrance of God;
- (3) Fasts;
- (4) Pilgrimage to Mecca; and
- (5) Sacrifices.

Broadly speaking, all religions enjoin such acts of worship, though there are differences relating to the manner in which they are to be performed. As against this, there is the modern tendency to condemn them as mere useless ceremonies on the ground that God could never have meant to confine man within mere formalities. The result is that external acts of worship are now not so common as they used to be, and the followers of other religions are progressively renouncing them. But while Islam, on the one hand, continues to reveal new aspects of its teachings suited to the requirements of every age, it possesses, on the other, the characteristic that the teachings laid down by it in the words of the Holy Quran are unalterable and fixed like a rock which the beating waters can never move from its place. Like nature it is capable of yielding new treasures, but like nature again its laws are immutable for they have been framed by a Being Who knows the hidden and the future and Who has based them on truth and wisdom.

There is no doubt that the heart is the seat of the emotions and that if the heart is corrupt and void of

feelings no amount of outward humility and show of sincerity can be of any avail. On the contrary such show is a curse which leads but to the pit of darkness. The Holy Quran not only accepts this principle but particularly emphasizes it. It says:

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ ۗ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ ۗ  
الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ ۗ

'Woe to those who pray but are unmindful of their prayers, and pray in order to be seen.'<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, it says that those who give charity to be seen and not out of the sincerity of their hearts are:

فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَإِذَا صَابَهُ وَابِلٌ  
فَتَرَكَّهُ صَلْدًا ۗ

'Like a slab of stone on which there is some dust, and the rain comes and washes it away and nothing can grow on it.'<sup>37</sup>

Such persons, instead of earning any reward for their sincerity, only harm themselves by their lack of sincerity. Mere outward acts of worship, therefore, unless accompanied by sincerity of heart can not be of any avail and are not approved by Islam and Islam requires that not only the tongue and the body but the heart must also join in worship.

The Holy Quran, and the sayings of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> clearly show that faith is perfected by the

<sup>36</sup> Al-Mā'ūn, 107:5-7

<sup>37</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:265

heart and the tongue and the limbs joining in proclaiming it. A person whose heart does not accept the truth but whose tongue and limbs proclaim his faith in it is a hypocrite. So also is the person whose heart accepts the truth but whose tongue and whose limbs contradict his heart. True belief is that which is accepted by the heart and is proclaimed by the tongue and the limbs.

We observe that a lover's face betrays a peculiar emotion when his beloved's name is mentioned in his presence, or when the beloved appears before him, so that even a stranger is able to perceive his love. Again, although nobody can doubt the love of parents for their children, the former very often demonstrate their affection by kissing or fondling their little ones. Similarly when two friends meet, they express their pleasure by clasping each other's hands. The people of Europe when they appear before their sovereigns do so with bare heads and kneel before the latter. Why is all this done? Why not the love and sincerity of the heart suffice on such occasions? It would not be correct to say that physical demonstration is needed to indicate the feelings of the heart to the other party who, being human, is incapable of gauging its true state of feelings without some sort of demonstration. We do not fondle a child or greet a friend with the object of demonstrating our affection for them. Do not parents fondle a newly born or a sleeping child? Such demonstration of affection is an involuntary, spontaneous act, not dictated by any ulterior motives.

It is impossible, therefore, that a man who loves God and entertains a true longing for Him, should not

seek to express his love and longing by some outward act. This is the secret of all worship. Worship is the physical symbol of the true relationship of man to God. A man who truly loves God, knowing that he daily expresses his love and affection for others by outward signs, cannot object to external acts of worship. Such objections proceed from lack of love.

This would be a sufficient explanation of the external acts of worship prescribed by Islam, but there are also other significances underlying them. One is, that, as the Holy Quran explains, physical acts react on the mind and the state of the mind reacts on the outward condition of the body: It says:

وَمَنْ يُعَظِّمْ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ

'It is only right that men should demonstrate veneration for the places where God's glory was manifested, for righteousness of the heart does naturally express itself outwardly.'<sup>38</sup>

This refers to the reaction of the state of the mind on the body. At another place the reaction of physical acts on the mind is referred to in the words, 'Beware, their hearts have been corrupted by what they have wrought.'<sup>39</sup> At first they acted against truth to gain material objects, with the result that, in the end, the love of truth vanished from their hearts. This is a truth which has been fully demonstrated by psychologists. I happened to read once in an American psychologist's book

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<sup>38</sup> Al-Hajj, 22:33.

<sup>39</sup> Al-Tatfif, 83:15.

that a professor, who was regarded as a very able man, was appointed the head of an institution, but in that capacity he failed utterly as he lacked firmness in matters of discipline and administration. A friend who noticed that he habitually left his mouth open advised him to keep his mouth shut. Acting on this advice, he discovered that he gained daily in firmness and determination, and in the end he became a very successful administrator. In the ordinary incidents of daily life we observe that physical conditions constantly react on the mind. A man who puts on a frown and exhibits signs of anger begins to feel really angry. If a man in a towering passion is somehow made to laugh, his anger instantly subsides. Tears induce sadness of heart and laughter induces joy. Islam had this principle in view in prescribing outward acts of worship, like the *Ṣalāt*, etc., for when a man assumes the outward appearance of humility and supplication, his heart gradually surrenders itself to love and in the end he is drawn to God as a piece of steel is drawn to a magnet.

Another significance underlying external acts of worship is that they promote a general feeling of love and obedience to God. Children learn to love their brothers and sisters and other relatives by observing that other people do the same. If all feelings of love and affection had been confined to the heart and had never found outward expression there could not have existed any feelings of affection between relatives, for how could a child have discovered whether any person was loved or hated by its parents and other relatives? It is obvious that this can only be discovered from outward

demonstration of the different kinds of feelings, which are perpetuated generation after generation by such demonstration.

If, therefore, no outward signs are prescribed for the expression of man's love for his Creator, and if His Majesty is not constantly and repeatedly proclaimed through external acts, the unborn generations who must receive their first impressions from the conduct of their parents, will not conceive those feelings of love and sincerity for God, which are engendered by constant observation of external symbols of love and respect. We observe that atheism and indifference towards God are on the increase among people who have grown indifferent to outward worship.

Again, in physical worship all those parts of man's body which are loaded with God's favours and bounties can join in rendering thanks for such favours and bounties. God's favours encompass the body as well as the soul, and perfect worship is that in which both body and soul join, for without such combination even spiritual worship cannot be preserved. It is true that the worship and adoration of the heart are the substance and the essence, but the worship and adoration of the body are the shell, and the substance cannot be preserved without the shell. If the shell is destroyed, the substance also is bound to be damaged.

Having drawn attention to the principle that physical acts of worship are indispensable for our spiritual progress, I now turn to the specific acts of worship prescribed by Islam for its followers. The first

and the chief of these is the *Ṣalāt*, which may be called the soul of all Islamic worship. Five times a day a Muslim must present himself before God and worship Him in the mode prescribed. He must first perform the *Wuḍū*, that is to say, wash his hands, face, forearms and feet in the prescribed manner. This is not only conducive towards physical cleanliness and purity, upon which Islam insists, but also has the effect of guarding, as it were, all avenues through which disturbance or interruption can enter, viz., the five senses represented by the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hands and feet, the latter two representing the sense of touch. Owing to considerations of time and space I cannot here enter into details, but those who are given to reflecting over spiritual matters can easily understand this. The very word *Wuḍū* indicates both these objects, for it means both 'cleanliness' and 'beauty'. The performance of *Wuḍū* promotes physical cleanliness which is indispensable for spiritual purity, and renders the *Ṣalāt* beautiful by preventing and arresting the interruption or disturbance of the worshipper's thoughts, thus making it possible for him to achieve the real object of prayer.

Having performed the *Wuḍū* the worshipper stands with his face towards the Kaaba which is meant to remind him of the sacrifices made by Abraham<sup>as</sup> in the path of God and the vast good that resulted from them. He then repeats certain prescribed passages from the Holy Quran. The first part of these is devoted to the praise and adoration of God whereby the worshipper can perceive, as it were, the reflection of God's image, and his heart is flooded with love and longing and he is

drawn towards God. In the second part he confesses that at every step in the course of his progress he is dependent on the help and assistance of God, and thus perceiving his own helplessness he is impelled towards self-improvement and greater trust in God. The third part contains prayers and supplications, which are the essence of *Ṣalāt*. By prayer man attracts the grace of God, and through the union of the love of man with the love of God in prayer the seed is sown of a new spiritual creation in the same way as a new physical being comes into existence through the union of a male and a female.

In short, *Ṣalāt* is so rich in spiritual benefits that man's reason is forced into admiration of it. But in order to be effective it must be performed in the manner and subject to the conditions prescribed by Islam.

The external acts prescribed by Islam for the performance of *Ṣalāt* are not without their significance. During the course of *Ṣalāt* the worshipper must at different stages stand with folded arms, bow down with his hands resting on his knees, stand erect with his arms hanging by his side, prostrate himself on the ground and sit with folded legs. All these movements are symbols of perfect humility and surrender among different peoples. In some countries people express complete submission by standing with folded arms; in other countries, by standing with their arms hanging by their sides. In ancient Egypt bowing with one's hands on one's knees was regarded as a symbol of deep respect; in India prostration was in vogue and in Europe falling on one's knees is considered to be a mode of showing

reverence. Islam has combined all these symbols in its mode of worship.

Islam enjoins that *Ṣalāt* should ordinarily be performed in congregation, so that the spirit of brotherhood may be fostered. Under this injunction a monarch must stand shoulder to shoulder with his meanest subject to perform the *Ṣalāt*. This striking spectacle affords a striking proof of the fact that *Ṣalāt* is a reality and not a mere form. All who join in it realize that they are standing in a Presence where even a monarch must lay aside his sceptre, and become a mere servant along with his subjects.

It is sometimes objected that the *Ṣalāt* of Islam is a mere piece of bargaining with God, as it is performed in the hope of obtaining something in return. This is exactly the reverse of the truth. Islam is the only religion which repudiates this idea. It teaches that the acts of worship prescribed by it are not the selfish demands of a worldly-minded man. Their principal object is to acknowledge the favours and bounties of Allah and to render thanks to Him for all of them, without doing which a man could hardly deserve to be called man. Their second object is to seek spiritual development. As is said in the Holy Quran:

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ

'O Men! worship Me, so that I may favour you with My meeting, and render thanks for My favours and be not ungrateful.'<sup>40</sup>

This shows that the object of worship is to render thanks and to seek spiritual development. At another place it is said:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ

'*Ṣalāt* saves a man from indecency and evil.'<sup>41</sup>

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was once asked why he was so constant in his prayers and he replied, 'Should I not be a grateful servant of the Lord?' Again the Holy Quran says concerning *Ṣalāt*:

'Verily hearts are comforted through prayer.'<sup>42</sup>

Through *Ṣalāt* one attains to the certainty of knowledge which dispels all doubt. Hence *Ṣalāt* is a means of spiritual progress just as there are means for the attainment of different objects in the material world.

In short, the institution of *Ṣalāt* is based on profound truths and combines so many excellences that no other religion is in a position to claim the like of them for the acts of worship prescribed by it. It satisfies the objects of worship in every respect and is the only means of attaining righteousness. Those who imagine that they can do without external acts of worship labour under a grievous error. Who can believe that while

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<sup>40</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:153

<sup>41</sup> Al-'Ankabūt, 29:46

<sup>42</sup> Al-Ra'd, 13:29

Abraham<sup>as</sup>, with his righteousness, Moses<sup>as</sup>, with his sacrifices, Jesus<sup>as</sup>, with his humility and meekness, and Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, with his perfection and excellence, could not dispense with such acts of worship and were not content with the heart's worship alone, people who are engaged in wordly pursuits from morning till night and have no thought to spare for God, may dispense with them and confine themselves to the mere inward remembrance of God? The idea that external worship is a mere matter of form and is of no real benefit is the outcome of laziness. It is encouraged only to drown the voice of conscience. It is a cloak under which people seek to hide their lack of faith.

The second mode of worship prescribed by Islam is *Dhikr*, or the remembrance of God. *Ṣalāt*, which must be performed in a certain manner and subject to certain conditions, is confined to special periods of time. But as the body needs water or moisture at brief intervals, and begins to feel dry and tired without it, the soul also stands in constant need of spiritual refreshment, for it is apt to be starved when man is engaged in material pursuits. Islam has, therefore, taught that man should, from time to time, in the midst of his pursuits and pre-occupations, recall and reflect over the different attributes of God, so that his whole attention should not be engrossed in worldly affairs, and the remembrance and the love of God should continue constantly to refresh his soul like a running fountain. The benefits of *Dhikr* are similar to those of *Ṣalāt*.

The third mode of worship prescribed by Islam is fasting. This mode of worship is also common to almost

all religions, but the form in which Islam has prescribed it is different from that recognized or prescribed by other religions. Islam enjoins upon every adult Muslim the duty of keeping fasts during one month in every year. Those suffering from a temporary illness and those who are on a journey during the month of fasting are permitted to substitute an equal number of days during some other part of the year. Those who are suffering from some permanent disorder or are too old or too weak to be able to keep fasts are exempted altogether. Those who fast must abstain from food and drink of every description, and from marital intercourse from the hour of dawn till sunset. It is desirable that some breakfast should be taken before dawn, so that the body should be saved from unnecessary suffering. Moreover a continuous fast of twenty four hours, without breakfast before dawn, is not approved of by Islam. The Holy Quran describes the object of fasting as,

لِتَكْبِرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

'That you may exalt the greatness of Allah for having guided you, and that you may learn to be grateful.'<sup>43</sup>

In other words, one object in view is that, being relieved from the necessity of preparing and eating food and having more time to spare, men should pay greater attention to spiritual matters and should remember God oftener. Another object is that the pangs of hunger and thirst should help men to realize the true value of the

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<sup>43</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:186

favours and bounties of God which they normally enjoy and should render them the more grateful to God. Man does not truly value that which he possesses, and he learns its true value only when he loses it. Most people never realize that eyesight is a great blessing of God, but when they lose it they realize its value. Similarly, when a man abstains from food and drink during a fast and suffers from hunger and thirst he begins to realize how many comforts God has bestowed upon him, and that he ought to employ a life so blessed in good and useful occupations and should not fritter it away in trivial pursuits.

Again, God says, the object of fasting is that men should attain *Taqwā*.<sup>44</sup> The word *Taqwā* is used in the Holy Quran in three senses. It signifies security from pain and suffering, security from sin, and the attainment of a high spiritual level. Fasting promotes all these. At first sight it appears paradoxical to say that fasting saves a man from suffering, for fasting itself imposes a certain amount of suffering on man. But a little consideration would show that fasting teaches men lessons which secure their national welfare. The first lesson is that a rich man, who has never suffered hunger or privation and cannot realize the sufferings of his poorer brethren who have very often to go without food, begins through fasting to realize what hunger is and what the poor have to suffer. This produces in his mind active sympathy with the poor which finds vent in measures calculated to ameliorate the lot of the poor, the natural result of which

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<sup>44</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:184.

is an increase in the national welfare. It is obvious that the welfare of the nation is bound up with the welfare of the individual. Another aspect of fasting is that Islam seeks to discourage in its followers sloth and laziness and a disinclination to bear hardships. It desires them to be ready and able to accept all manner of privations and inconveniences in times of need. Fasts habituate the Muslims to bear hunger and thirst and to restrain themselves in all their desires and passions, and those who faithfully carry out this command never become lazy or self-indulgent.

Fasting secures one against sin, for sin is born of inclination towards material indulgence. When a man becomes accustomed to a course of conduct it is difficult for him to renounce it. But a man who is able to give up a habit or a course of conduct at will, never becomes its slave. A man who, in order to seek the pleasure of God, gives up for a whole month, all material pleasures, and learns to exercise control and restraint, can easily overcome temptations that lead to sin.

Again, as a man has to wake up during the month of fasts in the latter part of the night for his breakfast, he gets extra opportunities of prayer and worship which speed him on the path of spiritual progress. When he sacrifices his ease and comfort for the sake of God, the latter strengthens his spirit and draws him towards Himself.

The fourth form of worship prescribed by Islam is the pilgrimage to Mecca. Its main objects are similar to those of *Ṣalāt* and the fasts, viz., to accustom a man

to leave his home and country and to suffer separation from his relatives and friends for the sake of God. Besides these, the Holy Quran ascribes to the pilgrimage an object which is peculiar to it. The pilgrimage to Mecca is a symbol of the respect shown to places where the will of God was manifested and reminds people of the incidents connected with that manifestation. It reminds them of Ishmael's<sup>as</sup> being left in the desert by Abraham<sup>as</sup>, and how those who make sacrifices in the path of God are protected and honoured; it thus fosters their faith in the power and might of God. Also, the pilgrim, on finding himself near the place which has, from the beginning of the world, been dedicated to the worship of God, is sure to experience a peculiar spiritual association with those who have through numerous centuries been bound together by the love and remembrance of God, and among them he also counts himself.

Besides this, the pilgrimage has a great political objective underlying it. Leading Muslims from all parts of the world who meet together once a year can exchange views and establish and renew relations of love and brotherhood. They have opportunities of acquainting themselves with the problems that confront them in different countries, of benefiting from each other's experience, and of devising methods of cooperating with each other. I am sorry, however, to observe that no advantage is, at present, being taken of this aspect of the pilgrimage.

The fifth mode of worship prescribed by Islam is sacrifice. Many people fail to understand the significance of sacrifice in Islam. They imagine that the ani-

mal sacrificed is supposed to carry away the sins of the person making the sacrifice. This is an entirely erroneous conception of the teachings of Islam on the subject. The equivalent in Arabic of the word sacrifice is derived from a root meaning nearness. Sacrifice is a symbol, the failure to understand the significance of which is responsible for the erroneous conception which people entertain concerning it. In ancient days, the language of symbols was in very common use and in spite of the development of spoken and written languages and the advance of literature in modern times symbols are still extensively used and accepted for the communication of thoughts and ideas, especially in social matters. For instance, when two friends meet they shake hands, and nobody questions the propriety of the action, nor does it occur to anybody to analyse the feelings underlying it. It is a symbol inherited from very ancient days and though its origin has been lost sight of, it is regarded as one of the most useful social practices, for it expresses and promotes friendship and brotherly relations. In ancient times when two men entered into an offensive and defensive alliance they used to clasp each other's hands to signify that thenceforward the hand of the one would be the hand of the other and that thenceforth they would be allies and would fight and defend together. In course of time this symbolical ceremony became the emblem of the expression of affection and friendship, and nobody would now be prepared to relinquish it. Similarly, kissing is a symbol signifying the desire of the animal nature to draw the person kissed into itself and to become one with it.

These and other symbols are used constantly in our daily lives and numerous benefits are derived from their use. Sacrifice is also one such symbol. If we ponder a little, it is not a small thing to sacrifice a life, and it is bound to create a profound impression on the mind except in the case of those who are accustomed to the taking of life. Some squeamish people have gone so far as to condemn sacrifice as an act of cruelty. There is no doubt that it powerfully stirs the feelings, and it is for this reason that it has been appointed as a form of worship. A man who offers a sacrifice declares in symbolical language that as the animal which is inferior to him has been sacrificed for him, he will, if called upon to do so, cheerfully give up his own life for that which is more precious than his own existence. How profoundly must the man, who understands the true significance of sacrifice, be affected at the time when he offers a sacrifice and how vividly must he remember the significance of it and the responsibility which it lays upon him. He would ever afterwards be reminded of the principle that inferior things must be sacrificed for superior things, and that he must be ready to sacrifice himself in the service of truth or of mankind. The Holy Quran refers to this significance of sacrifice when it says:

كُنْ يَتَاَلِ اللّٰهَ لِحُبِّهٖمَآ وَ لَا دِمَآؤُهَآ وَ لٰكِن يِّنَآلِہٖ التَّقْوٰى مِنْكُمْ ؕ

'Neither the flesh nor the blood of your sacrifices reaches God, but it is the righteous motive underlying them that reaches Him.'<sup>45</sup>

That is to say, your sacrifices will benefit you only if you fulfil the object underlying them, but if you fail to do that you will merely have killed an animal as you slaughter animals for the purposes of food and you will gain nothing by it.

This will show that the significance of sacrifice in Islam is totally different from that in other religions and that Islam has preserved the object which underlies this symbol, whereas other religions have lost sight of it and have invented new objects for it.

### **The Means whereby Man can Attain to God and the Practical Realization of this Object in this Life**

The fourth question under the first object of religion is whether man can attain to God and whether there is a religion which claims that this is possible under its teachings. It is obvious that this is a vital question, and the real value of a religion depends upon the answer to it. Every person who is guided by his natural instincts, and who does not wish purposely to ignore them must feel that the only function of religion is to point out the way to God and to lead man to Him. All other questions are subsidiary to it.

If a religion explains the attributes of God, emphasizes His unity, exhorts its followers to love Him sincerely,

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<sup>45</sup> Al-Hajj, 22:38

lays down modes of worship, but is silent as to whether it can lead men to God in this life, its teachings are a mere mockery, and attending to them would be a waste of time. Such a religion would be like a man who causes a proclamation to be made throughout the land with blowing of bugles and beating of drums that a momentous discovery has been made and that people should collect together to be told about it,—and that no man should lag behind, for the discovery is so wonderful that the like of it never was before, and that it is necessary that all men should know of it, as it is useful for all and that its benefits exceed those of any other discovery, and that it would be the height of ill-luck not to take advantage of it,—and when men have gathered from far and near, leaving their pursuits and occupations, in their eagerness to hear of this wonderful discovery, he makes a speech telling them that a new land has been discovered which is so vast that all men can settle in it comfortably, that it lies at every man's door, that there are running springs and bubbling brooks in it, and that there is such abundance of flowers and fruits and other delicacies that men need not quarrel among themselves, for every one can have as much as he desires, and life in it would be altogether very pleasant; the sun lights up its beautiful surface, and its deep shades afford relief and rest, and a man who enters it once does not desire to leave it again, etc., etc. Thus exciting the curiosity of his listeners who eagerly enquire as to the whereabouts of this wonderful land so that they might proceed thither and taste of its fruits and delicacies and enjoy the pleasant life it affords, he makes answer that the land, no

doubt, exists as he has described it, but that he is sorry that he is not aware of its exact situation, nor does he know how it might be reached; that he had read of it in a book which he had discovered in his father's library, and he could not endure that others should remain ignorant of it. There can be no doubt as to what would be thought of such a man. Yet there are people who daily mock us in this manner and nobody questions them why they do so. They call men to God but those who come at their call find nothing, only their longing and uneasiness are intensified.

Has anybody ever heard of people falling in love with an imaginary beauty, whom nobody has ever seen? Love is excited by the sight of beauty and not by merely hearing of it. How can a man then feel the love which he is expected to have for God, without having seen Him? Love is the melting of the heart, and how can the heart melt when no heat is applied to it? Let men first perceive the glorious face of the Beloved, and bask in its sunshine, so that their hearts may be melted and be filled with love. No religion can create in the hearts of its followers true love for God unless it opens the door to His meeting.

Look around and see how many people love God in their hearts. Surely not ten in a hundred thousand; and even these only imagine that they love God. They merely follow ancient customs and go on treading the path which their ancestors once trod. The world is plunged in darkness. Nobody is willing to sacrifice anything for God. Sacrifices made in the name of religion are prompted mostly by patriotism or nationalism.

From the remotest corners of the earth men have gathered to see the British Exhibition, but how many step outside their houses to see God? They think they cannot see Him either at home or abroad, and, therefore, make no effort to find Him.

We cannot afford to trust our spiritual welfare to the life to come. No man is permitted to visit this world twice. If he finds nothing in this life, and in the life to come he discovers that he has all along been in error, where lies the remedy? If there is no God and no future life, he shall have wasted this life in running after a delusion.

Every religion asserts that it can lead men to God in the life to come, but in such a vital matter how can one act on a supposition? We are told to do this or that, but what we want to know is what will God do for us in return? Our acts and conduct are like knocking at a door, but the question is (in the words of a man who lit up the world with his light nineteen hundred years ago) will it be opened to us? If the door is not to be opened to us and our knocking is to be in vain, what has religion taught us? An incongruous noise, which we could have made even without the guidance of a religion! All that it has done for us is that it has created in our hearts a longing which it cannot satisfy! A true religion, therefore, must teach us something whereby we can cause the door to open before we leave this world, so that before our retreat is finally cut off we should be assured that we are following the right path.

I give you the glad tidings that Islam, or in other words, Ahmadiyyat claims to teach the way how the door may be caused to open; nay, it claims that through it the door has already been opened to many who have in this very life entered through it and seen the face and majesty of God, and that, if you so desire, it can, God willing, do the same for you.

Before proceeding to explain the means by which Ahmadiyyat leads man to God, it is necessary to state what is meant by meeting or seeing God. It must be remembered that God is not a material object whom man can see with his physical eyes. He can only be seen with the eyes of the soul. This does not mean, however, that it is a mere trick of the fancy. This spiritual vision of God is as real and as irrefutable as our physical vision by which we perceive physical objects like the sun and the moon, so that no doubt is left in our minds as to their existence. If ten million men were to assert that there is no such thing as the sun, we would believe that these ten million men had gone mad. No doubt would arise in our minds that we had not seen the sun, for we have seen it in a manner which can leave no possible doubt behind it. There is this difference between fancy and fact, that the former is generally the result of the working of one sense only, while knowledge is the result of the operation of more senses than one. For instance, when a man imagines that a certain person is standing before him, while in reality there is no such person standing there, he can find out his mistake if he extends his hand to touch him, for his hand will meet nothing but empty space. But if a man is

actually standing there his sense of touch will confirm his sense of sight, and his hand will meet a solid object. It may sometimes happen that more faculties than one are deranged; this however would amount to lunacy and no other person is likely to be deceived by it. There is, however, a further test which can be applied to detect even unsoundness of mind, and that is that a person who is labouring under hallucination may be deceived himself, but he cannot deceive others. He cannot show to others that which he imagines he sees himself. But a reality is capable of being demonstrated to others. Therefore, when I say that through Islam or Ahmadiyyat a man may see God, I do not mean the mere working of fancy as the result of which the followers of most religions imagine that they can and do see God, but I mean the certain meeting of God which can be perceived not only by different faculties but can also be demonstrated to others. Nevertheless this seeing or meeting is spiritual and not physical. In support of the assertion that Islam makes such a claim, reference may be made to several verses of the Holy Quran. In the very beginning of the Holy Quran God says:

'This is that promised book which is referred to in previous scriptures. There is no room for doubt in it, for it guides the righteous to still higher levels.'<sup>46</sup>

Other religions only claim to make a man righteous but Islam not only does that, but also leads him

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<sup>45</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:3.

still higher. Not only does it teach a man his duties but when he has performed all that lies on him, it carries him higher and he becomes the recipient of attention and favours from God, and a mutual relationship of love and sincerity is established between him and God.

At another place He says:

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَ  
 الصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ ۗ وَحَسُنَ أُولَٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا □  
 ذَٰلِكَ الْفَضْلُ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ عَلِيمًا □

This means that those who render perfect obedience to God and His apostle, God will confer upon them one of the four dignities according to their deserts. Those who attain the highest stage of perfection will be made Prophets, and those next to them will be made *Ṣiddīques*, i.e., favourites of God, and those coming after them will be made *Shahīds*, i.e., those from whose eyes the veil has been removed, but who have not yet attained the dignity of special friends, and those that are next below them will be made *Ṣāliḥ*, i.e., they will be righteous men who are trying to improve themselves but who have not yet been admitted to the inner presence of God. These are the best companions whose company benefits others. These different stages of development may be attained only through the grace of God, and God well knows His servants.' That is to say, God is aware that He has endowed man with the capacity for unlimited development, and has put in his heart the longing to seek the Beloved, and thus it was necessary for Him to

provide the means of satisfying this longing, which He has done, leaving it to man to take advantage of them.<sup>47</sup>

Again He says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا وَرَضُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاطْمَأَنَّنُوا بِمَا وَ  
الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا غَافِلُونَ □

أُولَئِكَ مَا لَهُمْ النَّارُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ □

'Verily, those who desire not to meet Us and are content with material pleasures and material development, and desire nothing beyond this world, and those who are indifferent to Our signs which We show them to draw their attention, inasmuch as they have voluntarily withdrawn from the source of real happiness, will never attain to true happiness and will ever suffer spiritual tortures as the result of their actions.'<sup>48</sup>

At another place God says:

'Those who recognize the majesty of God, and act in accord therewith, will be given two paradises,' that is, one in this life and one in the life to come.'<sup>49</sup>

Again describing the blessings of paradise He refers to the principal blessing in the verse:

'Some faces (that is, those who enter paradise) will be lit up with joy, for they will see God.'<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Al-Nisā, 4:70-71

<sup>48</sup> Yūnus, 10:8-9

<sup>49</sup> Al-Raḥmān, 55:47

<sup>50</sup> Al-Qiyāmah, 75:23-24

So that attaining paradise in this life, would mean that man should see God in this life and should experience the working of His attributes within himself.

At one place He says:

'If you remember Me, I shall cause you to see Me, so you should render thanks to Me and should not be ungrateful.'<sup>51</sup>

That is, you should not imagine that having created every thing necessary for your material development, I would leave your higher needs unprovided for.

The next question is what is the nature of this meeting with God? It is in truth beyond the power of man to describe such an essentially spiritual existence; it may be realized but can hardly be adequately described. He alone who experiences it can understand the nature of it. He cannot convey an adequate impression of it to another, for it is an entirely novel experience and people can understand the nature of only those experiences through which they have themselves passed. For instance, we can describe the taste of sugar to a man who has himself tasted it and when we say to such a person that a certain thing is very sweet he will at once comprehend our meaning. But a man who has never tasted sugar can never fully realize what sweetness means. We can convey to him a poor and imperfect idea of it by distinguishing it from other things which can be tasted, but the only perfect way of making him understand what sweetness signifies would be to put a lump of

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<sup>51</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:153

sugar in his mouth and to tell him that it is sweet. Similarly the nature of the experience of a meeting with God cannot be put in words, but as this is a matter which concerns faith and on which depends the whole spiritual progress of man, God invests those who have gone through it with such attributes that everybody can perceive that they stand in a special relationship towards the Living God. Just as a machine comes alive when it is connected with electric current, and people can at once perceive that some mighty force is working through it, so is the case with those who attain to union with God. Since the beginning of time this fact has been proclaimed in the same manner. The fact that Noah<sup>as</sup>, Abraham<sup>as</sup>, Moses<sup>as</sup>, Jesus<sup>as</sup> and Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> and the other Prophets of God were His favourites was proclaimed to the world only through the manifestation of God's attributes for them. In no other manner could the nature of the relationship in which each of them stood towards God be understood by another.

The truth is that God being all spirit, His relationship with man can be expressed only through the reflection of His attributes in man. As the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has said, 'If you desire to meet God, you must assimilate the attributes of God and must fashion your lives accordingly.'

With beings that belong to the world of spirit a relationship can be established only through perfect understanding and knowledge. The Holy Quran describes this understanding or realization as being of three kinds or having three stages. The first stage is called, *'Ilm-ul-Yaqīn*, that is to say, knowledge or

realization by inference. In this stage a thing is not itself visible but its effects are visible from which a man can conclude that the thing exists. The second stage is *'Ain-ul-Yaqīn*, that is to say, knowledge or realization by sight. In this stage not only are the effects of a thing visible, but the thing itself is seen, although its nature has not been completely realized. The third stage is the stage of perfect realization or experience, that is to say, as complete an understanding of the nature of a thing as it is possible for a man to have, both through observation of its effects on others and realization of its effects on himself. This is called *Ḥaqq-ul-Yaqīn*, or perfect realization. These three stages may be illustrated by reference to the knowledge and realization of fire. When a man sees smoke from a distance, he concludes that there must be a fire from which it issues, but he cannot be certain, for there is the possibility that his eye might be mistaken and what he imagines to be smoke may be merely dust or mist. But if he draws nearer and sees the flame with his own eyes, his certainty will increase, but perfect realization of the nature of fire cannot be achieved till he puts his hand in it and experiences its burning effect. There are other sub-divisions of these stages of realization, but these are the principal ones, and man is constantly striving to attain them. We find that when a child begins to grow up, he wants to realize the nature of everything and is not afraid to put his hand in the fire to experience its effects. I imagine few children have not, at some time or other, scorched their hands in an attempt to discover the effects and nature of fire.

Islam lays down the same three stages of realization. The first stage is, that a man hears about the manifestation of God's attributes from others, or reads in books as to how God has dealt with His servants in the past, and he begins to think that there must be some reality underlying it. But this creates no more than a temporary impression on his mind. For, when he begins to strive in the same path himself he at first meets with disappointment and often loses courage, like a man, seeing smoke from a distance, begins to advance towards it, but as he proceeds further and sees nothing but smoke without any other indication of fire he begins to imagine that his eye had deceived him and that what he had seen was not smoke but a speck of cloud or a spiral of dust. Only such persons are satisfied with the records of the lives of holy men as never strive to have an experience at first hand themselves, and whose complacency remains, therefore, unshaken. This, however, is far from being enviable.

Islam does not limit man to the first stage of realization. It keeps the door open to the highest stage, and it claims that any one striving after God in accordance with its teachings, gains in understanding and realization in proportion to his effort, and that there is no stage of realization which was opened to others from which men are now debarred. I have explained that true realization is a purely inward condition of mind; it is that sharpness of spiritual vision by which man begins to perceive the attributes of God in a new light; it is that keenness of spiritual perception by which man discovers himself clothed with the attributes of God. But as every

state and experience has an outward manifestation, the perfect realization of God or, in other words, union with God, has also its outward manifestation by which other people as well as the person concerned himself realize his relationship with God. It is obvious that when two things approach each other the peculiar quality of one affects the other. For instance, a person who approaches fire begins to feel its heat, and a person who approaches ice begins to feel cold. Similarly, if a person handles perfume, his body or his clothes begin to emit its fragrance, and if he is near another person who speaks, he can hear him. In the same way, it is necessary that a person who attains to a stage of union with God should manifest qualities which show that he has attained to that state of blessedness. For, if there is nothing more than a mere assertion, how can we distinguish between the claims of an impostor and a righteous servant of God, and what benefit can people derive from seeing or associating with the latter?

Islam has described three stages of union with God, which can be distinguished by their manifestations. They are the proof of a man having attained to union with God, and they are also the means of increasing one's belief in God. The first stage is that of acceptance of prayer; the second of revelation, and the third in which man becomes a manifestation of Divine attributes.

Islam teaches that acceptance of prayer is a means of enabling men to attain union with God. When a man prays to God his prayers are accepted, provided

they are made in the manner, and are continued up to the point, appointed for their acceptance. He says:

أَمَّنْ يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ  
الْأَرْضِ ءَأَرَأَيْتُمْ مَعَ اللَّهِ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ □

'Then who is He, Who hears the cry of a distressed person, when he calls on Him, and accepts his prayers and relieves his pain, and, removing the oppression of the oppressor sets up the oppressed in his place? Is there, then, another god who has this power? But you derive no lesson from it.'<sup>52</sup>

This stage is open to all. God hears the prayers of every one who prays to Him in his distress, to whatever religion he may belong, and thus affords an opportunity to all to get into direct touch with Himself and thus to emerge from the stage of doubt and darkness. It is essential that a certain degree of realization should be open to people of every class and condition to make them turn to God, for people turn only to those things with whose importance they are impressed.

The followers of every religion can attain to this stage and can experience the effects of prayer. Many obstacles may be overcome and inconveniences removed by prayer. But this stage of realization is an inferior one, for room is left for doubt that that which has happened after prayer might even have happened without it, or that that which has been averted might not have come about even if no prayer had been offered, for

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<sup>52</sup> Al-Namal, 27:63

we very often observe that an undertaking which is on a fair way towards being accomplished fails, and that which was regarded difficult of accomplishment is brought about through normal means when no prayer has been offered or even when the person concerned has no faith in prayer. Another element which renders this stage doubtful is that its results bear a resemblance to the results of the operation of certain natural laws, for instance, mesmerism and hypnotism, by means of which several ailments and diseases may be cured and remedied. This may give rise to the doubt that the results of prayer have also been achieved through concentration or some such other cause, and are not due to any Divine aid or intervention.

Though acceptance of prayer in this stage is subject to such doubts, it certainly is a means of attaining certainty for the person who experiences it and much benefit may be derived from it. There is, however, another stage in which acceptance of prayer is not subject to any doubt, but that pertains to the higher stages of knowledge and realization, and will be explained in its proper place.

The second stage of realization is revelation. Islam particularly emphasizes this stage, while all other religions regard the door of revelation as having been irrevocably closed. Reason, however, cannot endorse the doctrine that God, Who used to speak to His servants in days gone by to assure them of His existence, has now ceased to speak altogether. The attributes of God are ever-existing and are not subject to diminution or decline, then why has He been silent during all these

centuries? If He has ceased to speak, how are we to assure ourselves that He has not ceased to hear, and that His other attributes remain unimpaired? Would not His silence justify the conclusion that He can no longer see, that He has lost the attribute of knowledge, that He has lost the power to watch over and protect us, and that the universe is now going on of itself? If His other attributes continue to operate just as they used to, why has He ceased to speak? He is hidden from our sight and is beyond the ken of our physical perceptions. Revelation was the principal means by which men could be assured of His existence. Now that this door is also closed, what means is left to assure us of His existence?

Islam teaches that God still speaks as He used to do; He still talks to His servants as of yore. Like the acceptance of prayer, revelation is not entirely confined to the followers of a particular religion. In order to enable people to testify to, and believe in, the revelations received by His righteous servants, God does on occasion speak to persons who are outside the true faith. That God even now speaks to His righteous servants has been expressly stated in the following words of the Holy Quran:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ  
الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا يَتَخَفُوا وَلَا يَتَمَرَّنُوا وَأَبْشُرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ  
تُوعَدُونَ □

تَمَنُّ أَوْلِيَاءُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ۖ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهَى  
أَنفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ ط □

'Those who say Allah is our Lord, and then hold fast to it, angels descend upon them with the revelation, 'Fear not, nor be grieved but be happy in the realization of the paradise which you were promised. We shall be your friends in this life and in the life to come, and you will receive all that you desire and all that you ask for!' <sup>53</sup>

That is, the desire to attain union with God, which is the real desire of every believer, will be completely and fully realized. This verse shows, that Islam regards the door of revelation as ever open, and holds out the promise of revelation in certain cases. It may be imagined how the fact that God speaks to a man direct or through angels will fortify him in his belief and faith in God and what an accession of strength it will be to his heart, for speech is also a kind of meeting. For instance, if one is separated from a friend in a jungle at night and hears his voice in the darkness that he is near, one is as much comforted as if one had seen him. Therefore, a man to whom God speaks believes in Him with as perfect a faith as he has in that which he has actually seen.

This is not a mere empty claim made by Islam. During the last thirteen hundred years Islam has constantly produced men to whom God has spoken. In the present age God has spoken to the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> and as the result of holy influence exercised by him, thousands of members of the Ahmadiyya Movement

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<sup>53</sup> Hā Mīm, 41:31-32

have become the recipients of Divine revelation. I believe that more than half of the Ahmadis have been the recipients of revelation in some form or other, and have had their faith confirmed and strengthened thereby.

It must be remembered that by revelation I do not mean the commonly but wrongly accepted connotation of it, under which any brilliant idea which suddenly flashes across a man's mind is called revelation. Some people have in their ignorance gone so far as to imagine that God never speaks in words, and that the thoughts and ideas of a Prophet are described as revelation. Islam emphatically repudiates this idea and teaches that revelation is conveyed in words and that God speaks to man as surely as one man speaks to another. A sound similar to that produced by the speech of man is produced in revelation and the recipient of revelation hears that sound as he hears the speech of fellow men in his daily life. The difference is that revelation is far more majestic and glorious than the speech of man and carries in itself such bliss and such a sense of happiness, that the recipient of revelation feels exalted and uplifted as if some great power had absorbed him. The words of the revelation are conveyed to his ears and he hears them, or they are conveyed to his tongue and he recites them, or they are presented before him in writing and he commits them to memory. All this while the sense of exaltation persists whereby he perceives that his experience is a glorious reality and is the direct action of a Superior Power.

There are two other kinds of revelation besides that just described which are conveyed not in words but

in symbolical language. One of these is a dream in which something is shown as a symbol of an abstract thing; for instance, milk indicating spiritual knowledge, a buffalo indicating a disease or an epidemic, etc., etc.

The second kind is called *Kashf* or vision, which is experienced while a man is wide awake, and is engaged in his normal pursuits. In such a condition he is enabled to hold spiritual intercourse with the souls of the departed, or to witness incidents happening at a distance from him, etc., etc.

All these kinds of revelation are referred to in the Holy Quran; a detailed discussion of them here would be out of place. I have stated that Islam does not define revelation as mere chance inspiration. Such definition of revelation is due to entire ignorance of the nature of revelations. If it were accepted as correct, revelation would become a mockery. Every person experiences at some time or other inspired thoughts and ideas. If these were called revelation, every man would esteem his thoughts as revelation. In this sense every speech and every writing could be put forward as revelation.

The Word of God is meant to lead us to certainty and faith and not to land us in doubt and distraction. If our thoughts and ideas were to be called revelation, most people would begin to imagine that whatever passes in their minds is revelation. But Divine revelation must possess distinctive features which are not possessed by mere fancies and imagination, so that men should not be led astray. What, then, is the best test by which a person may judge that a particular idea is his

and is not revealed, or that it is revealed and not his, or that a particular writing is his and not revealed, or that it is revealed and not his? If it be urged that his reason will point out the distinction to him, the answer is that if we begin to call ideas revelation, it will not take our reason long to succumb to the fancy that all our ideas are revealed and are not our own.

In fact such ideas do not merely destroy our faith in true religion, but also produce so many doubts and misgivings, and encourage such loose thinking, that people who entertain such ideas begin at every step to fashion new religions and thus to deceive not only themselves but also large parts of mankind. There is no doubt that in some cases of mental derangement a man may be deceived into imagining that he hears certain voices or sees certain sights. But the security against such cases is that they are confined to maniacs and madmen, and no one is put in danger of being deceived by them. If, however, revelation is defined as ideas flashing across the mind, a perfectly sensible man may begin to believe that his ideas are revealed and there would be no means of correcting the misconception. Such a supposition results from ignorance of the nature of true revelation. If people holding this view had themselves experienced revelation they could never have been deceived as to its real nature and would have realized that God speaks to His servants in a majestic and at the same time an inexpressibly sweet voice, which is heard by them as surely as they hear other voices and that there is left no possibility of delusion or doubt about it.

By the grace of God the writer of this paper has had personal experience of revelation and can confidently state on the basis of his own experience that revelation is conveyed in words and is not a mere idea of the mind.

It must, however, be remembered that there is nothing in the Holy Quran to warrant the belief that every dream or vision (*Kashf*) or revelation is from God. Islam concedes that dreams and revelations may be of different kinds. For instance the Holy Quran says:

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ ۖ مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ ۚ  
وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۗ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ  
عَلَّمَ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ ۖ

'I call to witness the stemless plant when it falleth.' That is to say, a plant which has no stem falls to the ground when it grows up and in the same way, a false claimant, whether an impostor or one self-deceived, never triumphs. As such a man's teachings are not based on essential spiritual truths they contain in themselves the seed of their own destruction. Therefore, when his following begins to increase, signs of decline simultaneously begin to appear, and before such a man is universally accepted, before his movement firmly establishes itself as an independent religion (that is to say, before it assumes such proportions as to justify its being reckoned among the great religions of the world) and before such period of time has elapsed as would justify the claim that his system has survived the test of time, his movement begins to decay and eventually the

whole fabric falls to the ground). The verse proceeds, 'Your companion has not gone astray nor is his claim based on wickedness.' (i.e., he is neither deceived nor is he an impostor). 'Nor does he speak from selfish desire.' (i.e., it is not as if the wish were father to the thought, nor that the things of his imagination are taken by him to be Divine revelation. What he has received is revelation which has come to him from an outside power, and think not that it is the Devil that prompts him). 'The source of his revelation is the Mighty and Powerful God.' Who controls everything, and Who will, by His might and power, establish the truth of His revelation; his doctrine will spread like a mighty tree, men of all classes and conditions will accept it, and time will not be able to efface it.<sup>54</sup>

In this verse, revelation has been described as being of four kinds. First, that, the source of which it is difficult to ascertain, i.e., which is the result of mental derangement. Secondly, that, which is the direct result of a man's own desires, and which can easily be ascertained to be so. Thirdly, that, which proceeds from an evil spirit and thus contains nothing but evil and impurities. Fourthly, Divine Revelation. Therefore, when I say that Islam describes revelation as one of the means of union with God, I do not mean all dreams or revelation. I admit, and, as a matter of fact, many centuries before the modern psychological view of dreams, etc., took shape, the Holy Quran had explained, that dreams and revelations may be due to mental derangement or to

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<sup>54</sup> Al-Najm, 53:2-6.

personal desires. By revelation I mean Divine revelation alone which is clearly distinguishable from mental delusions or the fancies born of one's desires.

Still, as there is yet left some room for doubt and confusion here, revelation is not as perfect and as sure a means of Divine realization as is required for absolute certainty of faith which should exclude every possibility of doubt or misgiving. Islam emphatically claims that this stage of perfect and absolute certainty can be attained through it. It enjoins its followers to repeat in the five daily *Ṣalāts*, about forty or fifty times a day, the prayer, 'Lord, guide us along the straight path, travelled by those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy favours.' At another place the Holy Quran explains that those on whom God has bestowed His favours are the Prophets; the *Ṣiddīques*, i.e., those who are close to the Prophets; the *Shahīds* i.e., those who are not close to prophethood, but nevertheless can, in their persons, demonstrate the operation of Divine attributes, and can on the basis of their personal experience lead people to God; and the *Ṣālihīn*, or the righteous. Unless a man attains to one of the three first-mentioned dignities he cannot attain to perfect certainty of faith.

How can we benefit by Divine attributes? For instance we are told God is All-Knowing. Can we have a certain proof of His knowledge? Until we can see with our own eyes the workings of this attribute, how can we, with confidence, nay, how can we with honesty, say that He is All-Knowing? We are told He quickens the dead to life, but if we have no evidence of it how can we honestly say that He brings the dead to life? We are told

that He is the Creator, but we observe that the whole creation is governed by certain laws of nature. How can we, then, believe that God has had a hand in the creation of this universe, and how can we honestly assert that He is the Creator? Again, we are told that all things are in His hands, and all things acknowledge His might, but, when we find that thousands of men deny His very existence, how can we, in the absence of some clear sign of His might, say with certainty, nay, how can we say with honesty, that He controls the universe? The same is the case with all His attributes. Unless we are convinced that the attributes of God manifest themselves in a manner which excludes all possibility of chance or coincidence, how can we believe that those attributes exist at all? We cannot perceive God by our physical senses, but can know Him only through His attributes. If we possess no certain proof of the manifestation of those attributes, how can we honestly say that God does exist and that our universe is not based on the operation of some complex but perfect law of nature?

This doubt is resolved by Islam alone, for it constantly produces men who are manifestations of the attributes of God, first receiving a reflection of these attributes in their own beings and then leading others to the perfect knowledge and realization of God by demonstrating in their own persons the working of those attributes.

In the present age God sent the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> so that men might be enabled to attain to a perfect knowledge and realization of Him and be freed from doubt and despair. He was such a perfect follower of

Islam that he attained to the stage of prophethood and God raised him to that level of spiritual knowledge which had not been attained even by Abraham<sup>as</sup>, Moses<sup>as</sup> or Jesus<sup>as</sup>. He manifested in himself the attributes of God in such a certain and perfect manner that all who saw it marvelled, and all who hear of it are filled with wonder. Hundreds of thousands have been restored to new life through the signs shown by him, and multitudes have been healed by his miraculous power. He attained to that perfect stage of Divine realization which excludes all possibility of doubt and misgiving, and found that complete union with God which admits of no separation. He was so imbued with the Divine colour, that all other colours faded before it. He renounced the world altogether and devoted himself wholly to the service of the Eternal Beloved, Who, in consequence of that devotion in turn, became his. He tested each doctrine and commandment of Islam in his own person, found them perfect, and himself experienced their fruits. God clothed him in the mantle of His attributes, and he returned to the world decked in it to lead mankind to God, for only those can proceed upwards who have come from above.

Jesus<sup>as</sup> has said, 'No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that come down from heaven.'<sup>55</sup>

To this may be added, no man can lead others to heaven, but he who is sent from heaven. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> whom God had clothed in the mantle of His

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<sup>55</sup> St. John 3:13

glory and whom He had sent for the guidance of mankind, was, thus, alone entitled, and able, to lead mankind to God. In support of this, he manifested each attribute of God in his own person, and by bringing God closer to man, brought man closer to God. The Holy Quran says,

'As man cannot approach God, He approaches Himself nearer to man.'<sup>56</sup>

This being His way, He has in this age appeared to the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> and has through him manifested Himself to the rest of mankind, to show that He is the Living God, and that as He was the God of Abraham<sup>as</sup>, the God of Moses<sup>as</sup>, the God of Jesus<sup>as</sup>, and the God of Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, He is today our God, and has not abandoned us; only we, through our ignorance, had forgotten Him.

It is not possible for me within the time and space at my disposal to explain with regard to each attribute of God how the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> manifested and demonstrated it to the world after he had attained perfect Divine realization himself. However, a few of them may be illustrated here.

One attribute of God, which is very widely acknowledged is the attribute of knowledge. All religions teach that He is All-Knowing, but none of them explains as to how we can assure ourselves that this is true of Him. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> has provided us with

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<sup>56</sup> Al-An'ām, 6:104

practical illustrations of this attribute of God. He has discovered for us secrets of knowledge which were either (1) hidden from the eyes of the world, or (2) were acquired by him in an extraordinary manner or (3) were beyond the power of man to acquire. As an illustration of the first of these, I need only refer to his teachings which I have already partly discussed and portions of which I shall discuss later on. Here I shall illustrate the second and the third. Most people are probably unaware that the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> was born in that part of India, which was then under the rule of the Sikhs under whom knowledge and learning were at a discount. He never attended school for a single day, but read some elementary books with private tutors. When, however, God raised him to prophethood, He bestowed on him, during the course of a single night, such thorough knowledge of the Arabic language that the learned men of Egypt and Arabia could not rival him in it. He wrote books in Arabic and repeatedly challenged his opponents to produce the like of them if they considered them to be the result of ordinary education and instruction, but none of them dared take up this challenge in India, Egypt, Syria or Arabia. Is this not a convincing proof of God's Omniscience? Can the acquisition of such knowledge be the result of man's fancy? The Punjab is so far away from Arabia and is at such a distance from all recognized centres of learning, that it is impossible that the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> could have acquired his knowledge of Arabic from other people. But even if it were possible, how did he acquire such knowledge as enabled him to write, in the Arabic lan-

guage, nearly a score of books, on the basis of which he successfully challenged people learned in it? It must be remembered that persons who have studied Arabic for years in the schools and colleges of the Punjab are scarcely able to write a few pages of it. No doubt, occasionally people like Dante and Shakespeare do acquire an almost unrivalled mastery over their own language, but they cannot be compared to the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, for they did not claim beforehand that they would acquire such mastery. They were not even aware of the value that was subsequently placed upon their works. It was only when their works became better known that they were appreciated at their true value. If several persons run a race, one of them is bound to outstrip the others. But such a feat is not regarded as anything out of the ordinary, when, however, a weak and emaciated person who can hardly stand on his legs joins a race, and declares beforehand that he shall win it, and does win it. This will certainly be something out of the ordinary and must be ascribed to the working of some higher agency.

That God manifests His attribute of Omniscience in this manner is borne out by the second chapter of the Acts, where it is written that the disciples were taught the languages of different tribes through the Holy Ghost. The difference between the case of the disciples and that of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> is that the former were taught the languages of the Jewish tribes only and even so they sometimes made mistakes in them, but the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> was taught the language of another country and was given such perfect command over it

that none of those whose mother tongue it was, could, after repeated challenges by him, rival him in it.

Another proof of the Omniscience of God which we have had through the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> is the holding of this Conference of Religions in London. Thirty-four years ago the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> saw a *Kashf* relating to the spread of his Movement in England. He published in his book *Izāla'-e-Auhām*, which was published in 1892. The words are these:

'The rising of the sun from the West (as predicted by the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> of Islam) means that western countries which have for centuries been in the darkness of unbelief and error, shall be illumined by the sun of righteousness, and shall share in the blessings of Islam. I once saw myself (in a vision) standing on a pulpit in London and delivering a reasoned speech in English on the truth of Islam and thereafter catching several white-feathered birds sitting on small trees, whose bodies resembled those of partridges. I understood this to mean that though it may not be given to me to proceed personally to London, my writings would be published among those people and many righteous Englishmen would fall a prey to the truth. Western countries have so far not been conspicuous for their attachment to spiritual truths, as if, God had bestowed spiritual wisdom on the East only, and wisdom of the world on Europe and America. All Prophets from the first to the last have appeared in Asia, and spiritual men, other than Prophets, who attained nearness to God have also been confined

to the Eastern peoples. But God wishes now to extend His beneficence to the West.'<sup>57</sup>

The meaning of this passage is perfectly clear. Thirty-four years ago God informed the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> that Islam would be propagated in Europe through him, that the means of such propagation would be his writings, and that in the end the West will share the blessings of the faith, as it shares today the good things of the world.

No doubt, what he saw in the vision was that he was delivering the speech himself, but as a Prophet is represented by his followers, particularly by his successors (*Khalifas*) the vision means that he or one of his representatives or successors would proceed to England to call men to Islam, and indicates that Islam and Ahmadiyyat would be preached from a pulpit or a stage and that men will accept it and be blessed.

The fulfilment of this vision is not a mere coincidence. The importance of an event can only be measured when all the circumstances attending it are known. Consider the circumstances in which this vision was published and in which the man who published it was placed.

When this *Kashf* was published the Christian religion was so powerful that it overawed the Muslims. Not only did European and Christian writers prophesy the complete annihilation of Islam by Christianity in the course of a century, but Muslim writers also had begun

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<sup>57</sup> *Izāla'-e-Auhām*, p. 516.

indirectly to admit it. Some Muslims, under the guise of religious reform, started a movement of mutual understanding between Islam and Christianity on the basis of the assumption that both were true and of the necessity of avoiding collision between the two, for these men feared that Islam could not withstand Christianity. Others had started writing apologies on behalf of Islam, and tried to explain that certain Islamic doctrines to which Europe took exception, were really no part of Islam and that Islam taught exactly what Europe approved of. They explained that Islam was revealed in an age of darkness when the Arabs were in a very degraded condition, that many of the doctrines and commandments of Islam were meant only to improve the condition of the Arabs and were not of universal application, that these would now be repealed by a conference of Muslim doctors and ulema, that the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> used to preach to the Arabs with due regard to their national and religious prejudices and that his meaning was really different from that which his words would ordinarily bear. In short, the Muslims had begun to admit by their conduct that the days of Islam were numbered. They had lost not merely the power to take the offensive but even the heart to defend Islam. They were ready to surrender, and awaited only the offer of better terms by Christianity, under which they would not be treated as mere savages.

On the other hand the man who saw and published this vision was alone and had no following. He had just proclaimed his claim to Messiahship, which had aroused universal resentment and opposition. The

Government looked upon him with suspicion, the people were hostile to him. Christians, Hindus and the very Muslims whose faith he championed, were all opposed to him, the last most bitterly of all. His claim was novel and unexpected. The Muslims were expecting a warrior Mahdi, and a Messiah who should descend from the skies. This man claimed to be not a warrior but a peaceful and peace-making Mahdī and taught that the Mahdi and Messiah were one and the same person who was not to come from the skies but was to appear from the earth, and strangest of all, that he himself was the person who was both Mahdi and Messiah, a person who possessed no distinctive mark of learning, rank or honour.

Further, travelling to distant countries requires money, and this man had at the time a following of forty or fifty persons, all of whom, with the exception of one or two who were in comparatively easy circumstances, were extremely poor, earning on an average less than five shillings a week, out of which they had to provide for all the needs of their families and themselves. For in these circumstances, living six thousand miles away from England, in a country which formed part of the British Empire and which was at that time in a condition of extreme political degradation, in a province which was regarded as the least intellectual and most backward in India situated at a distance of several hundred miles from the ocean, being resident of a village which is even today eleven miles from the nearest railway station and which was at that time served only twice a week by the post, the postmaster being also the village schoolmaster,

and which could boast of no higher educational institution than a vernacular primary school (for such was Qadian at the time), this man proclaims that God would propagate his doctrine in the West, that it would be preached from platforms and pulpits, and that men would accept its truth and join his movement. All this in fact comes to pass; his movement spreads and men of all classes join it; it reaches, and begins to attract, the truth-loving spirits of the West.

The invitation extended by the organizers of the Conference of Religions to the representatives of different religions bears no particular significance so far as other religions are concerned, for such invitation was bound to be issued to make the Conference a success. In our case it has a peculiar significance, for it has been the means of fulfilling the *Kashf* to which I have just referred and which was published in very adverse circumstances. If this Movement had followed the normal course it would not have been invited to participate in this Conference for it should have ceased to exist long ago owing to the extremely adverse circumstances through which it has had to pass; but God has, in accordance with this *Kashf*, caused it to prosper, and, in the end, that which had been foretold has happened. This shows that God is Omniscient, and that He reveals things of which man can have no knowledge or conception and which at the time are regarded by mankind as opposed to reason and common sense.

I cannot conclude this portion of my discussion without quoting one more instance of the demonstration by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> of the Omniscience of God.

This instance also pertains to Europe where, and in America, it has exercised, and is still exercising, a profound influence. I refer to his prophecy concerning the Great War and the end of the Czar. This prophecy was published piecemeal and was completed in four years from 1904 to 1908. He prophesied that God had told him that 'a mighty earthquake was impending,' and he explained that it did not necessarily mean that the earth would be actually shaken, but that it meant some form of calamity 'which would cause great loss of life and destruction of buildings, and which would cause rivers of blood to flow and create great consternation among men.' From the details of this earthquake as foretold at the time it appears that the prophecy foreshadowed a great war, for he says 'consternation would be caused in the whole world, and travellers would be put to great trouble.' This clearly shows that the calamity foretold was a war, for an earthquake would not particularly affect travellers. Again, he says 'rivers of blood would flow and the calamity would come all of a sudden. Young men would be turned grey by the shock. Mountains would be blown up and many people would go mad. The whole world would feel its effects, but the Czar's plight would be particularly miserable. The foundations of Governments would be shaken; naval fleets would be on the look out for enemy fleets and would scour the seas in search of enemy vessels; there would be naval duels; the earth would be turned upside down and God would appear with His hosts to punish the transgressors and the oppressors. The calamity will also affect the birds of the air. The Arabs will prepare

for war and the Turks will be defeated in Asia Minor, but would recover a portion of their lost territory.' It was also said that 'signs of this calamity would appear in advance,' but that 'God will delay it for a time.' That in any case, 'it would overtake the world within sixteen years of the publication of the prophecy, but not during the lifetime of the Promised Messiah<sup>ast</sup>.<sup>58</sup>

How clearly and powerfully has this prophecy been fulfilled! How terrible was the earthquake which had been foretold and how was the earth shaken by it! As I have already said the word did not mean an actual earthquake for the same word had been used in the Holy Quran, and in the Bible to signify war.<sup>59</sup> Every detail of this prophecy was clearly fulfilled. The war broke out suddenly and the whole world was affected by it. The prophecy was first published in 1904, and the war broke out in 1914, after the death of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, which took place in 1908. It affected not only those powers and Governments which joined in it, but also other powers and countries. It brought such terrible sufferings upon travellers which one would not like even to imagine. People who were travelling in foreign countries at the time when the war broke out have long and painful tales to tell of weary journeys, midnight escapes, captivity and starvation. Many of them were unable for years to communicate with those near and dear to them and no exchange of news was possible. Mountains were blown up as if they were no more than

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<sup>58</sup> *Brāhīn-e-Ahmadiyya* Part V and *Ḥaqīqatul Waḥī*.

<sup>59</sup> *I Samuel* 14:15

mere mounds of earth. Some of the French hills which were within the actual war area were levelled to the ground. So much blood was shed that streams and rivers actually ran red with it. Many people turned grey with shock, and, as had been said, so many men became mad that shell-shock became the name of a new kind of mental disorder, as the result of which thousands became incapacitated for months, and even years. Naval demonstrations and movements of fleets took place on an unprecedented scale. Such vast tracts of land were turned upside down that France has not yet been able to restore its devastated areas. The noise of cannonading and bursting of shells kept the birds flying in the air and prevented them from alighting on the trees so that many of them died of exhaustion and fatigue.

The war was almost precipitated in 1911, when Germany sent the Panther to Agadir, but in accordance with the prophecy, it was then averted owing to the firm attitude taken up by Great Britain and the feeling of continental statesmen that they were not ready for war. The Arabs also joined the allies and deemed it politic to cut asunder from the Turks. The Dardanelles and Iraq were considered to be the chief strategic points with the Turks but the Allies failed in both these theatres and in the end the Turks were defeated in Palestine in accordance with the prophecy and the war came to an end. But the Turks again acquired strength under the leadership of Mustapha Kamal Pasha and as had been foretold retrieved a portion of their lost fortunes. But the most terrible portion of the prophecy concerned the Czar of Russia. Out of all the monarchs concerned in the war

the Czar was singled out in the prophecy and it was said that during the war his plight would become pitiable, that is, not only would he lose his throne but would also undergo other hardships, sufferings and privations. The prophecy seemed to indicate that the Czar would not die or be killed at once, but would undergo painful sufferings. The prophecy has been fulfilled in every detail. The Czar lost his throne but his life was spared. Later on he was killed after being subjected to the most painful physical and mental torture. His wife and his daughters were disgraced in his presence while he was powerless to help or save them.

A recital of his sufferings makes one's hair stand on end and causes one's heart to weep for him, but at the same time, one's faith in the Omniscient God is also enhanced when one sees how He had revealed these things twelve years prior to their occurrence, at a time when nobody could even imagine that they could come to pass.

Are these facts not sufficient to prove that the God of Islam is All-Knowing, that Islam alone is the religion which makes one realize an All-Knowing God, and that Islam alone can establish a relationship between man and God?

Another well-known attribute of God which is accepted by almost all religions is the attribute of creation. Most religions claim that the conception of God presented by them includes the attribute of creation. They teach that all matter and man have been created by God and that the whole universe is His creation. But

what proof have they in support of that assertion? None! Their claim is based only on a negative assumption. If God is not the Creator of this universe, who is? An atheist has the same data before him. He is, however, a more diligent student of the laws of nature. His world and his religion are a study of these laws and he arrives at the conclusion that this universe goes on of itself and is not controlled by any outside power or agency. When, therefore, those who make nature a life study obtain no guidance from it, how can nature produce certainty in the hearts of those who are mere laymen?

The utmost that nature suggests is that there ought to be a Creator of this universe. This is, however, a mere inference and cannot be a substitute for faith and certainty. Experience teaches us that often when we discover the cause of a phenomenon, of which we were not previously aware, it turns out to be something entirely different from what we had imagined it to be. Is it not, therefore, possible that our belief, that over and above the laws of nature there ought to be a Creator and Regulator of this world, may be due to our ignorance of the nature, properties, and action and reaction of matter? It may be that matter possesses energy and properties which are unknown to us, and which render it independent of any outside control in its working. In view of such possibilities how can we be comforted by the mere inference that there ought to be a Creator of the universe? We need proof which should carry us from the stage of *ought to be* to the stage of *is* and should remove all doubts and misgivings. This is possible only if we are able to observe the working of the attribute of

creation with our own eyes and thus satisfy ourselves that God does actually create. No religion is in a position to give us certainty as regards this attribute of God. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, however, does lead us to this stage of knowledge. He does not ask us merely to believe that there is a God and that He is also the Creator. He claims to show us the actual working of God's attribute of creation and to demonstrate that it is not nature that creates but the Creator of nature itself Who creates. There are many instances of this, but I shall content myself with relating only two or three of them.

It must be remembered that a particular result cannot be ascribed to the action or intervention of any being until we are convinced both positively and negatively, that is to say, until we are satisfied that that result can be brought about by that being if it so desires and that it cannot be brought about if it does not so desire. Looked at from the positive point of view, there is left room for the conjecture that there might be other beings who can also effect similar results. The assertion therefore that a certain thing can be done only by a particular being necessarily implies that if that being does not do it, it cannot be done at all. Keeping this principle in mind I proceed to state the positive and negative proofs, which the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> has given of the working of the Divine attribute of creation.

I shall first describe those signs which are the positive proofs of the working of this attribute. With regard to the first of them I shall merely quote the statement of the man who is the principal witness of the sign. This man's name is 'Aṭā Muhammad. He is a

patwārī (i.e., a subordinate revenue official), and his statement is as follows:

'Before I became an Ahmadi, I used to be a patwārī at Winjwan in the Gurdaspur District. Qazi Ni‘matullah of Batala, whom I used to see often used to talk to me of Ḥaḍrat Sahib (meaning the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, but I never paid much heed to his talk. On one occasion when he was very persistent I told him that I would write to his Mirza asking the latter to pray for me with respect to a certain matter and that if his prayer was heard I would accept him. I then wrote to Ḥaḍrat Sahib, saying that as he claimed to be the Messiah<sup>as</sup> and a *Walī* (i.e., saint) his prayers ought to be heard, and I requested him to pray that God may vouchsafe to me a handsome and gifted male child by whichever of my wives I desired. At the end of my letter I wrote that I had had three wives for many years, but that no child had been born to any of them and that I desired to have a child from my eldest wife, (meaning that as she was growing old there was less hope of a son being born to her). I received a reply written by the late Maulawī Abdul Karīm Sahib (who was one of the leading members of the Ahmadiyya Movement and used to act as secretary to the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>) saying that Ḥaḍrat Sahib had prayed for me and that God would vouchsafe to me a handsome, gifted and well-disposed son by whichever of my wives I had desired but that I must repent like Zachari<sup>as</sup>. I lived in those days a life of debauchery, was addicted to liquor

and used to accept bribes. On receiving this reply I went to the mosque and enquired from the mullah what was meant by the repentance of Zachari<sup>as</sup>. The mullah and the other people in the mosque were surprised to see a vicious man like me in the mosque and the mullah was unable to answer my question. Then I enquired from Maulawī Fateh Dīn of Dharamkot, who was an Ahmadi, and he told me that the repentance of Zachari<sup>as</sup> meant that I should renounce my evil course of life, should give up bribe-taking, should be regular in my prayers, observe fasts, and should attend the mosque frequently. Accordingly I entirely changed my way of living. I gave up liquor, stopped taking bribes and became regular in my prayers and fasting. Four or five months later, when I entered my house one day I found my eldest wife in tears. On enquiring from her the cause of her distress she told me that I had already had, besides her, two other wives, as she had borne me no children, and that a fresh calamity had now befallen her, namely that her monthly courses had ceased and that there was now left no hope of her ever bearing a child. Her brother used in those days to be a sub-inspector of police at Amritsar, and she asked me to send her to her brother to obtain medical advice. I advised her, however, to consult the local midwife. She did so and asked the midwife to treat her. The midwife examined her and told her that she would have nothing to do with her as in her opinion God had made a mistake in her case (meaning that she had

been barren, and now that there were indications of her being with child. God must have made a mistake!) Thus she went out of the house saying that God had made a mistake. I asked her not to say so, for I had requested the Mirza Sahib to pray for me and I thought that this might be the result of his prayer. Some time later my expectations were confirmed and I began to tell people that we would be given a handsome boy. People marvelled at this and said that if this happened, it would indeed be a miracle. At last the time came and the child was born. It was a male child and was handsome. The child was born at night and I at once ran to Dharamkot where my relatives lived, and informed them of the event. On hearing this piece of news many people at once started for Qadian to join the Movement, but there were others who did not go. Some people of Winjwan also joined the Ahmadiyya Movement as the result of this wonderful occurrence, and I too did so. I named the child Abdul Haq. I had been married for more than twelve years and had not had a child before.<sup>60</sup>

Can there be a clearer proof of the fact that our God is a living God and that He is also the Creator? If there is no God, or if God is not the Creator how could it be that as the result of the prayers of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, a son should be born to a childless man, who had married three wives in the course of twelve years in order that he may have a child but had remained child-

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<sup>60</sup> *Sīrat-ul-Mahdi*, compiled by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashīr Ahmad.

less? Not only was a child born, but its birth took place in accordance with the father's desire and with the conditions laid down by him, that is to say, the child was born to his eldest wife, was a male and was handsome. If there is no God or if He is not the Creator, how did the Promised Messiah's<sup>as</sup> prayers effect all this? We are further impressed by this wonderful sign when we know that the man who asked for it was informed beforehand that the sign asked for would be shown to him in accordance with the conditions laid down by him. The import of an event must be gauged with reference to the effect which it produces at the time of its occurrence on those who witness it. As has been stated above the effect of this incident was that the man who had asked for the sign as well as many of his relatives and fellow-villagers became Ahmadis and many of them immediately started from their village to join the Ahmadiyya Movement. The child and his father and many of those who were witnesses of this sign are still alive. Any person who wishes to verify the truth of this statement may do so by making enquiries from them.

Many other signs of a similar character were shown by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. Every one of his own children was born as the result of a prophecy, and children were born to many childless persons as the result of his prayers.

Another miracle of his, which also has reference to God's attribute of creation, happened in this manner. He saw in a dream that he had prepared a chart which related to some future events in his own life and in the

lives of some of his friends, which he desired God to approve. He then saw God personified. He placed the chart before Him for His signature. God signed the chart with red ink. Before signing He flicked the surplus ink from the end of the pen with a movement of His hand. Some drops of the ink thus flicked fell on the clothes of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. A realization of the love and graciousness of God in granting his request filled his eyes with tears and with a slight spasm he woke up. A disciple of his, named Miyān Abdullah Sanaurī, who was at that time massaging him, drew his attention to some wet drops of red on his clothes. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> then related the *Kashf* to him in detail. These red drops had fallen on the shirt\* of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> and on the cap of Miyān Abdullah. (Miyān Abdullah is a revenue official in the service of the Patiala State.) Miyān Abdullah requested that the shirt might be given to him as a memento of this miracle. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> gave him the shirt on the condition that he must in his will direct that on his death the shirt should be buried along with his body lest people should begin to worship it. Miyān Abdullah is still alive and I have enquired of him whether there was any possibility of the liquid having fallen from the roof, etc. He states that the roof of the chamber was perfectly smooth and clean and that there was no such possibility and that as soon as he had observed the drops he had looked up to the roof to ascertain their cause, but had found none. He also states that there was at that time no inkpot or any

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\* See Appendix I.

other similar object in the room. The shirt is still carefully preserved by Miyān Abdullah and the above statement is supported by him on oath.

It must be remembered, however, that we do not believe that God has a physical form or that He signs His name, and uses pen and ink, or that the drops that fell on the shirt of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> were actually the drops of any ink that God had used on the occasion. On the contrary, as I have indicated above, we believe that God has no form or likeness and that He is above assuming the human or any other form. We believe that whatever the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> saw was a *Kashf* and the form in which he saw God was a symbolical representation of the relationship in which he stood towards Him. The act of signing meant that God would cause him to achieve his objects and desires. The ink which actually fell on his clothes and the clothes of Miyān Abdullah, was not ink which had in fact fallen from God's pen, for God uses neither ink nor pen, but was created by God under His attribute of creation to serve as a sign for the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> and for others, so that people might believe in His attribute of creation and understand that God creates out of nothing and that this attribute of His can, and does operate today as it operated in the beginning of creation.

I shall now cite an instance which would show that as God has the power to create, so also He has the power to prevent a thing from coming into existence, if and when He so directs it. It would then be clear that the attribute of creation is peculiar to God alone, and that no other being shares in it. Had not that been so it would

have been possible for that other being to bring about that which had been decreed against by God.

A man named Sa‘dullah, who was a teacher in the Mission School, Ludhiana, was a very bitter and foul-mouthed opponent of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. He used to write and publish poems and articles against the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, full of such filthy abuse that no decent person would be able even to conceive of the obscenity of the language used by him. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> himself had said that no other Prophet had been abused so much by any man as he had been abused by Sa‘dullah. He had repeatedly announced that the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> was an impostor and would be destroyed and that his prophecies concerning his children would not be fulfilled and that his end would be miserable. When his hostility and abuse had exceeded all bounds, and he became the means of preventing people from seeing the truth, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> prayed to God to show a sign to this man. His prayer was heard, and as this man had turned his back upon the truth and had shut the gates of God’s mercy upon himself, God decreed that he should die by the weapon which he had attempted to wield against the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. Accordingly, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> received this revelation concerning him: *Inna shāni’aka huwal abtar*, viz., Thine enemy who says concerning thee that thou shalt die childless, shall himself be cut off and his line will become extinct. When this revelation was received by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, Sa‘dullah had a son about fourteen years of age, and he was himself in the prime of youth. There was no reason why he should

not have had more children. But God, the Creator, withdrew in his case the operation of His attribute of creation after this revelation. The man was still young and survived the revelation for nearly fifteen years, but no more children were born to him, and he died in 1907, confirming the truth of this revelation. If matters had stopped there, this alone would have been a mighty proof of God's attribute of creation, but further and even stronger proof was added. When Sa'dullah died, the enemies of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> objected that the prophecy had not been fulfilled as Sa'dullah had left a son who survived him. They arranged a marriage for Sa'dullah's son in the hope that he might beget children and thus falsify the prophecy that had been made concerning Sa'dullah. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> replied to his opponents in his book, the *Ḥaqīqatul-Wahī*, that as Sa'dullah's son was in existence at the time when the revelation concerning his father was received, his surviving Sa'dullah did not affect the truth or fulfilment of the prophecy. The prophecy could only be rendered doubtful if he should beget a child. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> again affirmed that the young man would remain without children and Sa'dullah's line would become extinct. It so happened that although the enemies of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> persuaded Sa'dullah's son to marry two wives in the hope that he might beget a son, no child was born to him.

Normally it would require great boldness and may even be rash to say concerning a young man that he would remain childless. When the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> published this concerning Sa'dullah's son, one of his

followers, who was a lawyer, and was a man of weak faith, and who stumbled after the death of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> just as some of the disciples of Jesus<sup>as</sup> had stumbled, demurred strongly to the publication of such a prophecy, for, as he suggested, if a child was born to the young man, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> would be placed in a very awkward position, he would be discredited, and might run the risk of a criminal prosecution being started against him. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> replied that he could neither doubt nor turn aside from that which God had revealed to him, and that his disciple's objection to the publication of the prophecy was only due to the weakness of his faith. So in the end it turned out to be.

Now, consider. If Sa'dullah's son had died in his childhood people might have said that it was a pure coincidence, but the fact that his father survived the revelation for nearly fifteen years and had no more children, coupled with the fact that the son grew up to manhood and married twice but had no children, conclusively establishes that all this had happened under a Divine decree, whereby God meant to punish a rebel by making an example of him for his abuse of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>.

Will any one who ponders over these signs with a mind free from bias say that the God of Islam is not today the Creator just as He was in the beginning of creation. For, has it not happened that He said concerning one man 'Let him have a child,' and the man was given a child, and that He said concerning another, 'Let this man remain childless,' and the man remained child-

less? Then, do not these signs and miracles fill a man's heart with faith and certainty, and carry him from the stage of *there ought to be* a creator to the certain and sure stage that there *is* a Creator? Blessed be Allah, the best of creators!

Next I shall deal with another well-known attribute which is taken advantage of by many people, viz., the attribute of healing. All religions are agreed that God is the Healer. But some people also claim to heal the sick by prayer. A little consideration, however, would show that this healing has nothing to do with God or with prayer, for it is not confined to any particular religion, and the followers of every religion can effect such cures. How can the exercise of this art (for it is no more than an art) be put forward, therefore, as a proof of a man's relationship with God?

Supposing that the effecting of such a cure is the result of the acceptance of prayer and indicates that the person who had effected the cure stands in a special relationship towards God, are we not entitled to ask why the other attributes of God, for instance, the attributes of creation, knowledge, bringing the dead to life, protection, etc., are not manifested through that person? Those who totally deny the attributes of God would not be concerned with this question, but those who claim to manifest one attribute of God are bound to give a satisfactory explanation of their inability to manifest the others.

The real explanation is that every person possesses certain psychic powers whereby he can influence

and control the thoughts and actions of other persons. This process of healing operates through the concentration of the operator's attention which influences the nervous system of the subject and assumes control over it, so that his actions and conduct become subject to the will of the operator who can direct them in any manner he chooses. But such healing is confined almost wholly to disorders connected with the nervous system. For instance, it is possible that fever, headache, conjunctivitis, etc., may be cured by this means, but it would be impossible to cure by this means any disease or disorder affecting the constitution, for instance, syphilis, leprosy, tuberculosis, etc.

The power to heal nervous or superficial disorders may be considerably developed by practice, and is based upon the ability of the operator to concentrate his attention. It is not necessary that the operator should touch or handle the subject in any way or should make any prescribed movements. If the necessary degree of concentration is achieved, no matter whether by prayer or in any other manner, the desired result can be brought about. Every person can, by a little practice, acquire this art to some degree, and people who avoid the use of liquor and the eating of swine's flesh can easily become expert healers. But this has nothing to do with the spiritual condition of a man, nor can such healing be regarded as a sign or a miracle. It is an art, like any other art, and advantage can be taken of it as of any other law of nature.

On the other hand, the signs shown by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> as illustrations of the manifestation of the

Divine attribute of healing clearly prove that God exists and that He possesses the power to heal. The following incident may be related as an instance.

When the Movement began to spread, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> founded a high school at Qadian, his object being to provide a proper place of instruction for future generations of Ahmadis, where they could imbibe the traditions of the Movement and be imbued with the spirit of its doctrines and teachings. Ahmadi young men belonging to distant places joined the school for secular and spiritual instruction. One of these named Abdul Karīm who belonged to a village in the Nizam's Dominions in the Deccan, nearly sixteen hundred miles distant from Qadian. While at Qadian he was bitten by a mad dog and was sent for treatment to the Pasteur Institute at Kasauli. After he had had his treatment it was supposed that he was out of danger. On returning to Qadian, however, he had an attack of hydrophobia and developed the symptoms and suffered the tortures by which this terrible disease is always attended. He developed contraction of the throat muscles, convulsive dread of water, excess of fear, sleeplessness, fits of mania during which he felt a strong desire to attack and injure those who attended upon him—acts of which he felt ashamed during intervals of relief when he begged his attendants to leave him lest he should do them harm. He grew rapidly worse, and a telegram was despatched by the headmaster of the school to the director of the Pasteur Institute at Kasauli enquiring whether anything could be done for the boy. His reply arrived to the effect, 'Sorry, nothing can be done for Abdul Karīm.' As the boy

belonged to a distant place and the people of that part of the country were illiterate and ignorant, it was feared that his death would have a very ill effect on them. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> was very deeply affected by his condition and prayed to God for his recovery. At last his prayer was heard and Abdul Karīm, whose life had been absolutely despaired of and whose sufferings were terrible to witness, was restored to health by God in consequence of the Promised Messiah's<sup>as</sup> prayers.

Those who are conversant with medical science are aware that once a person is attacked by hydrophobia, no remedy can save him and his death is inevitable. There has not been a single case known to medical science in which a person actually attacked by hydrophobia has been saved, and when the news of Abdul Karīm's recovery reached Kasauli, one of the people there wrote saying: 'We were very sorry to learn that Abdul Karīm, who had been bitten by a mad dog, had been attacked by hydrophobia, but we are very glad to learn that he has been saved as the result of prayers. We have never heard of such a recovery before.'

This is an instance of real healing by prayer which shows that there does exist a God Who has the power to heal. Those through whose prayers such healing is effected, are entitled to say that they affirm the existence and illustrate the attributes of God in a most unmistakable manner.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> has shown many other similar signs, but they cannot all be detailed here. This paper, however, would not be complete without a brief

mention of a challenge that he once offered to Christian missionaries. He wrote to them saying that as they claimed to be the followers and representatives of Jesus<sup>as</sup>, who showed signs, and he claimed to be a servant and representative of Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, a way of testing the claims of their respective religions to truth would be to demonstrate whose prayers were accepted by God. The method suggested was that a number of men who had suffered from what were ordinarily regarded as fatal diseases should be selected and divided equally between the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> and the Christians by casting lots, and that each party should pray for the recovery of the patients allotted to it, and the result of the prayer of each would show whose prayer had been heard. The Christian missionaries declined to take up the challenge.

Another attribute of God is that He is *Quddūs*, i.e. Holy. All religions are agreed as to this, but none of them tells us how we can assure ourselves of His Holiness. In the first place, all the attributes of God described by various religions are in themselves doubtful. How, then, can we judge, on the basis of these attributes, that He is indeed Holy? But even if we were to take this attribute alone, there is nothing to show that God possesses Holiness. This attribute can be manifested only in one manner and that is that we should be able to see the manifestation of this attribute of Holiness in persons who have acquired nearness to, and union with, God. If this could not be shown, not only would we remain in doubt concerning the Divine attribute of Holiness, but we would also be compelled to deny that

man can at all attain to union with God. We observe that a rose leaves its fragrance in a garment to which it has been attached for a short time, or the clothes of a person who sits near another person, who has perfumed himself, begin to exhale the perfume. Then how can we believe that a man should attain to union with God but should not be able to show signs of such union and should remain unaffected by God's attribute of Holiness, which is really the essence of all other attributes? Only that man can be regarded as having attained to union with God who can manifest God's attribute of Holiness in his own person by proving that he has himself been rendered holy through the operation of this attribute, and whose life is a model of purity and righteousness.

The life of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> clearly satisfies this test. He illustrated the Divine attribute of Holiness in his own life which was a reflection of the attributes of God. There is no doubt that such manifestation can be effected only in a manner compatible with the person concerned being a human being, otherwise he would become God, which is absurd. But a reflection of these attributes in a man in a manner not incompatible with his being a man, does not, in any way, detract from their value. On the contrary, it is the only clear means of demonstrating the possession by God of His various attributes.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> manifested the Divine attribute of Holiness in his person so clearly that his bitterest enemies were constrained to admit that his life was absolutely pure and blameless. It must be remem-

bered in this connection that whenever a Prophet appears in the world, his opponents accuse him of many evils and vices, for, enmity renders a man deaf and blind so that even virtues appear as vices to him. Hence in looking at a Prophet's life from this point of view, his life previous to his claim should be considered. Before he lays claim to prophethood people bear him no special grudge and are not blinded by prejudice, and thus that period of his life can best furnish us with materials for a test of his purity and righteousness.

The life of Jesus<sup>as</sup>, who was also one of the Prophets of God and thus belonged to the brotherhood to which the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> belonged, fulfilled a similar test of purity and righteousness and he challenged his enemies saying, 'Which of you convinceth me of sin.'<sup>61</sup> But it is obvious that this could only relate to the period of his life previous to his claim of prophethood, for concerning his life after he started preaching, his enemies who had been blinded by hatred and prejudice charged him with excess in eating and a disregard of Divine Commandments and called him a wine-bibber, etc. His life falsified these charges but his enemies had become blind.

Similarly the life of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> was a model of purity and righteousness, a fact testified to by his bitterest enemies, Maulawī Muhammad Hussain of Batala, who proved to be his bitterest enemy after the publication of his claim to Messiahship, wrote concern-

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<sup>60</sup> *John*, 8:46.

ing him in his paper, the *Ishā'at-us-Sunnah*: 'The author of the *Barāhīn-e-Ahmadiyya* (this was the name of a book written by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> before he published his claim) has been so steadfast in serving Islam with his example, his energy, his substance, and his pen and tongue that it would be difficult to discover his equal among those Muslims who have gone before him.' The expression, 'serving Islam with his example,' is significant and meant that the life of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> was such a perfect model of good morals and conduct that people who saw it were drawn to Islam and that few such lives could be found among the Muslims who had gone before.

Those who are aware of the tendency of religious writers to exaggerate the virtues and merits of those who have preceded them, can judge what it would cost a Maulawī to have to admit that a certain living man had surpassed all those who had gone before. Particular value attaches to the testimony of this Maulawī for the reason that he was a resident of Batala, which is only a short distance from Qadian, and he was, therefore, familiar with the life of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> from his childhood upwards.

In addition to this testimony of one of his most inveterate enemies, every person who knew him was convinced and bore testimony to his purity and goodness. Men belonging to different religions, Hindus, Sikhs and non-Ahmadi Muslims of Qadian, who are perhaps bitterer enemies of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> than those who live at a distance—for a Prophet is not honoured in his own city—are all agreed that from his

childhood up his life was a uniform record of blameless purity. People were so convinced of his righteousness and had such strong faith in it that in their disputes with his family whenever they saw their cause to be just they always expressed their readiness to abide by his award, for, they knew that he would never depart from that which was just and true in his opinion, even if it caused loss to himself and his family.

He was once prosecuted for a technical breach of the postal rules which was liable to be punished with imprisonment and fine. Such breaches of postal rules had become common in those days and the postal authorities were anxious to obtain convictions in one or two cases in order to put an end to such practices. The case, therefore, was being very keenly conducted on behalf of the prosecution. The charge against the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> was that he had enclosed a letter in a packet contrary to postal regulations. The only evidence in support of the charge was that of the man who had received the packet. This man was a Christian missionary with whom the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> had had several religious discussions and who was, on that account, hostile to the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, and to whose uncorroborated testimony, therefore, much weight could not be attached. On the other hand, if the fact could be established, the breach of the regulations was clear, and a conviction was inevitable. The legal adviser of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, therefore, advised him to deny the charge and to plead not guilty, as there was no independent evidence in support of it. But he refused to take this advice and said he would not utter a falsehood, as

he had certainly put the letter in the packet under the impression that as the letter only contained formal directions with regard to the contents of the packet there was nothing wrong in placing the letter in the packet. He made the same statement in court and the magistrate, who was a European, was so struck by his righteousness that he acquitted him, in spite of the remonstrances of the postal officials, remarking that he had not the heart to convict a man who could have secured his acquittal by a mere plea of not guilty or by a mere refusal to plead, but would not adopt that course as lending colour to a lie.

I love to listen to the reminiscences of an old Sikh peasant who knew the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> from his childhood. He cannot talk of him without tears in his eyes. He says that when he used to go to the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, the latter used to ask him to go to his (Promised Messiah's<sup>as</sup>) father and request him that he should let him (i.e., the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>) serve God and the faith and should not insist upon his undertaking the conduct of worldly affairs. This old Sikh always concludes his narrative by exclaiming, 'He (meaning the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>) was a saint from his childhood,' and on this he invariably bursts into tears.

This simple and natural testimony from the mouth of a follower of another religion who had witnessed all the ups and downs of the Promised Messiah's<sup>as</sup> life is not without its special value and significance. But this is not a solitary instance. Every man who came in contact with him carried away the same impression, and the more familiar a man was with the mode of

his life, the louder he would be in praise of his purity, righteousness and love of humanity. What greater test can there be of the purity of a man's life than this, that friends and foes alike, who are familiar with the whole course of his life, should unite in praising his integrity, purity and high moral character.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, like Jesus<sup>as</sup>, challenged his enemies in these words:

'I have spent forty years of my life among you, and you have seen that I am not given to lies and imposture and that God has guarded me against all evil. How is it possible, then, that a man who has for forty years avoided all manner of falsehood, trickery, fraud and dishonesty, and has never told a lie concerning the affairs of men, should suddenly embark on a course of imposture, contrary to his previous habits and ways?'<sup>62</sup> And, 'Which of you can find fault with anything in my life? God has, out of His especial grace, throughout guarded me against evil.'<sup>63</sup>

These claims and testimonies show that not only was his life free from blemish of every kind, but that it was so characterized by purity and righteousness that even his enemies, who rejected his claim to prophethood, were unanimous in deposing to the purity and beauty of his life. As has been said, sure virtue is that which is admitted by one's enemies.

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<sup>62</sup> *Tiryāqul Qulūb*, (Edition II, page 157-158).

<sup>63</sup> *Tadhkiratul Shahādatin*, p. 62.

His life was thus a clear manifestation of the Divine attribute of Holiness, and having seen him we marvelled as to the Holiness of Him Whose servant had led such a sinless life from childhood to old age, and not only freed himself from all moral and spiritual shortcomings, but was a perfect model of morality and righteous living. 'Glory be to God; and exalted is He above that which they ascribe to Him.'<sup>64</sup>

Another attribute of God is the bringing the dead to life. The New Testament repeatedly states that Jesus<sup>as</sup> brought the dead to life, but is there any one in the present age who can bring the dead to life? Ancient recitals of such miracles are not enough to convince us. We can believe in this attribute only if we are shown proofs of it in our age. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> has, by furnishing practical proofs of this attribute of God, renewed and refreshed our faith in it.

Before I proceed to deal with these proofs in detail, I desire to point out that the attributes of God are of two kinds. Some of them are such that they are not manifested in their full glory in this world, as such manifestation would be contrary to the operation of some other attribute of His. These attributes, therefore, are not manifested in this world in the manner in which they would be manifested in the life to come. The attribute of bringing the dead to life is one such attribute. If the dead were actually brought to life in this world, there would be no such thing as faith, for faith

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<sup>64</sup> Al-An'ām, 6:101.

can only be beneficial so long as there is some mystery concerning its subject matter, and it loses all merit when all matters concerning it are demonstrated like the formulas of applied sciences. Who would consider it meritorious for a man to believe in the sun and in the oceans? Only those people, who discover the hidden secrets of nature, deserve special rewards.

Those who are physically dead cannot be restored to life in this world. The attribute, however, can be demonstrated in two ways, viz., (1) by conferring spiritual life on those who are spiritually dead, or (2) by restoring those to life and health who are lying at the door of death, but have not actually passed beyond it, as Jesus<sup>as</sup> said concerning the maiden who is mentioned in Matthew, 'Give place, for the maid is not dead but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.'<sup>65</sup>

I need not enlarge upon the subject of restoring those who are spiritually dead to a new life of the spirit, for, all of us, who believe in the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, are living instances of it. But I shall cite two instances of the second kind of the raising of the dead.

Mubarak Ahmad, the youngest son of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, once fell ill and his condition became very serious. He had a succession of fits till at last he was reduced to such a condition that those who were looking after him believed that he was dead. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> was at the time engaged in prayer in an adjoining room and somebody called out to him that he

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<sup>65</sup> *Matthew*, 9:24

should cease praying as the child was dead. He came out to the place where the child was lying and placed his hand on him. Within two or three minutes the boy began to breathe again.

Similarly, Miyan Abdur Raḥīm Khan Khalid, son of Khan Muhammad Ali Khan (who is a maternal uncle of his highness the Nawab of Malerkotla and has settled down at Qadian), once fell ill with typhoid fever. Two doctors and the late Ḥaḍrat Maulawī Nūr-ud-Dīn, who subsequently became the first *Khalifa* of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> and who was a very eminent physician—having been physician to his highness the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir—attended upon the patient, but he grew steadily worse. At last the physicians declared that it was no use continuing any treatment as the boy had only a few hours to live and could not possibly recover. When the news was carried to the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, he at once prayed for his recovery, but received a revelation to the effect that death was imminent. Then he made supplication that if the stage of prayer had passed he would intercede for the boy's life to be spared. In answer he was told, *Man dhalladhī yashfa'u 'indahū illā bi'idhnihi*, i.e., 'Who dares intercede with Him without His permission?' The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> says that after this he ceased praying, but another revelation followed saying, *Innaka ant-al-majāz*.<sup>66</sup> i.e., 'We give you leave to intercede.' On this he interceded for the boy's life and on coming out of the chamber announced that the boy would live as God had saved him from

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<sup>66</sup> *Tadhkirah*, pp. 464-465.

death at his intercession. The boy began to improve from that very moment and was restored to health within a few days. He is still alive and is reading for the Bar in England. His father and most of those who had witnessed this miracle are also alive and can testify that they saw the working of this attribute of God at the hands of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> with their own eyes.

Another well-known attribute of God is that He is the owner or master of the universe. All religions are agreed that He is the owner and master of every atom in the universe but we are not told how that is so. Unless clear proofs are forthcoming in support of this statement it is impossible for us to believe in this attribute, for we daily see signs of other people's ownership over their property, but we can perceive no sign from which we can conclude that God is the owner and master of the universe. Indeed it may be said that God has framed the laws of nature and that the whole universe is governed and regulated by these laws. But even so, if a man claims to have attained to union with God, he should be able to manifest this attribute, so that it should be a proof of his relationship with God, and men should be able to believe that God is the owner and master of the universe. In the absence of such manifestation, anybody may claim that he is the master and owner of the universe and if such a one were asked why he should then be subject to the laws of nature it would be open to him to reply that he had himself made it an eternal law that this should be so. There have been many instances in which men have claimed to be God, knowing that there is no living proof of the attributes of God and that if

their lack of those attributes is pointed out they can retort, saying, that God's attributes cannot be proved. If, however, the ownership and mastership of God could be demonstrated such persons would never dare blaspheme in this manner and attempt to deceive mankind. For in that case, those servants of God who are, as it were, clothed in the mantle of His grace could be put forward as manifesting this attribute of God, and such claimants of God-head could be called upon to show signs greater than those shown by the former, for they are merely the servants of God while the latter claim to be God Himself. This is the only manner in which such persons can be completely refuted. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, having attained to union with God, manifested this attribute of ownership and mastership in the same manner in which he manifested the other attributes of God, and demonstrated thereby that Islam alone can lead man to God.

One such instance is that when, as had been foretold by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, plague broke out in epidemic form in India, he saw in a *Kashf* that a wild and savage animal (which he understood to be the personification of plague), whose head resembled that of an elephant, had spread consternation among mankind by the terrible loss of life he had caused by his attacks, and that, after his charges in every direction, he came and settled himself down submissively and obediently before the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. He also received a verbal revelation when God put the following words in the mouth of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, 'Fire is our servant, nay the servant of our servants,' that is to say, the plague was not only his servant but also the servant of

those who sincerely followed him and set a high example of obedience to him in every respect, and that it would not harm them.

Another revelation which he received in this connection was:

*Innī uḥāfīzu kulla man fiddār*, i.e., 'I shall protect all those that dwell in this house,' i.e., from plague. These revelations were immediately published in books and newspapers, and the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> challenged his opponents to publish similar assurances of security from plague concerning their own selves and their houses, if they imagined that the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> was a mere impostor; but none dared do so.

The plague has been ravaging India for the last twenty-eight years, and that it was at its height in 1901, when these revelations were published by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. The total number of deaths by plague so far exceeds seven or eight million, and in some years the mortality through plague was as high as three hundred thousand. The Punjab has been the worst sufferer from it, being responsible for more than three quarters of the total deaths from plague in India. In such a province and under such conditions it is impossible for a man to assert that he and those who dwell in his house would be saved from plague, especially when the security relates to nearly three or four score of people (for such was the number of inmates of his house) and is not confined to a limited period of time but extends over a period of several years. Can a man dare make such an assertion of his own knowledge and, relying on his own

powers, secure its fulfilment? Qadian is a small town where it does not seem to be the concern of the Government or of any other body to pay any attention to sanitation. People who live in Europe or America can scarcely conceive the filthy condition of the streets of an Indian village. It may be compared to that of the villages of Syria where plague has, for a long time, made its home. The house of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> was situated in the centre of the village and was on all sides surrounded by other houses, so that no special sanitary measures could be adopted, nor could a constant supply of fresh air be secured. The house was situated at a level lower than the rest of the village and the sewage of half the village passed under its walls. The village pond was only fifty yards away in which accumulated surplus rain water and other refuse of the town, and as there was no outlet from it the process of decomposition and putrefaction were endemic. (This pond has now been partly filled up). It was nothing short of a miracle for a man living under these conditions to assert that he and those who dwelt within the walls of his house would be secure against plague. This assertion, if borne out, would be an irrefutable proof of the ownership and mastership of God. But thus assurance of immunity was proved in circumstances much more alarming than those detailed above. At the time when this revelation was published, plague had not yet visited the neighbourhood of Qadian. If that tract had continued immune, it might have been said that the soil or the atmosphere of Qadian possessed such properties that the plague germs could not flourish therein, and that the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> had published

this revelation relying on this circumstance. But soon after the revelation had been published Qadian was visited by plague, and remained subject to its attacks for four or five years. Again, if plague had been confined to other parts of the village and had not visited the quarter in which the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> lived, the matter would still have been left open to conjecture, for it could have been said that special sanitary measures and precautions had been adopted in that quarter and that its immunity from plague was due to its superior sanitary conditions and not to any Divine intervention. But the plague visited that quarter of the town also where the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> lived and took its toll of all the adjoining houses, but the house of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> remained unaffected so much so that not even a rat died of plague in it.

In other words, the house stood in the midst of a sea of fire which consumed neighbouring houses but left it entire, as if the flames when they approached its walls were extinguished by the action of some Unseen but Mighty Hand. This happened, not once or twice, but continued throughout five terrible years when the weekly number of deaths due to plague in India amounted to not less than thirty or forty thousand. The pestilence hovered round the house of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> but dared not touch any of those who dwelt within its walls, although during the epidemic many families took refuge in his house to take advantage of the immunity promised by the revelation, and the house became so full that living in it would have been dangerous even in normal times.

This is a mighty sign of the Ownership and Mastership of God which the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> manifested to the world, and every person who comes to know of it, is bound to acknowledge that a Perfect and Living God exists, and that it is possible for man to attain to union with Him.

Another instance of the manifestation of God's attribute of Ownership and Mastership carries particular interest for the people of the West, for the sign itself was shown in the West. One Dr. John Alexander Dowie, an American, claimed to be the Elijah or forerunner of the second advent of Jesus<sup>as</sup>, and very soon collected a large following. He founded a city, not far from Chicago and called it Zion City, and proclaimed that his movement would spread throughout the world. He claimed to heal people with his prayers and even with his touch, and told them to avoid the use of medicine. When his movement began to spread he announced that God had sent him to destroy Islam and its followers before the appearance of Jesus. When the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> was informed of this he wrote to Dr. Dowie that he had been appointed to defend and propagate Islam, and that as Dr. Dowie claimed to have come to destroy Islam, they could easily demonstrate the truth of their respective claims by means of prayer. Each of them should pray that of the two whoever was the impostor may be chastised and destroyed by God in the lifetime of the other. Now, if God really is the Master of this universe, and He appoints a man as the guardian of His garden and another man claims that he has also been appointed for the same purpose and disputes the claim

of the former, surely it would be right to expect that God would aid and defend His righteous servant appointed by Him, and thus demonstrate to the world which of the two had been appointed by Him and which of them was an impostor. This would be a clear manifestation of God's attribute of Ownership and Master-ship.

This challenge was sent to Dr. John Alexander Dowie and was also published in English and American papers. In the challenge the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> wrote:

'I am about seventy years of age, while Dr. Dowie (as he himself states) is about fifty-five and thus as compared with me he is still a young man. But since the matter is not to be settled by age, I do not care for this great disparity in years. The whole matter rests in the hands of Him Who is the Lord of heaven and earth and Judge over all judges. He will decide it in favour of the true claimant.' 'Though he may try as hard as he can to fly from the death which awaits him, yet his flight from such a contest will be nothing less than death to him; and calamity will certainly overtake his Zion, for he must bear the consequences either of the acceptance of the challenge or its refusal' (Vide *The New Commercial Advertiser of New York*).

This challenge was widely published in American papers. We know of as many as 32 papers which published this challenge and it is possible that it might also have been published in others. Some of these papers commented on it, saying, that the proposed mode

of decision was just and reasonable, (e.g., *The Argonaut of San Francisco*).

This challenge was first issued in 1902 and was repeated in 1903, but Dr. Dowie paid no attention to it, and some of the American papers began to enquire as to why he had not given a reply. He himself said in his own paper of December, 1903 :

'There is a Muhammadan Messiah in India who has repeatedly written to me that Jesus Christ lies buried in Kashmir, and people ask me why I do not answer him. Do you imagine that I shall reply to such gnats and flies? If I were to put down my foot on them I would crush out their lives. I give them a chance to fly away and live.'

But as it had been written so it came to pass; that if he took up the challenge he would be destroyed in the lifetime of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, and even if he evaded it he would not be able to ward off the calamity, and that his Zion would certainly be involved in it. God laid His hand on Dowie. Rebellion broke out against him in Zion. His own wife and son turned against him, and alleged that while he publicly condemned the use of wine he was secretly addicted to it. Many other charges were brought against him and he was finally expelled from Zion, a miserable pittance being allotted for his maintenance. This man, who used to live in greater ease and luxury than is available to princes, was now reduced almost to beggary and was not provided even with the necessaries of life. He then had an attack of paralysis and the feet under which he had said he could crush the

Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> like a worm were disabled. His troubles unhinged his mind and shortly after he died in great misery and pain. His death was also commented on by the American papers. Some of them referred to the prophecy concerning him, which the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> had published.

*The Dunnville Gazette* remarked:

'Ahmad and his adherents may be pardoned for taking some credit for the accuracy with which the prophecy was fulfilled a few months ago.'<sup>67</sup>

*The Truth Seeker* of New York referred to the fulfilment of this prophecy in the following words:

'The Qadian man predicted that if Dowie accepted the challenge, "he shall leave the world before my eyes with great sorrow and torment." If Dowie declined, the Mirza said, "the end would only be deferred; death awaited him just the same, and calamity will soon overtake Zion." This was the Grand Prophecy: Zion should fall and Dowie die before Ahmad. It appeared to be a risky step for the Promised Messiah to defy the restored Elijah to an endurance test, for the challenger was by 15 years the older man of the two and probabilities in a land of plagues and fanatics were against him as a survivor, but he won out.'<sup>68</sup>

*The Boston Herald*, wrote:

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<sup>67</sup> *The Dunnville Gazette*, June 7, 1907.

<sup>68</sup> *The Truth Seeker*, June 15, 1907.

'Dowie died with his friends fallen away from him and his fortune dwindled. He suffered from paralysis and insanity. He died a miserable death, with Zion city torn and frayed by internal dissensions. Mirza comes forward frankly and states that he has won his challenge.'<sup>69</sup>

I shall next take the attribute of God which is called *Bā'ith*, i.e., the Bringer of the dead to life. This is the attribute of God which so develops the inner and hidden faculties of man as to make him an entirely new man. Islam alone has defined this attribute of God in this form; other religions have only a confused notion of it. Again, there is no evidence as to this attribute unless we are shown a living manifestation of it, nor can we believe that a man has attained to union with God unless he manifests this attribute in himself. As Prophets are raised for the guidance of mankind, it is of the utmost importance for them to demonstrate the existence of this attribute, for unless they can point out to a body of men who had been spiritually dead and who have gained new life through them and thus present the spectacle of a resurrection on a small scale, we cannot believe in the need of the advent of Prophets, and the object of their advent would also remain unfulfilled. The Holy Quran, therefore, in several places describes the success of a Prophet as, *Sā'at* or *Qiyāmat*, i.e., 'the hour' or 'the resurrection,' from which some people have sought to conclude that the Holy Quran does not teach a resurrection after death. On the other hand, there are people who

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<sup>69</sup> *The Boston Herald*, June 23, 1907.

imagine that wherever the word *Sā'at*, i.e., the hour, occurs in the Holy Quran it invariably means the day of resurrection. The context, however, would in every case furnish a true indication as to whether the word is used as meaning resurrection or as indicating the success of a Prophet in his mission, namely, the securing of a body of men on whom a new spiritual life has been bestowed.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> has also fulfilled this test which has been laid down by Jesus<sup>as</sup> in these words:

'Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.'<sup>70</sup>

This test as laid down by Jesus<sup>as</sup> means that every tree produces fruit like itself and a true Prophet is he who produces in his followers, in proportion to their respective capacities, the characteristics of prophets and brings about their union with God in accordance with the measure of their natural faculties.

This test does not, however, mean that from the spirit of sincerity and sacrifice of a community we must

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<sup>70</sup> *Matthew* (7:15-20).

conclude that the founder of that community was true in his claims and had attained to union with God. A spirit of sacrifice is an indication only of the fact that the members of the community have been able to discover nothing in the life of their leader which would stamp him as an impostor. If people believe a man to be possessed of good morals, or truthful, it only shows that either they are not fully acquainted with the details of his life, or, if they have had sufficient opportunity to study every phase of his life, that he is not a deceiver and that he believes himself to be true in his claims. But it is not necessary that every person who believes himself to be true should really be true. It is quite possible that he may suffer from some defect in his mind or it may be that in conformity with the views of the group to which he belongs he may believe that whatever he says is from God. Such a delusion is quite possible in the case of persons belonging to communities or groups who do not believe in verbal revelation. When a person belonging to such a group or community thinks of the advent of a promised one and sees in himself some of the general signs which may be found in hundreds of men, and is persuaded that he himself is the promised one, it is quite possible, nay, probable, that if he is a man of some influence, no matter however small it may be, he may honestly begin to think that the idea which had occurred to his mind was really from God; and thereafter he may seriously look upon himself as the promised one. As he does not feel the need of verbal revelation, it will be open to him to look upon every idea of his as a revelation from God.

The mere existence of a spirit of sincerity and sacrifice, therefore, only indicates honesty of purpose but does not necessarily indicate a Divine mission. In proof of the fact that a man has been really sent by God, there must be a reflection of Divine attributes among his followers. As a Prophet manifests the Divine attributes of knowledge, creation, bringing the dead to life, healing, providence, mastership, etc., in the same manner those who follow him should in consequence of association with him, be able to acquire a reflection of these attributes according to their individual capacities. That is to say, they should be able to demonstrate on a short scale the coming to life of dead souls, and a reflection of the Day of Judgment.

The Movement founded by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> fulfils, by the grace of God, this test. The glory of God did not depart with the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. He has brought a new spirit into being and there are thousands of men among his followers who have found a new spiritual life through him, and by attaining to Divine realization have found a spiritual union with God and have arrived at the stage of perfect faith and absolute certainty. The attributes of God are reflected in them and they serve as the manifestations of those attributes. A majority of the members of the Ahmadiyya Community, some more and some less, have experienced miracles in their own selves. The fountain of Divine grace which the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> had caused to flow did not cease to flow with his death; it is still flowing and will, God willing, continue to flow so long as people continue to act upon his teachings.

As illustrations of this I shall mention only two incidents relating to myself. The first of these occurred four years ago. I was informed that an Ahmadi doctor had been killed in a skirmish in Iraq. His parents were very old and had come to see me only a few days before. The news of his death was conveyed by letters sent by his comrades mentioning the circumstances under which he had been killed. I was so affected by the news that there was a strong wish in my mind that it might turn out that he had not been killed, and my heart breathed this prayer several times during the day, although I tried to reason with myself that the dead could never return. In the night following I was told in a dream by somebody that, 'the doctor was alive and that news had been received that he had returned home.' I marvelled at this dream, but the nature of the dream was such that I knew that it was from God, although, as I imagined the doctor to be dead, I thought that there must be some other interpretation of my dream than that which was suggested by the words. My younger brother related this dream to a relative of the doctor who lives at Qadian, and who wrote an account of it to the latter's parents. Some days later a relative of the doctor wrote back saying that they had received a telegram from the doctor that he was alive and safe. It turned out that he had been taken captive by the Arabs in a skirmish in which almost all of his comrades were killed. Now, while on the one hand, God revealed to me in my dream that he was alive, on the other, He so arranged that a party of British soldiers threatened to attack the village in which he was confined by the Arabs, when during the

confusion which ensued, the doctor found an opportunity to escape, God thus conferring new life upon him.

The other incident is more recent. During the last decade, plague, which had ravaged the country in accordance with the prophecy, and as a proof of the truth of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, began to subside and the number of seizures during the last two or three years was so small that the Government was able to express the hope that it would be entirely stamped out within a year or two. Early last winter however, I saw in a dream a plague-stricken man and some buffaloes which ran about in the streets. Buffaloes in the language of dreams indicate pestilence. I had the dream published in the *Al-faql*, warning the people that a severe outbreak of plague was impending.<sup>71</sup> Within a month cases of plague began to occur and in February 1924, it assumed the form of an epidemic. During March, April and May the epidemic assumed very serious proportions and the weekly mortality list swelled to between eight and thirteen thousand. The total mortality has so far exceeded a hundred and fifty thousand which is more than the total mortality of the last five years from plague.

I have cited these two incidents merely as instances. God has, on numerous occasions, revealed to me the knowledge of things hidden and thousands of Ahmadis have had similar experiences with reference to the different attributes of God. It must, however, be remembered that such experiences are vouchsafed to

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<sup>71</sup> The Daily *Al-faql*, November 24, 1923.

man not at his will and pleasure but out of the pure grace of God in the manner that He pleases, and at the time that He wills. Man cannot at his will obtain access to the different attributes of God but God constantly grants such access to His servants to increase their knowledge and strengthen their faith and to bestow upon them a distinctive mark of honour. We believe that even now if a people sincerely and earnestly turn towards truth, God will, out of His perfect grace and wisdom, manifest His attributes to them, for He likes His servants to be rightly guided and not to fall into error and drift away from Him.

Islam, therefore, presents a perfect conception of God and opens the gates of certainty and faith, so that men may be saved from the darkness of doubt and error. It leads men to the presence of God in this very life, so that death loses all its terrors for them, and they await its coming with all pleasurable anticipations, realizing that they have found the truth and have experienced the manifestation of God's attributes, and that death hides nothing but opportunities of limitless progress.

## The Second Object of Religion

### Morals

The second object of religion set out above is in fact a corollary of the first. A man who attains to a complete realization of God would naturally eschew immoralities and evils of all kinds and, conversely, the more a man is involved in vice the farther away from God he drifts. The Holy Quran says, 'Those who sin in ignorance,'<sup>72</sup> meaning that the real cause of sin is lack of true knowledge and realization of God, which is a self-evident truth. A sensible man will not knowingly thrust his hand into fire; he will not eat food which to his knowledge contains poison; he will not enter a house which he is certain is about to fall; he will not thrust his hand into the hole of a serpent; nor will he enter the den of a lion unarmed. Men being so much afraid of fire, poison, serpents, and lions, how can it be supposed that they would rush into and revel in vices and immoralities if they had a perfect realization of God and knew that these things were more deadly than poisons and more dangerous than serpents and lions? It is, therefore, clear that sin is the result of ignorance and lack of true realization of God, and that a religion which leads to certainty of faith and true realization of God will necessarily perfect the morals of its followers. But as the subject is in itself a vital and interesting one, and most people

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<sup>72</sup> Al-Nisā', 4:18.

cannot derive any great benefit from mere inferences but stand in need of detailed exposition, I shall briefly set out the teachings of Islam concerning this object of religion.

In dealing with the first object of religion I had pointed out that the fact that all religions agreed in giving some name or other to the attributes of God had no significance at all, and that our attention should rather be directed to the details and explanations furnished by each religion concerning such attributes; for it could never be that a religion should openly ascribe some defect or shortcoming to God. Therefore a comparison between different religions was possible only if we tried to discover the details of their teachings concerning the attributes of God. If these details did not correspond with the true attributes of God, a religion could not claim that it acknowledged these attributes, nor could we conclude that that religion shared with other religions a common conception of God. If a man calls water milk, that will not make water milk; nor will any sensible person be deceived by the mere name in the absence of the qualities of milk in water. The same is the case with the moral teachings of different religions. In instituting a comparison between these teachings we can pay but little regard to general moral injunctions, for no religion is likely to teach its followers to try to win the pleasure of God by, for instance, a course of lies, thefts, robberies, oppression, breaches of trust, abuse, vituperation, quarrels, strife, disorder, etc. Nor can we imagine that a religion would exhort its followers not to speak the truth, or not to act with

kindness or affection, or to commit breaches of trust, or to dislike progress and reform, or to discard nobility, dignity, self-respect and meekness, or to suppress all feelings of beneficence and gratitude. A religion which aspires after universal acceptance and respect, is bound to provide a code of moral teachings, that code being common to all religions. If it fails in this respect human nature is sure to revolt against it, and thus it would be doomed to swift disappearance.

Such general moral injunctions, therefore, do not help us much. They are common to all religions, and no religion can pride itself on its exclusive proprietorship of them, nor can we derive any intellectual benefit from this sameness of moral teachings, for it is the result of compulsion and not of any deep insight or research into the sources and working of human nature and conduct. I am often amused by the attempts of people who seek to establish the superiority of their respective religions and to propagate their faiths by first putting together all the general moral injunctions and then representing them as their own exclusive teachings. Whereas the fact is that these injunctions are not peculiar to any religion; they are common to the most ancient, the most primitive as well as the latest and, if I may say so, the most advanced religions. Even the peoples or tribes that are reckoned among savages and have very crude ideas about religion would, if we disregard their actions, and question them calmly and kindly about morals, tell us something very closely resembling that which is taught by more advanced religions. It is, therefore, absurd to base the truth of one's religion on factors which are the property even

of savages. In comparing the moral teachings of different religions, therefore, we must have regard to the details and explanations of moral qualities, their sources and the means of acquiring them, and the sources of evil conduct and the means of avoiding it, etc.

I desire at the outset to point out that there is a great deal of misapprehension and misunderstanding concerning the true conception of morals and moral qualities. This too operates as an obstacle in the way of instituting an accurate comparison between the teachings of different religions. There is a general notion that love, forgiveness, courage, etc., are good moral qualities, and that anger, hate, severity, fear, etc., are undesirable qualities. This is an entirely erroneous conception, for all these are natural instincts and are neither good nor bad in themselves. Neither are love, forgiveness and courage; nor anger, hate, severity and fear, moral qualities. They are merely the natural instincts of man—nay, even of animals. We find them among animals also, for they too love and forgive, exhibit courage, anger, fear and hate. But has any one ever said that a sheep or a cow or a horse possesses high morals? What we call high moral qualities in man are called instincts in animals. Why should this be so? Why is it that those things which are described as high morals in man are not given that name when found in the lower animals? The reason is obvious. We know that these natural instincts or tendencies are not in themselves good or bad morals, and that it is something else in man the operation of which turns them into moral qualities.

We must, therefore, search for that something else in man, which converts natural tendencies into moral qualities. That something else is supplied by the operation of reason and good sense. Natural tendencies when governed and regulated by reason and good sense become moral qualities, and as every man is presumed to regulate his conduct by reason and good sense, these being the qualities which distinguish man from other animals, man's conduct is termed moral, although, as a matter of fact, in many instances it may only be the result of a natural instinct or tendency. Some people, for instance, are so forbearing by nature that they never object to anything, and some are so determined that they never relinquish a project which they have once taken in hand. Neither of these classes of persons can be described as possessing high moral qualities, for their acts and omissions are not governed by reason or intention but are almost involuntary, just as the fact that a dumb person refrains from abusing others or that a maimed person refrains from causing hurt to others, is not a moral quality, but the result of a physical disability. In short, *the proper use*, and not merely *the use*, of natural instincts and tendencies is a moral quality.

Having cleared the ground so far, we can easily understand that a religion which teaches us merely to be kind, or forgiving or affectionate or brave, does not teach us good morals, but merely enumerates our natural tendencies. Are not all these qualities to be found in animals? Are not animals kind and brave? Do they not love and forgive and show sympathy? We very often see that an animal approaches another animal which

happens to have been injured, stays near it, and looks at it affectionately so as clearly to convey the impression that it is expressing its sympathy with the other. Again; we sometimes see animals licking each other in affection. Instances may be multiplied to show that all these instincts are to be found in them. Such teachings, therefore, amount to no more than directions that we should obey our natural instincts, and have no greater moral value than injunctions to the effect that we should eat when we are hungry and should drink when we are thirsty and should sleep when we feel fatigued and worn out. Surely, we do not stand in need of religion to tell us all this. Our nature is a sufficient guide in these matters. A religion which merely repeats these things proves its own futility, for this means that it is not aware of the true conception of morals.

Can any one point out a country where the people do not love, or sympathize with one another in distress, or forgive the faults of others, or are not charitable to the poor? Or, is there a single individual in existence, who does not exhibit most of these qualities? Then, how does a religion improve matters by telling us to do these things?

If, however, by telling us that we should be kind, forgiving, brave, etc., a religion means that we should never exercise severity, or inflict punishment, or exhibit fear, it may have a claim to novelty, but its teachings would be unnatural. We are, by nature, endowed with these qualities, and it is impossible for us to renounce them, nor can a renunciation of them improve our morals, for all that nature has bestowed on us is for our

good, and its total suppression or renunciation is more likely to injure our morals than to improve them. For instance, if we are told always to be kind and never to be severe, it would mean that teachers should never admonish their pupils, parents should never rebuke their children, and a Government should never punish those who rebel against it. Again, if we are taught never to be influenced by fear, it would mean that we must always persist in a course of conduct which we have once adopted, even if our error has become manifest to us, and should pay no heed to consequences and should not be afraid of incurring any loss or damage, whether relating to our temporal affairs or to our faith or belief. Can any reasonable person describe these as instances of good moral qualities? Morals mean the use of natural instincts and tendencies befitting the occasion, and not their use on all occasions regardless of their propriety or impropriety. On the other hand, the total suppression of these tendencies is both unnatural and harmful. Only that religion, therefore, can be said to have realized the philosophy of human conduct and morals, and to have given correct directions with regard to them, which clearly grasps the distinction pointed out above and lays down rules of conduct with reference to it and does not merely enumerate our natural instincts.

So far as my knowledge extends, Islam alone, of all religions, has kept this distinction in view and has laid down correct rules of conduct. For instance, the Holy Quran says:

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِثْلُهَا جَ فَمَنْ عَفَا  
وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ  
الظَّالِمِينَ ④

'The recompense of evil should be in proportion thereto; but if a man forgives a trespasser, under circumstances which are calculated to effect a reformation in his conduct and which do not lead to disorder or disturbance, his reward is with God. Verily He loves not the transgressors.<sup>73</sup>

A man who inflicts punishment severer than that warranted by the offence, or punishes an offender merely out of revenge in a case where he knows that punishment would harden him and injure his morals still further, or forgives an offender knowing that if he is not punished he will become more daring and embark upon a fresh career of wrong-doing, is a 'transgressor' within the meaning of the above verse, and God will not approve of his conduct.

Let us consider the true significance of the rule laid down in this verse. The rule laid down with reference to the natural instincts of man is that an offender should be punished in proportion to his offence. But it is pointed out that high morals demand that in meting out punishment a man should consider whether the wrong-doer would be reformed by punishment or by forgiveness. If there is hope of reforming him by forgiveness, he should be forgiven and should not be

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<sup>73</sup> Al-Shūrā, 42:41.

punished merely out of revenge for the wrong done by him. If on the other hand, punishment would prove more salutary than forgiveness, then he should be punished, and not forgiven out of mere squeamishness, for, otherwise, he would be deprived of a chance of reforming himself, and it would be cruel and not merciful to forgive in such a case. A person, therefore, who realizes that forgiveness or punishment would be more effective in reforming a wrong-doer, and yet adopts a contrary course, is guilty of cruelty in the sight of God, even if he has forgiven, for forgiveness, in such a case, amounts to intentional injury to another person's morals.

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has expressed the same thing in other words. He says, 'Human actions are those that are the result of intention.'<sup>74</sup>

An act done under the influence of a natural instinct or passion cannot be called a human or a moral act; it is the working of an animal instinct or passion. A horse or a donkey, under the circumstances, would have acted in the same manner. A human or a moral act must be the result of deliberation and design.

This would show that Islam has realized the true significance of morals and has prescribed rules of conduct in accordance with it. Therefore, only those religions can be compared with it whose moral teachings are based on the same conception of morals. To

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<sup>74</sup> *Bukhārī*.

call a mere enumeration of natural instincts a code of moral teachings would be doing violence to language.

Islam thus defines good morals as the proper use of natural instincts under the guidance of reason and judgment. It condemns as bad morals their improper use which does not take into consideration the propriety or otherwise of a particular action on a particular occasion. I shall now proceed to give instances of rules of moral conduct laid down by Islam, which illustrate the restrictions placed by Islam on the exercise and working of natural instincts so as to render them of the utmost possible benefit to man.

Islam classifies morals as being of two kinds, those relating to the mind and those relating to the body. This classification considerably exalts the moral conception. The Holy Quran says:—

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ ۗ  
'Go not near evils, manifest or hidden.'<sup>75</sup>

In other words, a Muslim is forbidden to approach not merely those evils which become, or can become, known to others, but also those that are committed by the mind and cannot become known to others, except when confessed by the offender himself. Again, it says:

وَأَن تَبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوا بِهَا سِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ ۗ

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<sup>75</sup> Al-An'ām, 6:152.

'Whether you make that manifest which is in your minds (that is to say, whether you act in accordance with it) or whether you keep it secret (that is to say, whether you confine it to your mind and do not translate it into action), God will call you to account for it.'<sup>76</sup>

These morals are further subdivided by Islam into good morals and bad morals. For instance, the Holy Quran says, 'Morals are of two kinds, good and bad; and good morals prevail against bad morals.'<sup>77</sup> In other words, a man who adopts good morals gradually subdues his bad morals.

Good and bad morals are again subdivided into two classes, those that affect the individual alone, and those that are likely to affect others also.

These classifications would show that Islam assigns to morals a much more extensive scope than is done by other religions. It does not confine the conception of morals to acts or omissions which affect others, but also includes within this conception acts or omissions which affect the individual himself alone. The Holy Quran refers to this principle in the following verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ لَا تَضُرُّكُمْ مِّنْ ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ،

'O believers, look after the welfare of your souls, and discharge the spiritual obligations that

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<sup>76</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:285.

<sup>77</sup> Hūd, 11:115.

you owe them. If the salvation of another is regarded as possible by your forsaking the path of rectitude and virtue nevertheless adhere to virtue, for, if another goes astray because you have been rightly guided and have adopted virtue, God will not, on that account, be offended with you, and expect you to save another by destroying yourselves.<sup>178</sup>

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says, 'Thyself has claims on thee,<sup>179</sup> that is to say, you are not merely to look after others; you must also regard the welfare of your own self, and provide means for its physical and spiritual development. According to Islam, that which is hidden is as much moral or immoral as that which is manifest. So that not only is a man who is openly arrogant, immoral, but a man who is outwardly meek and humble but nurses pride in the secret corners of his heart is equally immoral, for, although he has not injured another, he has injured and sullied his own soul. As the Holy Quran says:

لَقَدْ اَشْتَكَبُوا فِيْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَعَتَوْا عُتُوًّا كَبِيْرًا □

'They were presumptuous in their hearts and were also very overbearing.<sup>180</sup>

Again, a man who entertains evil suspicions concerning another, is guilty of immorality, although he does not publish such suspicions, as the Holy Quran

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<sup>78</sup> Al-Mā'idah, 5:106.

<sup>79</sup> *Bukhārī*.

<sup>80</sup> Al-Furqān, 25:22.

says, 'Some thoughts of the mind are sinful' (i.e., those that are the outcome of evil suspicions).<sup>81</sup>

Similarly, oppressive, disorderly and dishonest designs are immoral according to Islam although the person who entertains them is unable to carry them out owing to lack of courage or lack of means. Such a person does not deserve to be called good, merely on the basis of such of his actions as can be seen.

Conversely, a man who has the good of humanity at heart and is anxious to serve his fellow-beings and to promote their welfare, is according to Islam a good man, although he may be unable to translate his thoughts and wishes into action owing to lack of means or opportunities for such service.

There is, however, an exception to this general rule. A man who is assailed by evil thoughts,—for instance, by pride, jealousy, hate or evil suspicions, but who suppresses them, is not guilty of an immorality, for such a man really combats evil and deserves commendation. Conversely, a man who experiences a sudden rush of good thoughts or a sudden inclination towards doing good, but does not encourage such thoughts or inclination, does not deserve to be called a good man on that account, for, as has already been said, good or bad morals are the result of deliberation and design, and in these two instances good and evil thoughts were not the result of deliberation, but were, as it were, involuntary. The Holy Quran illustrates this principle in the verse:

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<sup>81</sup> Al-Ḥujurāt, 49:13.

وَلَكِنَّ يُّؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبْتُمْ قُلُوبُكُمْ ط

'God will call you to account for those thoughts that are the result of deliberation,'<sup>82</sup> and not for those that are accidental and are driven out as soon as discovered.

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> explains this by saying:

'If a man is assailed by an evil thought but he suppresses it or drives it out of his mind and does not act in accordance with it, God will bestow upon him a good recompense for having so acted.'<sup>83</sup>

This exception which relates to such morals as concern the individual himself, is also applicable to morals which affect others. As God says:

يَجْزِي الَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا بِالْحُسْنَى □ الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ  
الْأَثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ ط

'God will recompense those people with good who avoid evil of all kinds, whether great or small, and when they are about to commit evil under a sudden urge, check themselves and turn away from it.'<sup>84</sup>

That is to say, if a man, owing to carelessness or under the influence of sudden passion, is about to stumble into evil, but as soon as he perceives what he is about to do, checks himself and pilots himself to safety,

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<sup>82</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:226.

<sup>83</sup> Bukhārī.

<sup>84</sup> Al-Najm, 53:32-33.

he will not be counted a bad or immoral man. On the contrary, his conduct will deserve praise, for he is like a man fighting in the defence of his country though he has not yet attained complete victory.

I shall next illustrate the teachings of Islam concerning morals by reference to specific moral qualities. This subject is so vast that to deal with it in any detail one would require much larger space than I can here afford. I shall, therefore, confine myself to the discussion of only a few moral qualities by way of illustration. In doing so, I shall keep in view the classification which I have indicated above in defining morals, viz., that morals consist in the proper use of natural instincts.

I shall first deal with the natural instincts of pity and revenge. Man, in common with other animals, possesses the natural instinct under which he tries to avoid inflicting pain on others, and the sorrows and misfortunes of others affect his mind in such a manner that he begins to share in their troubles. All persons would feel drawn towards a sick person and would have sympathy for him; except perhaps those who are too busy to pay him any attention or those who may have suffered at his hands. The latter, very likely, instead of feeling any sympathy for the afflicted person, may actually enjoy the sight of his suffering. This last feeling is called *Naqam*, or vengeance and is a distinct feeling which comes into operation when a man suffers pain or loss at the hands of another and wishes to inflict pain or loss on him in return. In a case like this the feeling of revenge displaces the feeling of pity or compassion; and the person who inflicts pain, instead of pitying the man

on whom pain is inflicted, derives a distinct pleasure from his suffering. The feeling of revenge, unless controlled by law, assumes several forms. Some times the person aggrieved is able, or imagines that he is able, to inflict pain on the aggressor, and he proceeds to inflict, or attempts to inflict, on the latter such pain as the latter had caused to him, his object being that the latter should suffer as he had himself suffered. In other cases, the aggressor or his family or tribe may happen to be more powerful than the aggrieved person, or the latter may imagine that a repayment in kind would not be approved by others, or owing to some other reason he may be unable or unwilling to inflict real pain on the aggressor, so he uses the weapon of invective or back-biting against him. It might happen that the aggressor is so powerful that the aggrieved person cannot even use his tongue against him. In such a case, he may discontinue visiting him and put an end to all intercourse with him. In some cases even this may not be possible and then the aggrieved person may merely entertain spite against the aggressor, and take pleasure in the misfortunes and sufferings of the latter and be displeased at his success and good fortune.

The natural instinct of vengeance thus manifests itself in many forms, and incites a person to a variety of acts. To put a restraint upon the working of this instinct and to place it under the control of reason is called moral, and to permit it to work unrestrained and uncontrolled by reason would be immoral.

Islam defines the restraints to be placed upon the working of this instinct, which are necessary to convert it into a moral quality, in the following verse:

فَمَنْ اَعْتَدَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اَعْتَدَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ

'If a man commit a trespass against you, you may inflict upon him punishment proportionate thereto.'<sup>85</sup>

This is the general rule and regulates the conduct of those whose reason and judgment are not sufficiently developed to appreciate the niceties of moral rules of conduct. For those whose reason and judgment have been better developed a further restriction is placed in the verse:

□ فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ

'The reward of those who forgive the trespass of others, intending thereby to effect a reformation, is with God. God loves not the transgressors.'<sup>86</sup>

A person who forgives, when forgiveness would promote disorder, and one who punishes when punishment would harden the offender, are both transgressors, and God loves not such conduct. In other words, a restriction is placed on the exercise of the feeling of pity, which leads to forgiveness, and of revenge, which leads to punishment. It is laid down that when forgiveness is more likely to produce a good impression on the offender and to save him from further wrong-doing, pity

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<sup>85</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:195.

<sup>86</sup> Al-Shūrā, 42: 41.

ought to be allowed to have its course and he should be forgiven. But when punishment is expected to have a more deterrent and reformative effect on the offender, then the feeling of retribution ought to be allowed to operate, and punishment should be inflicted, but it should in no case be out of proportion to the wrong done or the offence committed. This is with reference to the first form of revenge, that is to say, where the aggrieved person is able in his turn to inflict pain on the aggressor.

The second form which revenge might take in a case where the aggressor is a powerful man and the person aggrieved is unable or unwilling to inflict pain on him, is that of abuse and fault-finding. Concerning this the Holy Quran says, 'Do not impute faults nor abuse each other.'<sup>87</sup> Fault-finding and abuse are, therefore, prohibited in all cases, and even an aggrieved person should not have recourse to them in revenge. What is the reason underlying this prohibition? Why should not an injured person injure his oppressor by finding fault with him, and why should he not relieve his feeling by heaping abuse on him? The answer is that abuse is prohibited because it is false and immodest, and Islam does not tolerate falsehood or immodesty. Defamation and fault-finding are prohibited because, instead of reforming the conduct of the aggressor, they are likely to injure it, for, when a man's vices are proclaimed openly he loses all sense of shame and decency and begins to indulge openly in them.

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<sup>87</sup> Al-Hujurāt, 49:12.

The third form of revenge is that the aggrieved party should cut off all intercourse with the offender. Islam disapproves of this form of revenge also. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has said, 'It is not permissible to a Muslim to cease speaking to his brother for longer than three days,' i.e., he must resume speaking to him within three days.<sup>88</sup>

The fourth form of revenge is to entertain spite against the aggressor. This is also condemned by Islam. God says in the Holy Quran, 'We have driven out spite from the hearts of the believers,'<sup>89</sup> that is to say, a Muslim should not be spiteful. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has said, 'A Muslim is not spiteful, and does not harbour malice.'<sup>90</sup> Islam, therefore, permits only one form of revenge and that is to inflict on a trespasser punishment in proportion to the wrong done by him, and even this is subject to the condition that if there is an established Government in the country, retribution must be exacted through the machinery appointed by the Government and the person aggrieved must not take the law into his own hands. If there is no Government, the punishment may be inflicted by the person aggrieved, but it must be in proportion to the wrong suffered; and if forgiveness is more likely to reform the offender, he must be forgiven. The other forms of revenge, that is to say, abuse, fault-finding, nursing of spite, etc., are all condemned by Islam, for they tend to promote evil and discord, and

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<sup>88</sup> *Bukhārī and Muslim.*

<sup>89</sup> Al-Ḥijr, 15: 48.

<sup>90</sup> *Kunūzul Haqā'iq.*

the real object of vengeance, viz., the reform of the offender, is not achieved.

Another natural instinct of man is love which is again common to man and other animals. The opposite of love is hate. Both these natural instincts are converted into moral qualities by the use which is made of them. We can neither love everything nor hate everything; it is necessary to place restrictions and limitations on the working of these instincts.

We find that we naturally love those objects that are either useful to us or which yield comfort or pleasure to any of our senses. But this is not a moral quality, for such feelings of love are to be found among animals also. Love will be a moral quality, *first*, if it is exercised in proper proportion, that is to say, those who deserve a greater portion of our love than others should receive more of it, *secondly*, if it is based more on gratitude for benefits, received in the past; than on the hope of receiving benefits in the future, for the former is an obligation and the latter mere self-interest, and *thirdly*, if it has regard not merely to immediate benefits and pleasures but also to remote ones. When thus regulated the instinct of love becomes a moral quality, otherwise it is mere natural passion. Islam prescribes these three conditions. The Holy Quran says:

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ  
وَأَمْوَالٌ أُكْتِرْتُمْوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسْكِنٌ تَرْضَوْنَهَا  
أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ  
بِأَمْرٍ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ □

'Say if your parents and your children and your brothers and your sisters and your wives and your husbands and your kinsfolk and the property which you have acquired and your business the dullness of which you fear, and your dwellings and your homes which you love, are dearer to you than God and His Apostle and striving in the path of God, then wait till God issues a decree concerning you, and God loves not those who forget their responsibilities.'<sup>91</sup>

This verse describes the gradation in which those who deserve our love are to be loved by us if our love is to be a moral quality and not a mere instinct. Each is to be loved in proportion to his or her proper rank in our affections. God is to be loved in proportion to his rank, and the Prophets, in proportion to theirs, and religion and parents and children and wives and husbands, in proportion to theirs. If that were not so, love would not be a moral quality but mere passion. For instance, if a man forsakes his parents for the sake of his wife, or ignores the call of his motherland for the sake of his property, he cannot be called good on account of his love for his wife or his property. He has, no doubt,

<sup>91</sup> Al-Taubah, 9:24.

loved, but his love is not controlled by his reason or his judgment, and is not, therefore, a moral quality.

The second condition is that it should have greater regard for past benefits received than for present enjoyment, or the hope of receiving benefits in the future. Under this condition love for one's children becomes an instinct and love for one's parents becomes a moral quality. The love of parents for their children is merely a manifestation of the instinct of preservation of the race, but the love of a child for his parents is a moral quality, for the parents have already done what nature wanted them to do, and now they are almost useless. A son, therefore, who loves his parents exercises a good moral quality, for he does so in remembrance of the benefits received by him from his parents during his childhood and in return for that kind and loving care he considers it a duty to treat them kindly and to provide every comfort for them even at the sacrifice of his own. That is why Islam has said, 'Paradise is under the feet of one's mother,' and has not said, 'Paradise is under the feet of one's children,' for every sane person instinctively loves his children, but every person may not instinctively love his parents, and, therefore, does not love them as they deserve. Instances are not wanting of persons who neglect their parents in order to provide for the smallest needs of their children. Nobody would say that this is a good moral quality.

The third condition necessary to convert love from an instinct into a moral quality is that it should have regard not merely to immediate benefits and enjoyments but also to remote ones. For instance, a man

loves an object, but that love injures his faith or his morals. In such a case love would be a natural instinct but not a moral quality, for the consequences of such love are bad and not good. If a mother, out of love for her child, does not rebuke him for his faults, her love is merely an instinct and not a moral quality, for if it were the latter, the mother would have censured the child for his faults, and attempted to correct them, for the real good of the child is in being rebuked in such a case and not in being petted. In this connection the Holy Quran says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا

'O believers, real love is this that you should save yourselves and your wives and children from destruction.'<sup>92</sup>

Hate is another natural instinct, as opposed to love. The natural operation of this instinct is to repel or avoid those things that are useless or harmful, or those that are disliked. Some religions condemn the feeling of hate, and pride themselves on teaching high morals. No natural feeling is, however, to be condemned merely as such, as the use and application of such feeling, on the proper occasion, is to be commended and not condemned. What is to be avoided is the excess or diminution of such feeling above or below the proper standard. Excess of hate would be enmity, that is, an inclination born of dislike, which incites a man to acts of transgression towards the object of such dislike. On the other

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<sup>92</sup> Al-Tahrīm, 66:7.

hand, lack of the feeling of hate on a proper occasion argues a lack of self-respect, that is to say, a failure to dislike a thing even when it offends against one's sense of self-respect, dignity, etc.

Hate, therefore, is not in itself immoral; it is a mere natural instinct. It is only its improper use that is undesirable. For instance, the Holy Quran repeatedly condemns spite or enmity, and describes it as the quality of unbelievers and transgressors, and never ascribes it to the believers. At a few places enmity has been ascribed to God and the believers, but there it means the recompense of enmity and not enmity itself. On the other hand, Islam, just as it condemns enmity, disapproves of the feeling of dislike and hate being suppressed altogether, for they are the necessary supports of dignity, self-respect, etc., which are admittedly good moral qualities. How is it possible that we should regard a thing as evil and should feel no repugnance towards it? All evil is spiritual uncleanness. When we see a man in a filthy condition or in dirty clothes, we feel a repugnance towards him, even if he is nearly related to us, and nobody would condemn this feeling of repugnance. Then, why should we condemn the feeling of spiritual repugnance which arises from our witnessing an evil deed? This feeling is to be commended, and when it is exhibited in its proper place and occasion it is a good moral quality.

In fact all this condemnation of hate and repugnance is due to a confusion between evil and the evil-doer. No doubt, we must care for and look after even the evil-doer, but we must also hate and dislike evil. If we

do not condemn the evil of the evil-doer, we shall not be prompted to reform him. Islam has pointed out this distinction. The Holy Quran says:

لَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰٓ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوٓا ۗ اِعْدِلُوٓا

'Let not the enmity of a people incite you to injustice. Be just, that is nearer to righteousness.'<sup>93</sup>

In other words, one must be just even towards one's enemies. Again, it says:

لَا يَنْهٰكُمُ اللّٰهُ عَنِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوْكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِكُمْ اَنْ تَبَرُّوْهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوْا اِلَيْهِمْ ۗ

'God does not forbid you to show benevolence to, and to deal equitably with those of your opponents in faith who have not made war upon you in order to compel you to renounce your faith and have not driven you forth from your homes.'<sup>94</sup>

That is to say, benevolence is enjoined even towards the enemies of Islam. On the other hand, at another place it says, 'Do not lean towards the transgressors.'<sup>95</sup> Now taking both these verses together the meaning is obvious, i.e., in temporal affairs you should show benevolence even to the unbelievers, but you should feel repugnance towards such of their acts as are contrary to purity and righteousness. At another place the Holy Quran says:

<sup>93</sup> Al-Mā'idah, 5:9.

<sup>94</sup> Al-Mumtaḥanah, 60:9.

<sup>95</sup> Hūd, 11:114.

وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ  
الْكَفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالرُّضْيَانَ ۗ

'God has endeared faith to you and has made it attractive to you, and He has put repugnance in your hearts towards disbelief, disobedience and transgression.'<sup>96</sup>

These verses show that whereas on the one hand, Islam enjoins kind treatment and benevolence towards evil-doers, it incites, on the other, repugnance towards evil. Thus alone can morals be perfected.

I next turn to the natural instinct of ambition. Man desires to outstrip his contemporaries in the race for progress. This instinct is not confined to man, but is also to be found among other animals. A horse going at a leisurely pace begins to gallop as soon as it hears the sound of hoofs behind it; and seeing this the one behind also begins to gallop in an effort to outrun the one in front. The proper use of this natural instinct produces many moral benefits, and a deficiency or excess of it results in many moral defects. A man can derive great moral advantage from it by using it as an aid in moral and spiritual development. For instance, the Holy Quran says, 'O believers, outstrip one another in virtue and good deeds.'<sup>97</sup> It is by virtue of this instinct that a student makes rapid progress in his studies. When used under proper restrictions and limitations, it develops into an excellent moral quality.

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<sup>96</sup> Al-Ḥujurāt, 49:8.

<sup>97</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:149.

On the other hand, the unrestricted exercise of this instinct gives rise to many undesirable qualities. For instance, it produces envy, that is to say, a desire to advance accompanied by a desire that nobody else should advance. Islam condemns this feeling. One of the prayers taught in the Holy Quran is, 'I take refuge with God from the mischief of an envious person.'<sup>98</sup> Another moral defect produced by an excess of this instinct is that a man begins to despise the merits of others, and begins to look upon them as positive faults. In Arabic this feeling is called *Ihtiqār* (scorn). Islam condemns this feeling also. For instance, the Holy Quran says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا  
نِسَاءٌ مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ ۚ

'O believers, let not one people despise another, haply that other may be better than themselves, and let not women despise other women, haply the latter may be better than the former.'<sup>99</sup>

If the feeling of scorn continues to develop, the scornful person begins to abuse other people or to taunt them concerning their descent or origin, etc. Islam has forbidden all this. For instance, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says, 'Whenever a man imputes to another a moral or a spiritual fault which does not in fact exist (that is to say, when the imputation is by way of abuse or defamation), the same fault will manifest itself in the man who has

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<sup>98</sup> Al-Falaq, 113:6.

<sup>99</sup> Al-Ḥujurāt, 49:12.

made the imputation.<sup>100</sup> A further consequence of the uncontrolled working of this instinct is that it renders a man proud and boastful; he gradually forgets his own faults and weaknesses and begins to consider himself superior to everyone. Concerning this the Holy Quran says, 'God loves not him who is proud and boastful.'<sup>101</sup>

Another natural instinct is the instinct of propagation of the race. Islam has imposed necessary restrictions and limitations on it also, so as to convert it into a moral quality. For instance, the Holy Quran says, 'Marriage is lawful to you.'<sup>102</sup> But, 'Approach not adultery,'<sup>103</sup> that is to say, do not seek to satisfy your passions outside lawful wedlock, otherwise the object of this instinct, viz., the propagation of the race, would be defeated. Those, however, who cannot find a suitable match are told:

'Those who cannot find mates should preserve their chastity.'<sup>104</sup>

That is to say, they should take such precautions as would enable them to keep a strict control over their passions, but they should neither commit adultery nor deprive themselves altogether of the power of propagation, for God does not approve of the total suppression or uprooting of a natural instinct. In this connection the Holy Quran says:

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<sup>100</sup> *Bukhārī*.

<sup>101</sup> *Al-Nisā'*, 4:37.

<sup>102</sup> *Al-Aḥzāb*, 33:51.

<sup>103</sup> *Banī Isrā'īl*, 17:33.

<sup>104</sup> *Al-Nūr*, 24:34.

وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا  
ابْتِغَاءَ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا ۗ

'Some people have devised celibacy and monasticism to keep their passions in check. We did not prescribe these things for them, they are their own inventions and (being contrary to the natural instincts) they were not able to observe them as they should have been observed.<sup>105</sup>

This shows with what consummate wisdom Islam has regulated the working of this instinct. On the one hand, it has provided a legitimate means of satisfaction through marriage, and on the other it has prohibited its satisfaction outside lawful wedlock. It disapproves of celibacy, for a strict observance of it would amount to a total suppression of this instinct, whereby the object for which this instinct was created, namely the propagation of the human species, would be defeated. If celibacy were to be adopted generally, the human race would become extinct in the course of a generation. As the practice is contrary to nature, those who devised it were not able to act strictly up to it. As to those who cannot find suitable matches, Islam exhorts them to preserve their chastity till they succeed in finding a mate but does not permit them to destroy the instinct altogether. Is there any other religion which regulates the working of this instinct common to man and all species of animals, including insects, so as to convert it into a high moral quality, based on deep psychological truths?

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<sup>105</sup> Al-Ĥadīd, 57:28.

Another natural instinct in man is the exercise of his rights of ownership over property whereby he spends his wealth or hoards it. The working of this instinct has also been properly regulated by Islam.

The first restriction imposed is, 'Spend out of the best of that which you have earned or are entitled to (and not out of that to which you are not, entitled).'<sup>106</sup> Again,

□ **وَأْتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تَبْذُرْ تَبْذِيرًا**

'And give to those relatives for whose welfare you are responsible their rightful share in your property' (indicating that Islam enjoins a man to look after his near relatives), 'and to the poor and the needy and give not with a view to receive a profitable return, nor squander the whole of your substance.'<sup>107</sup>

The Arabic word, *Tabdhīr*, means to scatter seeds or to scatter away, or to prove or test a thing. The expression, *La tubadhdhir tabdhīrā*, in the above verse, therefore, means that a man should not give to relatives or the poor or the needy in the hope of, or with a view to receive from them, a larger amount in return, as a farmer scatters seeds in the hope of gathering a rich harvest; nor should a man give away all his substance and keep nothing for himself, or conversely, squander all of it on himself and give nothing to others; nor should he give to his relatives and the poor in such a

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<sup>106</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:268.

<sup>107</sup> Banī 'Isrā'īl, 17:27.

manner or in such quantities as to render them idle or to encourage in them the habit of begging or living on charity, or to lead them into dissipation, and thus to make the giving a means of temptation rather than of assistance to them.

Again, the Holy Quran says,

'In a Muslim's wealth those who can express their needs and those who cannot speak and express them (i.e., animals) have a right.'<sup>108</sup>

A Muslim must, therefore, spend a portion of his wealth for the care of weak and sick animals, whether domestic, vagrant or wild.

Similarly, Islam has laid down detailed instructions concerning all the moral qualities, for instance, patience, gratitude, beneficence, righteousness, trust, loyalty, confidence, moderation, providing for the needs of others, care of widows and orphans, promoting goodwill among men, fear, hope, contentment, selflessness, brotherhood, meekness, endurance, modesty, fulfilment of promises, benignity, dignity, hospitality, visiting the sick, honesty, probity, sorrow; and the moral evils, backbiting, slander, falsehood, mischief, eavesdropping, espionage, reading other people's letters, cheating, proclaiming one's beneficence, doing good with a desire that it may be heard and seen by men, hypocrisy, idle talk, swearing, flattery, theft, murder, oppression, rebellion, torture, using with false measures, interference, cowardice, etc., etc., the observance or

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<sup>108</sup> Al-Dhāriyāt, 51:20.

avoidance of which tends to promote righteousness and purity. It is obvious that it is impossible for me within the limited scope of this paper to deal in detail with all these moral qualities. I need only remark that Islam has, by this process of limitation and regulation, converted every human instinct into a high moral quality, and that no other religion, whether prior or subsequent to Islam, has paid adequate attention to this aspect of the question. Even those religions which had the example of the Holy Quran before them have failed to solve this problem. It is only the Holy Quran that has solved it in a complete and satisfactory manner. Other religions have contented themselves with an enumeration of the natural instincts of man or of some aspects of them and have given them the name of morals. Islam has provided us with the most satisfactory solution of the problem which has for so long vexed and still continues to vex thinking minds, viz., what is the true significance of morals? Islam defines morals as the co-operation and coordination of the natural instincts of man. That religion alone can be credited with having provided us with a code of moral teachings which devises means for the proper working of every natural instinct, subject to such restrictions and limitations, as would operate to prevent any of those instincts from trespassing into the domain of any other instinct. Revenge should not interfere with the proper working of pity, nor should pity overstep its limits and interfere with the proper working of retribution; love should not interfere with hate nor hate with love; each should operate within its own proper sphere without colliding with any of the other instincts, like

planets moving in their respective orbits. The operation of human instincts under the moral teachings of Islam may be described as a state governed by reason in which the citizens, that is, the natural instincts of man, are kept in order by the moral teachings of Islam.

### **Different Stages of Moral Qualities**

I now turn to the second question arising under the second object of religion, viz., what are the different stages of moral qualities prescribed by Islam? The graduation of moral qualities is as indispensable to the moral development of man, as the graduation of courses of study is indispensable for the normal instruction of the human mind. If courses of instruction prescribed by our schools, colleges and universities were not divided into grades and classes, most students would be unable to derive any benefit from them. Many of them would not be able to decide how far they should proceed in a particular course of instruction and many would be discouraged at the outset, believing that it was impossible to accomplish that which had been prescribed. The institution of classes and grades, therefore, is not only convenient for teachers and directors of studies, but is also of great benefit and encouragement to the students. The same is the case with moral instruction, or, for the matter of that, any kind of instruction which is meant for the universal benefit of mankind. It must be so graduated that people of varying attainments and capacities should be able to take advantage of it. If the course is so regulated that only people of high attainments can take advantage of it, it will be of no benefit to people of average or low capacities and vice versa. If,

on the other hand, no order or arrangement is kept in view, people of ordinary attainments and capacities will be unable to derive any benefit from it. Again, if it is a mere collection of imaginary and high sounding moral precepts, it will be of no practical use or benefit to mankind, except for the purpose of adorning a speech or impressing an audience. Mankind, therefore, is in need not only of a code of moral teachings, but of a practical and graduated code, which can lead men to moral perfection through a gradual process.

I now proceed to explain the different grades or stages of moral qualities, good and bad, prescribed by Islam.

Islam has laid down both categorical and detailed rules governing the moral conduct of man. It has divided good and bad moral qualities into different stages and grades, whereby each man can check and determine his own moral position and carve out a way for the acquisition of good qualities and the discarding of evil ones. In addition to this basic or fundamental classification which covers all moral qualities, Islam has described each moral quality in detail, and has laid down a perfect order which governs all these qualities.

The fundamental classification of moral qualities is contained in the verse:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ  
الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ ۗ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ □

'God enjoins equity, beneficence and treatment like that between relatives; and forbids evils which

concern the individual alone and are not manifest, and those that are manifest and offend the feelings of others, and those that injure others. He admonishes you, so that you may be rightfully guided.<sup>109</sup>

In this verse virtues and vices are divided into three classes respectively, and these six classes cover the whole field of moral qualities.

The first stage of virtue is *'Adal* or equitable dealing, that is to say, a man should deal with others as he is dealt with by them, and should repay the good done to him with at least an equal measure of good. He should also think equitably of others, that is, he should think of others as he desires that they should think of him. He should not repay good with evil nor expect from others good in return for evil. The word *'Adal* however, excludes all such evils as are absolutely undesirable, for instance, abuse, falsehood, adultery, etc. *'Adal* permits man to mete out punishment to an offender in proportion to his offence, but does not permit him to seek to punish him (the offender) by doing in his turn an evil act similar to the one done by the latter, for vice is a poison, and a man who takes poison himself in order to punish another for having taken poison, commits an act of folly and not of revenge.

The next higher stage of virtue is *Ihsān*, i.e., beneficence, that is to say, a man should try to repay the good that is done to him by another, whether that good affects property, body, or mind, by a larger measure of

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<sup>109</sup> Al-Naḥl, 16:91.

good, and that he should forgive those who trespass against him, except in cases when forgiveness would promote disorder and strife. This stage is higher than that of *'Adal* and a man cannot attain to it unless he has first habituated himself to the first stage, otherwise it will only be a superficial transformation, liable to be reversed in a moment of aberration.

The third stage of virtue is described as *Ītā'ī dhil qurbā*, that is to say, a man should do good to others neither in return for any good done to him nor in the hope of receiving good in return, as for instance, parents do good to their children, or brothers do good to brothers, under a natural impulse. Parents do not love or look after their children in the hope of receiving benefits from them in return. Even in the case of parents who are too old to expect that they would be alive by the time the child grows up, there is the same fondness and love for the child as in the case of parents who are still in their youth. This love of parents for their children, as I have said, is not prompted by any hope of gain; it is an instinct. Parents never imagine that they are laying their children under any sort of obligation by loving them and looking after them. They only fulfil a natural yearning and the hope of a material return or the thought that they are laying the child under an obligation never even enters their minds. This feeling, therefore, which parents or near relatives entertain for their children or relatives is much nobler than *Ihsān* or beneficence. In beneficence there is a certain feeling of self-complacence, a feeling that one is doing a good act, whereas in the love of parents or relatives for children and relatives, there is

no such feeling of doing good to others. On the contrary, there is a feeling of relief and pleasure personal to one's self. This is the highest stage of virtue, and a man who attains to this stage derives a genuine pleasure from doing good. He does not imagine that he is laying anybody under an obligation. Rather he feels grateful that he has found an opportunity of doing good, just as a man to whom a child is born does not imagine that a burden is laid upon him, but is happy and grateful for this Divine blessing. Such people devote themselves to the service of humanity, and find sorrow and joy in the sorrows and joys of others, and the thought never crosses their minds that they have conferred any benefit upon others. Instead, they are grateful that God has, out of His pure grace, afforded them opportunities of serving others. They constantly desire that they may be afforded greater opportunities of such service, as parents desire that if they had ampler means they would keep their children in greater comfort.

There are three stages of evil, corresponding to the three stages of virtue. As against '*Adal* there is *Fahshā*', which, when used in juxtaposition with the word *Munkar*, means secret vices which are not apparent for instance, evil thoughts and evil designs issuing out of an unclean mind. This is the first stage of vice, as '*Adal* is the first stage of virtue. The influence of evil company, evil instruction or animal tendencies is first felt by the mind, and a man is assailed by evil thoughts which incline him towards vice. But there is an inherent tendency in man towards virtue which suppresses and overcomes such thoughts. If they are allowed to take

root they prevail in the end and the first foundations of vice are laid. Then begins the second stage of vice, *Munkar*, which affects a man's acts and conduct. Other people are displeased by such conduct and disapprove of it, but so far it remains confined to acts which affect the individual alone, for instance, loose talk, falsehood, etc. At this stage a man develops only a few vices, is ashamed of them and is afraid to indulge in more serious ones. If, however, he fails to keep a sharp lookout over his own conduct and takes no steps to check his career of vice, he arrives at the third stage, which is called *Baghyi*, that is, vices which injure other people and amount to an open violation of rules of moral conduct. The word *Baghyi* means revolt, and the third stage of vice, therefore, indicates that the evil-doer openly revolts against moral laws and throws off his allegiance to them. He now takes pleasure in vice, and boasts of it, and reproof and admonition are lost upon him.

By indicating these different stages of virtue and vice, Islam has rendered it easy for all persons to ascertain their true position in the moral scale and to take steps and adopt measures for their moral improvement. At every stage a man has a definite object put before him, which does not appear to him to be impossible of attainment and which, therefore, does not discourage him. For instance, nothing would appear stranger or more hopeless to a man who is so steeped in vice that he does not possess the slightest conception of virtue or morality, than to be told that he must so reform himself as to make virtue a part of his nature and to spend the rest of

his life in the service of humanity. The gulf between his present position and that which he is asked to attain to, would appear insuperable, and he would probably despair of ever becoming a reformed man. But if he were to be told that every step taken towards virtue makes him more virtuous and that if he can not altogether renounce vice he should at least feel ashamed of it, he would eagerly follow the suggestion as being practicable and easily attainable. When he begins to feel remorse and is ashamed of his conduct, he can be told that he has achieved the first step towards virtue, for the renouncing of the graver forms of vice is also a form of virtue. The encouragement which he derives from this can be used as an aid towards his further progress on the path of virtue. He can next be told that if he is yet unable to do good, he should at least avoid evil, and should refuse to act upon the evil promptings and suggestions of his mind, so that he should not by his evil deeds cause pain or unpleasantness to others. He will find this easier than the first stage, and when he has accomplished this he will be more than ever eager to advance towards virtue and to renounce his former career of vice. His mind will still be liable to evil thoughts, but, can anybody doubt that he will have attained a certain stage of virtue, for he will be constantly advancing towards it and will have renounced the greater portion of his vices? He may then be asked to take the next step and to cleanse his mind of evil thoughts and to shun all impurity and vice. This will surely be much easier for him than the first two stages and when he has accomplished this, his mind will be

like that of a new-born child, a clean slate on which no impression has yet been made. He shall next be asked to adopt the standard of '*Adal* or equitable dealing in his conduct, and thus he will gradually attain to that stage of virtue for which he is fitted by his courage and capacities.

If this method is not adopted, every scheme of moral reform is bound to end in failure. General moral sermons which do not keep in view the principles here enunciated, are of no value as means of effecting moral reform. One might as well start the education of an illiterate child by asking him to commit to memory the books prescribed for a post-graduate course, or to memorize the whole of the New Oxford Dictionary, in the fond hope that when he has performed this stupendous task he will become a truly learned man. The result will be that the child will probably go mad, or at least his mind will be left as blank as when he started. He will only have retained a few phrases in his memory, which he would be able to repeat like a parrot, without having the slightest notion of their meaning. In the same way, no moral improvement can be effected by exhortations, however fine, of a general nature.

A person who receives his moral instruction in this general manner will pick up his morals from his companions and his surroundings, and will derive no benefit from the moral instruction which is lavished upon him.

The Holy Quran lays great stress upon this graduated course of moral training, so much so that it

says, no man can be a Prophet unless he teaches men to become *Rabbānīs*. *Rabbānī* means a person who gives instruction first in elementary matters, and then in more advanced sciences and arts, and regulates his course of instruction by dividing it into grades and stages. It is necessary, therefore, for a Prophet to impress upon his followers that in prescribing courses of spiritual and moral training, they should have due regard to the capacities and temperaments of those who are meant to be benefitted by them. They should persuade people to give up their old habits step by step, and should instruct them in those things of which they are ignorant, by degrees. Gradual instruction does not, however, mean that some things should be kept back as secret from some people, but that people should be instructed to act upon those things step by step, so that they should always have in view an object which is easily attainable, that they should not lose courage, and that their successful accomplishment of one stage should be an encouragement to start on the next. For instance, all scholars are aware of the total length of the course which they have to go through, but its division into classes and grades and the frequency of tests and examinations serve as encouragement to them so that they are able constantly to measure their progress in studies and, thus, do not feel oppressed by the idea of having to complete the whole course at once.

In addition to these general instructions, Islam lays down detailed rules concerning each moral quality, and prescribes grades and stages, which render it very easy for a man to adopt or renounce desirable or unde-

sirable moral qualities as the case may be. But as the space at my disposal does not permit me to enter into an explanation of these details I shall content myself with what I have said concerning the general division of moral qualities, hoping that this would be sufficient to indicate the nature of the moral teachings of Islam.

## Why are Good and Bad

### Moral Qualities So Called?

In regard to this question also Islam lays down certain principles, and supplements them with certain details. The principle is:

مَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

'I have not created men—great or small—but that they should develop in themselves My attributes.'<sup>110</sup>

The first object of moral development, therefore, is to fit man for union with God, for, unless a man purifies himself he cannot approach the Source of all purity and life. God loves not the wicked and the impure of heart, and desires that men should assume His pure attributes, so that they might be fitted to approach Him. He says:

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا □

'We have created on earth the most beautiful and useful things and have appointed men therein

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<sup>110</sup> Al-Dhāriyat, 51:57.

to see which of them conducts himself most beautifully,<sup>111</sup>

That is to say, which of them develops Divine attributes in himself. So that the reason why some moral qualities are called good is that they are reflections of Divine attributes, and the reason why others are called bad is that they are inconsistent with Divine attributes. That which has no share of the light must surely be dark; and the farther it recedes from the light, the darker will it grow.

Apart from this general classification Islam has in the case of different moral qualities assigned detailed reasons which demonstrate the good or bad nature of each of these qualities, so that people may be drawn towards those of them that are good, and should avoid those that are evil. I shall here mention some of those details by way of illustration.

I have already stated that one of the highest moral qualities in man is the quality of pity which manifests itself in forgiveness. In addition to the general reason stated above why this quality should be regarded as good or noble the Holy Quran states:

إِذْ قَعَرْنَا لِنَفْسِنَا هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَأِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ

'When a man injures and oppresses you and deals unjustly with you, you should deal kindly by him and forgive him. Thus will you strike at the

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<sup>111</sup> Al-Kahf, 18:8.

root of hatred and enmity, and he who is your enemy will become your fast friend.<sup>112</sup>

Punishment is generally inflicted to prevent the wrong-doer from committing further wrongs. Islam says that if the principle laid down by it were followed, viz., that the person injured should forgive the wrong-doer where there is reasonable hope that forgiveness would help to reform him, greater benefit would result from it than from the imposing of a penalty. Punishment would, at the most, avert further injury, but forgiveness is likely to convert the wrong-doer into a friend.

Again, in regard to beneficence and benevolence the Holy Quran says, 'Do good to others, and let them have a share in your wealth, your knowledge and your power, etc., for, has not God been beneficent towards you?'<sup>113</sup> That is to say, God Who provided you with the means and with the capacities by which you have acquired wealth, knowledge, and power; and as all mankind are sharers in the bounties of God, you should, in return for the favours granted to you, let other men share in the things with which you have been blessed.

As regards murder and oppression it is stated that they lead to further disorder and oppression, and that mankind would become extinct if they were not checked. The Holy Quran says:

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<sup>112</sup> Hā Mīm, 41:35.

<sup>113</sup> Al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:78.

إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾  
وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا

'Avoid oppression, for God loves not oppression, and do not by oppression create disturbance in the earth after peace has been established therein.'<sup>114</sup>

That is to say, oppression never promotes peace and order. It is never a source of strength, for it creates agitation and a determination in the people to resist it, and conspiracies and rebellions destroy the peace of the land.

Concerning envy the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says, 'Avoid envy, for envy eats up the sources of comfort, as fire eats up fuel.'<sup>115</sup> That is to say, you are envious of another because he is in greater comfort than you, but envy takes away your own peace and comfort, and thus you only injure yourselves.

Concerning contempt the Holy Quran says:

لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ

'Let not a people despise another people, it may be that the latter may become better than the former.'<sup>116</sup>

In the revolutions of the wheel of time it may be that a people who is despised today may be honoured tomorrow, and a family that is honoured today may be

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<sup>114</sup> Al-A'rāf, 7:56,57.

<sup>115</sup> Abū Dāwūd

<sup>116</sup> Al-Ḥujurāt, 49:12.

despised tomorrow. If a people is looked down upon today, tomorrow when they attain to power, they are sure to seek to humiliate those that looked down upon them, thus setting in motion a vicious circle of hatred and disorder. When the field of improvement and progress is without discrimination open to all God's creatures, why should a particular nation or class or section be despised?

With regard to adultery and fornication the Holy Quran says, 'It is an impurity and an evil way.'<sup>117</sup> That is to say, it is a vice which produces a sense of secret guilt in the mind and renders it impure and it is a wrong way of achieving the object underlying the sexual instinct. The object of this instinct is the propagation and preservation of the human race. Illicit intercourse defeats that object by preventing birth or by rendering the parentage of the child doubtful and thus putting its care and bringing up in peril.

Concerning miserliness the Holy Quran says:

فَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يَبْخُلُ ۚ وَمَنْ يَبْخُلْ فَإِنَّمَا يَبْخُلُ عَنِ نَفْسِهِ ط

'Some of you are miserly, and he who is miserly is miserly to his own prejudice.'<sup>118</sup>

That is to say, a miser only deprives himself of the use of his wealth. He deprives himself of the enjoyment of eating good food, wearing good clothes, and living in a good house, etc. He goes on hoarding money,

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<sup>117</sup> Banī 'Isrā'īl, 17:33.

<sup>118</sup> Muḥammad, 47:39.

and the only enjoyment which he gets out of it is the added care and anxiety of keeping it safe.

Thus Islam gives reasons for commending or condemning different moral qualities, and enables people to judge of their nature.

### **Means of Acquiring Good Morals and of Avoiding Evil Ones**

The function of religion is not merely to point out good and bad moral qualities, but also to provide or devise means by which men may be able to renounce evil and adopt good morals, for without this all our effort is vain and our search profitless. I am unable to say what the answer of other religions is to this question, but I am happy to be able to state that Islam or Ahmadiyyat furnishes a complete and satisfactory answer to it.

The first means of moral improvement furnished by Islam is through the manifestation of Divine attributes, without which the attainment of moral perfection is impossible. In all things man stands in need of demonstration; he can easily learn through demonstration what he cannot acquire through books. In the absence of demonstration all sciences and arts would be lost to the world. For instance, can anyone learn chemistry or engineering or any other science without the aid of experiments and demonstrations?

The same is the case with moral training. Man cannot attain to moral perfection without the help of perfect models and demonstrations. It is necessary, therefore, that perfect models should appear again and

again in the world to demonstrate to mankind a life of moral perfection. It is also necessary that these models should themselves be men for a being that is not human cannot serve the purpose of a model for men. The conduct of such a being cannot encourage mankind to imitation. So we must have perfect men to imitate and such men must appear from time to time to enable other men to mould their conduct in imitation of them. Islam claims that such perfect men appear frequently on earth. For instance, the Holy Quran says:

يَبْنِيْ اٰدَمَ اِمًا يٰۤاٰتِيْنَكُمْ رُّسُلًا مِّنْكُمْ يَفْقَهُوْنَ عَلٰيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِيْ « فَمَنْ اتَّقٰ وَاٰصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَا لَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ » □

'O, Sons of Adam, whenever I raise from among you apostles who relate to you My signs, then those who learn righteousness from them and help them to reform the world, shall suffer neither fear nor grief.'<sup>119</sup>

Apart from Prophets, there are other persons who may also, though to a lesser degree, serve as models for the people. Concerning these the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says,

'God will raise among the Muslims, at the beginning of each century, men who will renew the faith by excluding from it false doctrines and beliefs which may have crept into it, during the course of the century.'<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Al-A'rāf, 7:36.

<sup>120</sup> *Abū Dā'ūd*.

Such reformers have constantly appeared in Islam. In our own age when the darkness of error had become intense, God raised a Prophet for the protection and restoration of the faith, and for the renewal for the benefit of mankind of the perfect example of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. Hundreds of thousands have found new spiritual life through this Prophet.

This is the only complete and perfect means of attaining to moral perfection. All other means are only subsidiary to it. The advantages of this are certain, but those of others cannot be entirely free from the possibility of doubt and error. As, however, this means cannot be procured by man at his own will and pleasure, Islam has provided other means, by which a man might discard evil morals and acquire good ones.

The second means provided by Islam for the moral improvement of man is the method adopted by it in classifying moral qualities into different grades and stages, with which I have already dealt, and which need not, therefore, be repeated here.

The third means provided by Islam for this purpose is that it has explained the reasons why good moral qualities should be adopted and evil ones eschewed, so that men, knowing the real nature of these qualities, may of themselves be prompted to acquire good morals and to eschew evil ones. This has also been explained above.

The fourth means provided by Islam for this purpose is that it has altered man's point of view in respect of evil morals; it has substituted hope for despair. Many

evils are committed because they can no longer avoid them. Those who propagate such ideas among their children, lay the foundations of the moral depravity of future generations. A man who does not believe that a certain object is attainable, will never strive to achieve it. A people that believes that its forbears have exhausted all possible discoveries and inventions is not likely to make a discovery or invention itself; and a nation that believes that it cannot possibly effect an improvement in its condition is not likely to attempt it. Similarly, people who believe that evil is inherent in them and that they cannot possibly resist it, and that it is impossible for them to achieve moral perfection, provides the means of their own destruction. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has laid great stress on this point, and has altogether forbidden despair. He says, 'When a person says the people have perished he is the person who destroys them.'<sup>121</sup> That is to say, no material calamities and misfortunes can prove so disastrous to man, as the conviction in his mind that the door of improvement and progress has been shut upon him. Despair prevents a man from making an effort for success and thus leads him to certain failure and destruction. Islam does not countenance the view that man can ever be debarred from self-improvement and progress, and thus opens wide the door to moral development. The Holy Quran says, 'We have created man with the best capacities.'<sup>122</sup> That is to say, he is endowed with the highest faculties

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<sup>121</sup> *Muslim.*

<sup>122</sup> Al-Tīn, 95:5.

for development and progress. Again it says, 'Let the creation of the perfect and blameless soul of man which is endowed with the faculty of distinguishing between right and wrong, bear witness.'<sup>123</sup>

There can be no doubt that man is born with a pure and sinless nature, and however deep he might plunge into sin, his nature retains some of its original purity, so that if at any time he turns towards virtue, he can discard all his vices, which are all acquired, and can attain to the perfection of virtue, which is inherent in him. By proclaiming this truth Islam has completely altered man's point of view towards good and evil, and has furnished him with fresh hope and courage. Religions other than Islam are either silent on this point, or represent man as entering this life under so many burdens and handicaps that they are enough to drown him without the additional weight of his own misdeeds.

Islam says that man is born pure. This helps him to keep up his courage and to try to preserve his nature unsullied. If he believes that he is born sinful, he would not mind so much if he were to become a little more sinful than he already is.

But to be born with a pure nature is not enough. Before a man attains to the fullness of reason he has to walk along a path beset with dangers of which he is not aware, and the temptations and base desires that he encounters sometimes sully the purity of his nature. If there were no method by which such stains could be

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<sup>123</sup> Al-Shams, 91:8-9.

washed away, man would plunge into despair and would make no effort to regain his original purity. Hence, in order that moral improvement should become possible religion must provide means for effacing the stains of acquired sin. Islam claims to have made provision for this by opening to erring men the door of true repentance, which has been closed by all other religions. Islam rescues man from despair and tells him that he can, in spite of errors and mistakes, attain to that purity of mind and conduct which is the highest goal of man. It thus encourages him to make constant efforts towards virtue and purity, and enables him ultimately to arrive at his goal.

Some people imagine that the doctrine of repentance encourages indulgence in vice, as a man can go on committing sins in the belief that he can at any time repent and thus escape the consequences of his evil actions. No sensible person, however, would entertain such an idea, for how could he be certain that he would be afforded the opportunity to repent? Besides, the objection is due to lack of appreciation of the true nature of repentance. Repentance is not so easy as these people imagine. It is not open to a man to repent at any time at his own will and pleasure. Repentance is a spiritual revolution which changes a man's entire moral and spiritual being. It means true and abiding remorse for past sins and errors, and a firm resolve to make one's peace with God and to reform one's course of conduct. This condition cannot be brought about at will. It is the outcome of continued effort and contemplation. In very rare cases it may be the result of a sudden emotional

upheaval but such emotion would be produced only by some volcanic action shaking the very foundations of a man's being, and such action could not be generated at will. Repentance cannot, therefore, encourage indulgence in vice; it is a true means of effecting reformation. It saves man from despair and encourages him to make efforts towards self-improvement.

The idea that repentance encourages wrong-doing is due to the misapprehension that repentance means merely to ask forgiveness for one's sins. This however, is not repentance (*Taubah* or *Istighfār*). Repentance does not mean asking forgiveness for sins; but on the contrary, sins are forgiven as the result of repentance.

The fifth means prescribed by Islam for moral reformation, appears at first sight to be inconsistent with the fourth, but in reality it is merely supplementary to it. This is the effort which Islam makes to uproot the evil influences of heredity. No doubt man is born with a pure nature, but he sometimes inherits from his parents or remoter ancestors certain inclinations towards vice. This is not a self-contradictory statement. Nature and inclination are two different things. Nature or conscience is always pure.

Even the child of a robber or a murderer is born with a pure nature. But if the parents possess an evil mind, the child will be influenced by it, and if he subsequently encounters evil situations, will be easily led away by evil thoughts just as the children of confirmed invalids are prone to fall an easy prey to diseases from which their parents suffer. Such inclinations and ten-

dencies of a child result from the thoughts which fill the minds of the parents at the time of their union. The effect of these thoughts on the mind of the child is, in most cases, very slight and may often be overcome by environment and training, but Islam has prescribed a means of turning even such influences into instruments of good.

The husband and wife are taught to offer a prayer when they are together, which means, 'Secure us, O Lord, and our issue against evil thoughts, evil promptings and evil companions.' Apart from its efficacy as a prayer, the invocation starts a current of pure thoughts in the minds of the parents, even if they are not ordinarily responsive to them. Not merely the act of praying but the words of this particular prayer, as well as the concern which most people feel for the welfare of their issue, and the natural desire of all parents that their children should lead pure lives, combine to produce this effect. When, therefore, parents offer a prayer for the purity of their children, their own minds are bound to be affected by it and to incline towards purity and virtue; and as the child is likely to inherit the thoughts entertained by his parents at the moment, he will be saved from the influences of all such evil thoughts which his parents may have entertained prior to this prayer. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says : 'Children whose parents offer this prayer at the time of their coming together are saved from the touch of Satan,' meaning, that they are saved from the evil influences which they were liable to inherit from their parents.

The sixth means provided by Islam for the moral improvement of man is that it has devised ways for such thoughts to enter the mind of man as to incite and stimulate his natural instinct of virtue. Some of these ways, e.g., prayer, worship, fasting, remembrance of God, etc., have already been mentioned, and need not be repeated. I shall, however, describe three of those ways that have not yet been mentioned.

- (a) The first of these is mentioned in the following words of the Holy Quran, 'O, ye Muslims, keep company with the righteous.'<sup>124</sup> It cannot be denied that man is influenced by his environment, and a man who keeps company with the righteous is bound to experience a rapid and wonderful change in himself which draws him towards virtue and helps him to get rid of vices and evil thoughts. Islam lays so much stress upon the influence of a man's company upon his morals, that Muslims have always been fond of resorting to the company of righteous men. They often undertake long and arduous journeys for this purpose and bear separation from their homes and dear ones, and by the help of the magnetic influence of such men arrive at their goal within a wonderfully short period of time.
- (b) The second way for moral improvement is the observance of the laws relating to lawful and prohibited things. It is a matter of great surprise that mankind has not yet realized the truth that a man's

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<sup>124</sup> Al-Taubah, 9:119.

morals are deeply affected by the food he eats. On the contrary, the laws of Islam regulating food are criticised as purposeless. The fact, however, that the food one eats affects one's morals can hardly be denied. The Holy Quran says, 'O Apostles, eat those things that are pure, and you will be enabled to act righteously.'<sup>125</sup> This command is addressed to Prophets and apostles, but it is one of the rules of the Holy Quran that whenever a Prophet is given a commandment, it is meant for his followers. In obedience to this principle the Holy Quran has laid down directions and restrictions relating to food, which non-Muslims imagine to be mere ceremonious matters, but which have a great moral significance. It is curious that while it is admitted that the properties of vegetables and mineral foods have their effect upon man, such effect is denied in the case of animals. There is no reason, however, why a man should not be affected by the peculiar properties or habits of an animal whose flesh he eats, and I am convinced, that the time is not far when this truth will be universally accepted. It has been established that the eating of the flesh of certain animals encourages nudism, and that the flesh of certain other animals encourages unnatural vice and perversions. Further research in this direction will confirm the principle on which Islamic restrictions concerning food are based. The principle laid down by Islam is that as man must develop all his natural in-

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<sup>125</sup> Al-Mu'minūn, 23:52.

instincts he ought to partake of all kinds of foods, except those that are likely to cause him some physical, moral or spiritual damage. That is why Islam enjoins the eating both of vegetables and of meat, for some moral qualities are developed by the use of vegetables and others by the use of meat. For instance, the use of vegetables develops humility, kindness, intelligence, perseverance, etc., and the use of animal foods develops courage, bravery, dignity, self-respect, etc. Islam has, therefore, enjoined the use of all kinds of food, in order to develop all the faculties and instincts of man. The Holy Quran says:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا اٰدَمُ خُذْ وَاٰزِيْنَتَكَ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوْا  
 اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿۳۱﴾ قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِيْنَةَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِيْ اٰخَرَجَ  
 وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ ۗ

'O, children of Adam, keep in mind two things which are necessary for righteous living: Worship God with outward and inward purity, and eat of all kinds of food, and do not confine yourselves to any particular kind of food, so that all your faculties and instincts may be developed. Ask those who despise external purity and those who seek to restrict men to particular kinds of food only, on what authority do they prohibit the use of the good things and pure food created by God.<sup>126</sup>

This is, however, subject to the restriction that food which unduly excites certain instincts or which

<sup>126</sup> *Al-A 'rāf*, 7:32-33.

injuriously affects health, reason, morals or faith, should be avoided, for such food defeats the object of nourishment. The Holy Quran prohibits four kinds of food, each prohibition being based on a different principle. The Holy Quran says:

قُلْ لَا آجِدُ فِي مَا أُوْحِيَ إِلَيَّ مُحَرَّمًا عَلَى طَاعِمٍ يَطْعَمُهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ مَيْتَةً  
أَوْ دَمًا مَسْفُوحًا أَوْ لَحْمَ خِنْزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رِجْسٌ أَوْ فِسْقًا أُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ  
فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ □

'Say, I do not find in that which has been revealed to me any food that has been made unlawful except (1) dead animals, (2) spilt blood, (3) the flesh of swine, for each of these is injurious, and (4) that which renders a man shameless and faithless, that is to say, things that are sacrificed for winning the pleasure of some deity other than God, or things over which any name other than that of God is pronounced. But a person who is compelled by hunger may eat of these things, provided he has not voluntarily placed himself in that situation and provided he eats no more than is absolutely necessary. In such case God will save him from evil consequences of his act.<sup>127</sup>

The first three articles mentioned in this verse are prohibited as being physically injurious and the last is prohibited as being harmful to a man's faith. As regards dead animals and blood there can be no doubt that they contain several kinds of poison. Besides, a dead animal might have died through disease or poisoning or by the

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<sup>127</sup> Al-An'ām, 6:146.

bite of some poisonous insect or through violence or old age, and in each of these cases it is evident that its meat would not be suitable for eating. The meat that is fit for eating is that of an animal whose blood is allowed to run out, for blood contains several poisons and is always injurious to health. The flesh of swine is prohibited on similar grounds. It engenders a number of diseases. It is the flesh of an animal that loves filth, and is addicted to an unnatural habit which is not to be found in any other animal. The use of this flesh is, therefore, injurious both to health and morals, but as its effects are not directly and immediately traceable, people have not so far appreciated the harm which is done by it. I am sure, however, that the day is not far when the flesh of swine will be condemned as an article of food and the moral progress of man will not be allowed to be impeded by its use.

The fourth prohibition in the above verse relates to articles that are sacrificed to deities other than God. It is obvious that the use of such articles is destructive of that feeling of jealousy which a man ought to entertain concerning the Unity and Honour of God. The use of such articles is, therefore, prohibited by Islam. In addition to these, several other articles are prohibited on similar grounds, that is to say, on account of their being injurious to body or mind; for instance the flesh of wild beasts, birds of prey, animals that live in darkness or filth, and animals that eat filthy articles, is prohibited. Out of articles of drink, wines, spirits and other fermented liquors are prohibited, for, they tend to undermine reason and injure the finer intellectual faculties.

Islam acknowledges that the use of wine is beneficial in some cases, but says that its harm far outweighs its benefits, and it ought, therefore, to be avoided.

In short, Islam accepts the principle that food affects the moral condition of man, and it has, therefore, prescribed such restrictions and regulations as secure to its followers an unhindered course of moral development. It permits the use only of such foods, in such proportions and quantities, as are conducive to moral progress and development.

The third way of moral development devised by Islam is that a child should be subjected to and surrounded by good influences from its infancy. Islam, possesses the unique distinction of having emphasized this principle. In other religions it is generally understood that religion should regulate the conduct of a child only after it has attained to years of discretion. According to Islam, the injunctions of religion become binding on a child only after it has attained discretion but in matters of habit and routine a child is not expected to be able to conform to the commandments of its faith with ease and facility in later years unless it is trained from very infancy to act in accordance with them. Islam, therefore, enjoins on parents the duty of correct bringing up of a child from the moment of its birth. As soon as a child is born to a Muslim, the *Adhān* (i.e., the words used for calling the faithful to prayer), which contains an abstract of the essential doctrines of Islam, is recited into its right and left ears. This might, at first sight, appear to be a pure formality but it serves two important purposes. In the first place, it serves to remind the

parents of their duty to start the instruction of the child from the moment of its birth. Those parents who realize the significance of this Islamic injunction, will be careful to see that the child is trained to habits of virtue and order from its infancy. It is not to be supposed that they should recite the *Adhān* in its ears at the moment of its birth and should then neglect its training till after it grows up. The understanding of a child grows daily in strength, and the stronger it grows the greater the necessity of training it. Secondly, the injunction prescribing the recitation of the *Adhān* into the ears of a newly born child indicates that the intelligence of the child grows steadily from the moment of its birth, and that it does not attain to full discretion at any given moment. Full discretion is the sum of the impressions which the child has accumulated since its birth. Not a single impression is ever entirely lost. The impression itself may be forgotten but it leaves behind a legacy of developed intellect and discretion. This is confirmed by experience. There have been instances of nervous breakdown during which men have been known to utter phrases and sentences in languages of which they were entirely ignorant. Enquiries have, however, revealed the fact that those phrases and sentences were heard by them in their infancy when they were still in the cradle, and were retained in a corner of the brain. When the objective mind was affected by the breakdown, the subjective mind began to act and old impressions were revived. In short, this Islamic injunction is based on profound wisdom, and is extremely helpful in the moral training of man.

The seventh means devised by Islam for the moral improvement of man is to close the avenues through which sin enters the human mind. I have already stated, that according to Islam, evil is extraneous to man and enters from outside. The nature of man is pure; it loves virtue and abhors vice. Every man, without distinction of class or creed, is born with this pure nature, but it is not by itself enough to safeguard him against vice. His nature only prompts him to do good and to avoid evil. It is the function of reason to point out what is good and what is evil, and the judgment of reason is based on information received through the senses. Therefore, once an error is committed in receiving external influences, man's judgment is bound to be affected in deciding whether a particular act or course of conduct is good or bad, and the error will result in nature or conscience being deceived into regarding that as good which is in fact evil and vice versa. It will consequently reprove him for doing that which is good and will encourage him to do that which is evil. It is necessary, therefore, that all evil influences to which a man is likely to be subjected should be removed or stopped. All sudden temptations that lead man into wrongdoing are also external, and it is necessary to put an end to them also, so as to enable man to exercise complete control over his conduct. A man who is addicted to drink, for instance, succumbs to the temptation when he sees other people drink, or when he sees such articles as are used for the drinking or storing of liquor, or by being reminded of the times or occasions on which he is accustomed to drink. If such a man is kept

away from the places where he can obtain drink, or where he may be reminded of his habit, and if things which are likely to remind him of it are kept away from him, he will, after a short time, regain the power of self-control and will completely divest himself of the habit of drink.

Keeping this principle in view Islam has laid down instructions whereby all those avenues by which evil thoughts or vices can enter the human mind are sought to be closed. It is a matter of surprise, however, that this psychological truth on which Islam has based injunctions which have made a substantial addition to the volume of moral and intellectual debt which the world owes it, has provoked the fiercest opposition to Islam and has failed to receive due appreciation even at the hands of those who appraise the value of all things by the standard of reason.

It is difficult to explain here in detail the teachings of Islam concerning all those matters that incite a man to sin or wrongdoing. I shall, therefore, confine myself to a few instances by way of illustration.

I shall first advert to those injunctions which relate to chastity. Islam does not, like other religions, merely say, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,'—for, we do not stand in need of being told that adultery is sinful. The question is how shall we avoid falling into this sin? Islam tells us that we can avoid the commission of this sin by shutting the doors through which the temptation to commit it might enter, viz., the doors of sight, hearing, and touch. When a man beholds a beautiful person,

or listens to laudatory accounts of beauty, when he hears a charming or seductive voice, or touches a soft or smooth body, and is gratified with what he sees, hears or touches, he is drawn towards it; this may lead to what the whole world unites in condemning as a dangerous poison for society and morals. The Holy Quran says:

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَحْضُرُونَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ ۗ  
رَبُّ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَحْضُرْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ  
إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِحُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ ۚ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا  
لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ  
أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوْ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولِي الْأَرْبَابَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ  
لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَىٰ عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ ۚ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنَ  
زِينَتِهِنَّ ۗ وَتُذَوْنَ إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

'Tell the believers to cast down their eyes and to guard all those parts where evil can enter; this will be a source of great purity for them, and God is aware of what they do. And tell the believing women to cast down their looks and to guard all those parts where evil can enter, and not to display their beauty except what is external thereof, and let them cover up their necks, heads, and faces, and not display their beauty except to their husbands, or their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands, or their sons, or the sons of their husbands, or the sons of their sisters, or their women, or their slaves, or such male servants as have no desire for

women, or such boys as are not yet aware of the relations between the sexes; and let them not strike their feet so as to make their hidden beauty known; and turn to God all ye who believe so that you may be successful.'<sup>128</sup>

These verses command men and women to close all those avenues through which passionate and sinful thoughts enter the mind. One of these avenues is the eye, and the believers are told to cast down their eyes. Another of them is the ear, and the believers are told that men and women should not listen to each other's voices in song and merriment, etc., and should not listen to tales of each other's beauty. They are also told not to touch each other unless there is a legitimate necessity to do so, and women are told that when they go out they should cover their bosom, and the face, i.e., the neck, head, and those parts of the face which it is not necessary to keep exposed for seeing or breathing. No one who would consider these injunctions with a mind free from bias and prejudice can help admiring their wisdom, for they remove all possibility of vice resulting from the relations of the sexes. These regulations will sound strange in Western ears, but this is due entirely to habit and custom, for it is not at all difficult to carry them out in practice. Islam does not by any means confine women to the four walls of the house, as appears to be the prevalent notion. In the early history of Islam we find that women accompanied men to the field of battle, looked after the sick and the wounded, rode,

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<sup>128</sup> Al-Nūr, 24:31,32.

and learnt the sciences and arts from men, and also instructed men in them. In short, they enjoyed all beneficent freedom. All they were required to do was to cover the neck, head and face when proceeding out of their homes or to wear veils, in order to guard all entrances through which sinful thoughts might enter their minds. Confining women to their homes and shutting them out from all intellectual pursuits is no part of the teachings of Islam, and was not the way of the Muslims for several centuries.

The *purdah*, or *Hijāb* prevalent in these days among the Muslims in most countries, is based on political considerations. As the price of a woman's honour in some countries is calculated in money, which constitutes a shameful insult to womanhood, the Muslims dwelling in those countries have, for the more effective protection of the honour of their women, voluntarily placed certain restrictions on their movements, which are not imposed by Islam.

I have sometimes heard it stated that the Islamic injunctions in regard to safeguarding chastity are an insult to women. This is most surprising, for the covering up of the head and the face is a device to obviate the necessity of men keeping their eyes cast down in thoroughfares and crowds, the primary injunction being to keep the eyes cast down, which applies equally to men and women. The insult, if any, is, therefore, common to men and women. It is then asked why are women required to cover up their faces; why are not men required to do the same? The answer is that Islam differentiates between the functions of men and women. The

primary duty of women is to look after the upbringing and training of the future generation, and the function of men is to provide the means for such upbringing and training. In order that man may be able to discharge this function properly he is required to spend most of his time out of doors; his sphere of activity lies in the streets and thoroughfares and other public places, but the proper sphere of action of woman is the home. Islam confers on both freedom of action within their respective spheres, and places restrictions on the freedom of one within the sphere of action of the other. Men are told to obtain permission before entering a house, for that is where women are free. Women are not required to ask the permission of men when going out, but they must take the precautions described above, the reason being that Islam acknowledges that a woman might have legitimate business outside the home, and may, therefore, go out without having to ask permission. But a man can have no legitimate business inside another's house without the permission of the women occupying it and so there is an additional restriction placed on him, viz., he cannot enter it without obtaining permission. There is no question, therefore, of insult to men or women, in these restrictions. On the contrary, they are a golden means of moral improvement, and are disliked or opposed only out of habit and custom. There are instances of Western women who have adopted purdah or *Hijāb* and who find no discomfort or inconvenience in it, except a feeling of shyness and strangeness—which is but natural—for the first few days.

The direction enjoining moderation is another instance of the Islamic injunctions which are designed to prevent sin or evil. It is obvious that an attempt to suppress natural instincts altogether, is likely to lead to a revolt of these instincts. They are like a river which sometimes rises in flood. At such seasons the surplus water may be used for purposes of irrigation by means of channels and canals but if we attempt to confine it within the old banks it may overflow and carry devastation into the surrounding country. Islam, therefore, enjoins moderation in all things, and disapproves of the total suppression of natural instincts, which might lead to a moral flood and consequent devastation. For instance, a celibate, as a penalty of attempting to suppress a natural instinct, always runs the risk of being overwhelmed by a sudden burst of passion which may lead him into sin. Again, a man who gives away the whole of his wealth and keeps nothing for his wife and children, may be reduced to the undesirable condition of a beggar to supply his own wants or the wants of those dependent upon him; or worse still, may become a pick-pocket or a thief, and may thus, instead of becoming good fall into serious evil. When, therefore, Islam says, 'We have made you a people moderate in all things,'<sup>129</sup> it closes the door on all the undesirable consequences of excess.

Habit and custom are another source of evil and sin. A person sometimes feels impelled to commit a wrong in order to find the means of satisfying a habit, or of conforming to a custom. For instance, the manners or

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<sup>129</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:144.

customs of a certain country or class may require a man to dress in a particular style and, not having the means of complying with this unwritten social law, he may find himself compelled to adopt unlawful means to acquire money sufficient to enable him to comply with it. Islam has abolished all such habits and customs. For instance, in eating and drinking it has prohibited the use of everything that is likely to result in the formation of a habit and to enslave a man,—such as wine, liquors, stimulants, etc. It describes habits as chains which it is the function of Islam to cut asunder. In regard to customs, Islam says that they are a burden which men are often compelled to carry out of fear of ridicule, though it is often too heavy for them to bear, as the rich and the poor, the heavily indebted and the free from debt are all expected to conform to them. Customs compel people to commit sins and crimes in their effort to preserve a fictitious dignity in the eyes of their equals. They thus destroy their souls in the anxiety to preserve outward appearances.

The Holy Quran describes one of the objects of the advent of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> as follows:

يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ  
عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ  
عَلَيْهِمْ

'This Prophet enjoins good on them and forbids evil unto them (that is, he is the bearer of a perfect law). He makes lawful unto them that which is pure and beneficent and declares that unlawful which is impure or harmful (that is, the injunctions

of the law are not arbitrary but are designed to promote man's welfare and to safeguard him against all harm). He lifts those burdens of theirs which they could not have lifted themselves owing to fear of social penalties (that is, he relieves them of useless social customs), and he removes the shackles of evil habits.<sup>130</sup>

As evidence of this, one may cite the enforcement of total prohibition among the Arabs, who were, as a nation, the slaves of drink. This was accomplished by a single injunction of Islam prohibiting the use of liquor and the effect was so instantaneous and so complete that from a nation of drunkards the Arabs became in one day the most abstemious people, and wine has never since become a national drink among them. Science has now fully demonstrated the ill-effects of drinking and the whole medical profession is opposed to the use of liquor, yet some of the most civilized nations and Governments have failed in enforcing total prohibition. In short, habits and customs are responsible for a great number of evils and sins, and Islam has rendered a valuable service to humanity by freeing the Muslims from the yoke of any such habits and customs.

What I have said in regard to the moral teachings of Islam is merely by way of illustration. I trust, however, that it will serve to convey some idea of the character and significance of those teachings.

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<sup>130</sup> Al-A'rāf, 7:158.

## The Third Object of Religion

### Social Aspect of Islam

I now turn to the social aspect of Islam. By the social aspect of Islam I mean such rules of conduct as have been laid down by Islam to serve as the foundations of society and to regulate the rights and duties of its members *interse*. These rules are merely practical illustrations of some of the moral qualities. In dealing with morals the primary object is the welfare and purity of the individual, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that the individual is a member of society. On the other hand, in dealing with social rules the object in view is the collective welfare of society of which individuals are members. At bottom both kinds of rules are moral rules. When we look at the matter from the purely moral point of view our object is to discover rules of conduct which should enable a man to live a righteous life cleansed of all evil. From the social point of view our object is to discover such rules of conduct as would enable men to live together amicably and to march forward on the road to national progress. In the first case, we devote our attention to a consideration of moral truths and principles in the abstract, in the last case, we are more concerned with their application to the relations of different men with one another. The Holy Quran has stated the rules of social conduct at different places, but the last chapter is devoted wholly to this purpose. The place assigned to this chapter in the Holy Quran indicates that the beneficent adjustment of social

relations is regarded as the most important of the physical needs of man.

In this chapter the social relations of man are classified under three heads each of which has special reference to one of the Divine attributes. The first division has special reference to the Divine attribute of Providence, and comprises family, tribal or national relations, including relationship by blood or marriage and the bond of brotherhood established by residence in the same country or province. The second division comprises the relationship of sovereign and subject, and master and servant, and has reference to the Divine attribute of Mastership. The third division comprises international and inter-communal relations, and has reference to the attribute of Godhead. The attribute of Providence illustrates the relations which ought to exist between members of the same family, tribe or nation. The attribute of Mastership illustrates the relations between sovereign and subject, master and servant; and the attribute of Godhead illustrates the relations between people of different nationalities and different religions.

I shall deal with each of these classes or divisions in the order just mentioned. So far as the relations between different members of the family are concerned, the most important relationship is that subsisting between husband and wife, for on this depends the welfare of the whole family and in the long run the welfare of the whole nation. The first rule laid down by Islam in this connection is that this relationship ought to be based primarily on moral considerations and not on considerations of beauty, wealth, or rank. The Holy

Quran warns those who are about to marry to consider what effect the contemplated union would have on the purity of their lives, and what sort of legacy in the form of issue it is likely to leave behind. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says,

'Some people marry for beauty, others for rank, and others for wealth, but you should marry a good and pious woman.'<sup>131</sup>

This alone should be the true basis of marriage, and if it is not kept in view in the choice of a mate, the relationship between husband and wife is not likely to run a smooth course and the issue of the union is likely to suffer. The moral and intellectual qualities of the parents leave their mark upon the children. This has been amply illustrated by the study of eugenics. Though the inferences drawn by the students of eugenics are not always free from exaggeration, there can be no doubt that the moral and intellectual qualities of the parents are to a greater or lesser degree reflected in their children. The choice of a husband or a wife, therefore, becomes a matter of vital importance. The first rule laid down by Islam, therefore, is that in the choice of a mate greater weight ought to be attached to the qualities of the head and the heart than to the external circumstances of looks, wealth or rank. Islam does not despise the latter, but they ought not to constitute the primary basis of marriage. If a man and a woman are drawn towards each other on account of their piety, morals, and intelli-

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<sup>131</sup> *Bukhārī, Kitāb-al-Nikāḥ.*

gence and, at the same time, they are not wanting in looks, wealth, and rank, their union will be doubly blessed; but beauty, wealth, and rank, in themselves, are not guarantees of permanent happiness. If all marriages were based upon this principle there would at once be a moral revolution in the world, and the issue of such marriages would be far more amenable to moral and spiritual discipline and development.

A further precaution enjoined by Islam is, that not only should the parties to a contemplated marriage satisfy each other as to their respective merits, but the relatives of the bride should also satisfy themselves that the proposed bridegroom would be a suitable husband for the bride and a desirable father of her children. It is one of the conditions of an Islamic marriage that the consent of the parties as well as the consent of the bride's guardian should be obtained. If she has not father or brother or other near male relative living, who can act as her guardian for the marriage, the consent of the magistrate must be obtained, and the latter must satisfy himself that no fraud or deception is being practised upon her. A woman is afforded this special protection, because she is by nature and temperament more modest and emotional than man and cannot herself make enquiries concerning her prospective husband with the same facility with which the latter can find out everything concerning her. Besides, woman being more impressionable than man, she becomes more readily a victim of deception. The law, therefore, requires the consent of her guardian, or the magistrate, to her marriage. If such consent were insisted upon in every case,

we would not hear so much of respectable and unsuspecting women being made the victims of deception by unscrupulous adventurers. Though Islam does not permit indiscriminate mixing of the sexes, it allows an affianced couple to see each other, so that they may satisfy themselves as to each other's appearance. If they approve each other, the marriage can take place. Islam requires a marriage settlement to be made upon the wife at the time of marriage. This is one of the essentials of Islamic marriage. The settlement is called *Mehr*, i.e., dower. The object of *Mehr* is that the wife should have an independent proprietary position, and should be free to spend in charity or make gifts to her relations, etc., out of her separate property. The institution of *Mehr* is a practical acknowledgment by the husband of the independent proprietary position of the wife and her right to maintain and acquire separate property over which the husband has no control.

In case of disagreement between the husband and wife, the husband has no right to chastise or punish the wife except for manifest immorality. In such a case four respectable residents of the neighbourhood must testify that she has been actually guilty of immoral conduct. He must, however, begin by admonishing her. If she persists in her conduct he should separate from her for a period which must not exceed four months. This means discontinuance of conjugal relations but the husband will still be bound to maintain the wife. If the period of separation exceeds four months, the husband will be compelled by law to resume conjugal relations with the wife. If the discontinuance of conjugal relations also has

no reforming effect on her conduct and the testimony of four righteous men of the neighbourhood is forthcoming, she may be chastised by the husband but her bones must not be injured and no bruise or mark should be left on her body. All this, however, is prescribed only in cases of manifestly immoral conduct. A husband has no right to punish his wife for other faults or neglect of duty.

A husband is bound to maintain his wife, even when the wife is rich and the husband is poor. He is commanded to deal kindly and affectionately with her. The Holy Quran says that even in cases of disagreement the husband's treatment of the wife must be kind and affectionate. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has said, 'Remember that I enjoin upon you to deal kindly with women.' Again, he says, 'A husband should not dislike his wife. If he dislikes one thing in her, there must be many good things in her which he likes.' Again he says, 'A husband must clothe his wife as he clothes himself and feed her as he feeds himself, and should not abuse her nor remain away from her.' Again he says, 'It is not permissible to a man to spend the whole of his time in worship or other pursuits and thus to neglect his wife.' He must set apart a portion of his time for his wife. Again he says, 'The best of you are those who treat their wives best.' On the other hand, a wife is told to obey her husband, to guard his property and his honour, and to look after and bring up his children.

In case of disagreement between husband and wife they are both enjoined to try to remove the causes of friction and revert to amicable relations. If the dis-

agreement is serious, the matter must be referred to two mediators, one chosen by the husband from among his relatives or friends, and the other chosen by the wife from among her relatives or well-wishers. The mediators should then look into the matter and try to discover the causes of discord, and should try to bring about a reconciliation between the couple. If this is not possible or their efforts towards reconciliation prove futile, the husband will be permitted to divorce the wife, that is to say, to announce the dissolution of the marriage. This is again subject to several conditions. For instance, the announcement must be public and not secret, and it must be repeated three times, with an interval of one month between two announcements. Before the final announcement it is open to the parties to effect a reconciliation and resume conjugal relations.

If the wife has a grievance against the husband and she desires a divorce, she can ask for it through the magistrate just as the marriage itself was subject to the consent of her guardian or of the magistrate. If the magistrate is of opinion that her grievance is just, he will pronounce a divorce and in such a case the husband will not be entitled to recover from the wife any property which he might have settled on her. If the divorce is directed by the mediators or by the magistrate but the wife is found to be in default, she may be directed to return any portion of the property that her husband may have settled on her and which she still has in her possession. Throughout the course of the proceedings and till the divorce is completed the husband is bound to maintain the wife.

Another safeguard provided by the law of Islam for the wife is, that her guardian for marriage is prohibited from receiving any money or property as consideration for the marriage. This is designed to prevent the guardian from making improper use of his authority to consent to the marriage of his ward.

In some cases a man may be under the necessity of marrying more wives than one for moral, spiritual or even political considerations, or for getting children, or for reasons of health. Islam has, therefore, permitted a plurality of wives subject to a maximum of four on condition that they must be accorded perfectly equal treatment, both in matters relating to maintenance and the personal relations of the husband. The husband is enjoined to live with each wife for an equal period of time. If he fails to maintain equality of treatment between the wives he renders himself liable to the punishment described by the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> as the resurrection of only one half of his body on the day of judgment.

Divorce and polygamy are often condemned by Western writers and speakers, but it is curious, that after heaping abuse for centuries, on the chosen one of God for permitting divorce, the West is being slowly convinced of the desirability of some form of divorce in order to preserve the fabric of society from crumbling to pieces. Would that it had paused and considered before traducing and vilifying the elect of God, so that it might have been saved the shame and disgrace of having to confess its fault. The West still hesitates to adopt the law of Islam relating to divorce which, on the one hand,

is a safeguard against an indiscriminate recourse to divorce and, on the other, permits divorce as a remedy in the last resort. Some Western governments and legislatures have recently framed laws to make divorce easier but these laws are likely to lead to an undesirable increase in the number of divorces, and thus to undermine the foundations of family life by destroying the sanctity of marriage which is the soul of all domestic ties. The only appropriate remedy is provided by Islam and the only solution of the problems with which the West is faced in this connection is the adoption of that remedy.

The West has not so far paid any serious attention to the doctrine of polygamy, but the day is not distant when it will have to consider it in all earnestness, for the claims of nature cannot be long defied with impunity. It is urged that polygamy is only a device for sensual indulgence. But even a casual consideration of the restrictions imposed by Islam on those who seek to take advantage of this concession would convince an unbiased mind that the institution of polygamy is by no means a device for indulgence. On the contrary, it is a heavy sacrifice which a man is called upon occasionally to make. Indulgence means the seeking of one's desire. How can a man be accused of seeking his desire in marrying more wives than one and treating them with perfect equality in accordance with the laws of Islam? Islam enjoins that in such a case the treatment of one wife should in no respect be different from that which is accorded to the other. The husband may love one wife far more than he loves the other but he cannot give her a

penny more than he gives to the other, nor can he spend with her one single hour more than he spends in the company of the other. If he spends one day in her company, he must spend one day in the company of the other, and his relations with both must be on a basis of equality. Except with regard to the love which he bears in his heart and which nobody can see, his treatment of the wife he loves a thousand times better than the other must be the same as his treatment of the latter. Is this indulgence, or is it one continuous sacrifice borne for the sake of one's country, or nation or progeny, as the case may be?

How painful is it, then, for a Muslim to be told by those who are utterly ignorant of the laws of Islam that the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> had married more wives than one towards the end of his life merely out of self-indulgence? Every one of his marriages was a heavy sacrifice made by him for his country and his people, and the just and equal treatment which he accorded to every one of his wives will ever elicit not only the admiration but also the compassion of those who study his life. History bears witness to the fact that even in his last illness, when he was in a state of high fever and was hardly able to walk he went every day supporting himself on the shoulders of two men, from the house of one wife to that of another whose turn it was to have him in her house. A few days before his death his wives requested him not to move from house to house every day, as it was inconvenient for him, and to remain in the house of 'Ā'isha till his illness left him.

Some people describe polygamy as a cruel practice. But it is the absence of such permission which is cruel in many cases. For instance, if a man's wife becomes mad or contracts an incurable disorder, or turns out to be barren, what is the remedy? If the husband does not marry a second wife, he may be forced into vice, which would be a cruelty to himself and to society. If he is compelled to live with a lunatic it would be cruelty towards future generations and towards society. If he goes on living with a leprous wife, for instance, it would be cruelty to himself. If his wife is barren and he does not marry a second time, it would be cruelty towards his country and people. If in any of these cases he divorces his first wife, it would be a shame and a disgrace for him, for he lived with her as long as she was whole and deserted her at a time when she most needed his protection. Hence situations may arise in which a second marriage would not only be justified or necessary, but would become a patriotic or religious duty.

The next relationship that requires consideration is that of parents and children. Marriage lays the foundation of this relationship. Islam enjoins upon parents the proper upbringing of children. It prohibits infanticide practised on account of poverty, as was the custom in some savage tribes; or the killing of daughters out of a false sense of pride as was prevalent among some warlike people. If the husband does not desire children, he must obtain the permission of the wife before having recourse to any means designed to prevent procreation. Again, Islam enjoins upon parents the moral training of

their children from their infancy, so that they might grow up useful members of society. It enjoins equal treatment of children, so much so, that when they are grown up, if the parents make a present to one of them, they must make similar presents to the others.

If it becomes necessary to chastise a child, it must not be struck on the head or the face, as that part of the body is the seat of all the senses and a permanent injury might thus be caused to the child.

Special stress has been laid on the instruction and training of girls. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has said that, 'If a man has a daughter and he brings her up well he shall be saved from the fire,' that is to say, if a man brings up his daughter well, God shall deal kindly with him. Again, he says, 'If a man has sons and daughters, or younger brothers and sisters, and he instructs them and provides for their needs, he shall be admitted to paradise.' Similarly he says, 'If a man has a daughter and he does not kill her, nor humiliate her, nor prefer his sons to her, God will give him paradise,' meaning that such a man would be fitted to receive a larger share of the grace of God, and not that he would be free to act in any manner he might please and yet would come to no harm.

Special stress has been laid upon care for the health of children. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says: 'Do not compass the death of your children by going in to your wives while they are giving suck, for such an act affects the development of the child.' This indicates that special care ought to be taken of the health of the children, for if a man is required to control his passions for the sake

of their health he is expected to make lesser sacrifices much more readily for the same object.

Another question relating to family relationship is the question of inheritance and succession. Islam has laid down such perfect rules for the regulation of inheritance, that all unbiased persons, to whatever religion they might belong, would acknowledge their fairness and wisdom. Islam has included females, parents, husbands and wives in the list of heirs. It forbids the exclusion of any heir or heirs from succession; nor can a man deprive his heirs of their share of inheritance by devising the whole of it away from them. A will can be made only with respect to one-third of the property of the testator, the rest must go to his heirs. Nor can a will be made in favour of an heir, each heir can get only his specified share of the inheritance and no more.

The share of a female heir is in most cases one-half of that of a male heir. In certain exceptional cases a female succeeds to a share equal to that of a male heir, but there are special reasons justifying this departure from the ordinary rule. Some people think that the rule giving a male twice the share of a female is inequitable. They forget that under most systems of law even today the rights of females have not been recognized at all, and that Islam alone has given full rights to women. The reason for this rule is that a woman is not required to maintain herself or her children out of her own property. She must in every case be maintained by her husband, whereas a man is burdened with the duty of maintaining his wife and children. If a woman marries she is relieved of all anxiety with respect to her own and her

children's maintenance, and if she does not marry,—of which Islam does not approve,—she has only herself to maintain out of her property. If a man marries, and Islam bids him do so, he will become responsible for the maintenance of his wife and children. Keeping this in view Islam has fixed the share of a male as double that of a female, and this is perfectly equitable.

Children are required to honour and obey their parents, and to support and maintain them in their old age. They are particularly enjoined not to speak harshly to them or to injure their feelings in any way, and to pray to God constantly for their welfare.

Brothers are required to maintain such of their brothers as have no one else to maintain them, and in such a case they would also be entitled to succeed to them. Similarly, other relatives are required to support and maintain those relatives to whom they would have succeeded as heirs had they died possessed of property.

Next to the immediate members of one's family come one's neighbours and countrymen. Regarding these the Holy Quran says:

وَالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَ  
الْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ، وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ

'Be good to your parents and near of kin and orphans and the needy, and the next-door neighbour, and the distant neighbour, and your partners in

business and co-workers, wayfarer and travellers and your slaves.<sup>132</sup>

Islam has placed social relations on a firm basis by declaring the rights of these classes of persons, especially those of the poor, who are our backward brothers. Well-to-do members of society have been made responsible for the welfare of orphans. The former must bring up the latter like their own children. Those who are poor and out of work must also be helped and have work provided for them. Again, a man is told to do good to his near and distant neighbours, that is, to persons living in the same town with him, and to those who have come to live there from other towns. Co-partners and co-workers are then mentioned as deserving of special treatment. I am personally not an admirer of trade unions which are the outcome of the social life of the West. If the social laws of Islam were acted upon the rights of workmen could be protected without the institution of such unions but this verse does indicate a certain amount of cooperation and brotherliness between persons working in the same profession. Again, we are told to treat travellers—rich or poor—kindly, so that brotherly relations may be established far and near, and the foundations of universal peace may be laid.

Regarding the relations between old and young the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has said,

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<sup>132</sup> Al-Nisā', 4 :37.

'An elder or powerful person who does not treat a younger or weaker one with kindness and a younger or weaker person who does not treat an elder or powerful one with respect, is not of us.'

This lays down a fundamental principle applicable to masters and servants, teachers and pupils and all similar relationships.

Regarding the general relations of men and women, men are enjoined to look to the comfort of women. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> used always to wait in his seat after prayers, so that women should first pass out comfortably. When all of them had passed out, he would rise himself and the men also would rise with him. On a journey if men tried to drive the camels fast, he would say, 'Mind the glass,' meaning they should not go too fast as the women would be rendered uncomfortable.

Men are told not to enter their own houses without advance intimation on return from a long journey. They must arrive home during day-time and after previous notice of the time of arrival, so that the women may have time to arrange everything for their reception.

Another injunction regarding women is that they should not be separated from their children. This indicates a general principle that relatives should not be separated from relatives and should be allowed to meet and visit each other. All such things as are likely to cause discord are prohibited. For instance, it is laid down that the making of false charges should be severely punished. A man should not make a proposal of

marriage, where another man has made a proposal before him, till the latter is finally rejected.

I now turn to the duties of a citizen as explained by Islam. Islam requires every man to earn his living and not to live an idle life. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has said: 'The best food is that which a man earns with the labour of his own hands,' and, again, 'The prophet David<sup>as</sup> used to earn his own living.'

Another duty of a Muslim citizen is to eschew begging. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> laid special stress on this and always taught people to refrain from begging, for it is a humiliation which a Muslim ought to avoid. He is reported to have said,

'It is permissible only for three persons to beg, first, a man who is trying to avoid begging by seeking work but can find no work or is unable to do any work; secondly, a person upon whom some penalty has been imposed which is manifestly beyond his means, in such a case, a subscription might be raised for him; and thirdly, people upon whom a fine has been imposed as a class, for instance, where one man has committed an offence and the whole of his tribe has been penalized.'

Another duty of a Muslim citizen is that he should greet everybody he meets with the salutation, 'Peace of God be upon you,' thus laying the foundations of good fellowship. He should also shake hands with his friends and acquaintances whom he should meet.

Again, a Muslim is required to visit those of his friends and neighbours who may be ill, to console and cheer them.

Before entering a house a Muslim must obtain the permission of the inmates, and must greet them with the salutation of peace. If there is no answer, or if those he wants to see are not free to see him, he should come away and not entertain any feeling of annoyance.

If a Muslim should chance to hear somebody speak ill of another he should not carry the tale to the latter, for, as the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has said,

'A man who slanders another in his absence is like a person who shoots an arrow at another but the arrow misses its mark, and the man who conveys the slander to the person about whom it was spoken is like a person who directs that arrow to its mark.'

Again, Muslims are enjoined to help in performing the obsequies of a Muslim who dies in their town or village. They must also attend the funeral and arrange the burial, etc. But all of them are not required to go. If, however, none of them goes, all are equally guilty of neglect. Muslims have always regarded the performance of this duty as a special act of piety, and the companions of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> used to accompany the funerals even of non-Muslims.

Again, Muslims are told to avoid undignified conduct and such conduct as is likely to offend or annoy others. The Holy Quran says that the Muslims should walk in the streets and bazaars in a dignified manner.

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> once observed a man walking in the street with only one shoe on. He admonished him and told him to put on both shoes or to walk barefooted altogether. Muslims must not throw refuse into streets or public places. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has said that God is displeased with a man who throws refuse on to streets or places of public resort. On the other hand, Muslims are required to help in keeping such places clean and free from obstruction or danger. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says,

'God is pleased with a man who removes from a road that which is likely to cause annoyance or obstruction.'

Again Muslims are prohibited from quarreling in public places, and thus disturbing the peace and comfort of others. They are also prohibited from doing anything which is likely to contaminate water used by the public. They must not utter abuse, or do any other act likely to offend or annoy; as going about naked or the like. A Muslim must not sell deleterious and injurious substances,—for instance food which is not fit for human consumption, or which is likely to produce disease or some disorder, or goods which have deteriorated and are no longer fit for the purpose for which they were meant. He cannot take shelter himself behind the maxim *Caveat emptor* but must himself take care not to sell or offer for sale any thing which is either injurious or harmful.

Another duty of a Muslim is to exhort people to virtue and to warn them against evil. But he must do so

with kindness and affection, lest people out of contrariness, should recede further from virtue. He must also teach people that which he knows and should not keep his knowledge or skill a secret, but should admit the public to its benefits, for the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has said that a man who keeps the knowledge of a particular thing secret and refuses to disclose it when he is asked about it, shall be bridled with a fiery bridle on the Day of Judgment. This does not mean that a man should not profit by his inventions, and that he should make them public. The object is that sciences, arts and learning should not be allowed to disappear by being hidden and confined in the bosoms of particular individuals. It is, however, permissible to use one's knowledge and skill for one's own profit and for the benefit of the public, and the system of registration and patents ensures not only the profit of the inventor but also the permanent preservation of the invention.

A Muslim is required to be brave but not tyrannical. He must not oppress the weak, the poor, women or children, or even animals. It is related of Abdullah, son of Umar<sup>ra</sup> the second caliph that he saw some boys who had made a target of a live animal. When they saw Abdullah they ran away, and Abdullah exclaimed, 'God is displeased with those who have done this, for I have heard the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> say, 'God is displeased with those who make a target of a live animal for sport,'" that is to say those who tie down or secure an animal for the purpose of shooting at it. Islam does not, however, prohibit hunting or shooting. This Islamic injunction, which was laid down more than thirteen centuries ago,

is in advance of the ideas of some of the so-called civilized nations of the twentieth century. Only recently the pastime of shooting tame pigeons, which was indulged in some of the Western countries, had to be prohibited by law.

Similarly, it is related that the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> once saw a donkey which had been branded on the head. He was very displeased and forbade the branding of animals on the head, as that must be very painful and said that in future animals should be branded on the leg.

On another occasion he saw somebody who had caught the young ones of a dove. He told them to set them free and not to torture the mother. At another time he said, 'God takes pity on a man who pities animals and feeds them and gives them drink.'

Another duty of a Muslim is not to endanger the lives and safety of others. For instance, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has prohibited people of an infected area from going outside that area, and people from other areas from entering an infected area. This injunction anticipated by a matter of centuries quarantine regulations and other similar measures, which are supposed to be the result of the wisdom gained from modern science and research.

Another duty of a Muslim is to help his friends and neighbours in need by loans of money, etc., but he may not in such a case stipulate for any return for the use of that which is loaned. A Muslim should have wide sympathies and a generous disposition, and should regard it as a duty to render assistance to his less fortunate brethren. He should earn his living by work and

labour, and should not seek to make a profit out of the misfortunes of others, or by encouraging in them extravagance or improvidence. He is, therefore, prohibited from lending money on interest.

A Muslim should be ever ready to make sacrifices for national and patriotic causes, and should be active in the discharge of his civic duties and responsibilities. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has said, 'A man who is killed in the defence of his property, will be accepted of God.' The Holy Quran says, 'Why do you hesitate to fight, when your brothers and sisters are being oppressed by tyrants?'

Another duty of a Muslim is to save the life of a person who is in danger; and if he fails to render assistance in such a case he draws upon himself the anger of God. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has said, 'A man who sees another being murdered and does not render him any assistance or make an effort to save him, is under the curse of God.' It is, therefore, the duty of a Muslim to rescue the drowning, help in putting out fires, and to render assistance in times of calamity like earthquakes, mining disasters, railway collisions, volcanic eruptions, storms, etc. In short, whenever and wherever there is danger to life and security, a Muslim must render every assistance in his power towards the work of rescue; if he fails in this duty, he is answerable to God for his default, and would not deserve the grace and mercy of God.

Again, a Muslim is prohibited from pointing a weapon or an arm even playfully at another. A disregard

of this direction is responsible for the loss of scores of lives every year.

Then, a Muslim must never lose courage or give way to despair. He should ever stand firm like a rock in the midst of trials and misfortunes. The winds of calamity may not shake him and the waves of disaster may beat against him in vain. He must battle with failures and defeat till he wins his way to success or dies in the effort. Islam makes a man brave, and a Muslim never seeks to escape from, or shirk, his responsibilities by such cowardly means as suicide or self-destruction.

Such is a Muslim! But by Muslim I do not mean the so-called Muslim of today who has entirely forsaken Islam and looks to the West for moral and spiritual sustenance of every description. By a Muslim I mean the Muslim of thirteen hundred years ago, whose type has been revived in the present age by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>.

An important aspect of social relations which is being sadly neglected today is the care and upbringing of orphans. A people that neglect its orphans can never hope to win in the race for progress. Islam has, therefore, laid down suitable rules for the care of orphans. It requires that a guardian should be appointed for the person and property of an orphan, the nearest blood relation being entitled to be appointed the guardian of a minor. The guardian should manage the property of the minor on his behalf, and look after the upbringing and welfare of his ward. If he is poor, an honorarium may be paid to him for his trouble and for the time which he has

to spend in looking after the minor and his affairs. If he is in easy circumstances no payment is to be made to him. The guardian should bring up the minor to some trade or calling suitable to his capacities and circumstances. Special attention is directed to be paid to the manners and morals of the minor. He should not be left entirely free to pursue his own devices, nor should he be dealt with so strictly as to repress his spirits and to stamp out his initiative. He should be treated with kindness and affection, for he has already been deprived of that most priceless blessing, the love of his parents. When he attains to years of discretion it becomes the duty of the State to assess his capacities and judgment. If he is then found capable of looking after his own affairs he should be released from the care of his guardian and his property should be handed over to him. If his judgment is found to be so defective as to render him incapable of looking after his own affairs he should continue under the care of his guardian and his property should also continue to be administered by the latter, a suitable allowance being made for the maintenance of the ward.

Another important aspect of social relations is that of creditor and debtor. There are occasions when a man is forced to seek a temporary loan to tide him over his difficulties. To meet such contingencies Islam has permitted loans and mortgages. Those who are in easy circumstances are under obligation to help those who are in need of financial assistance by loans with or without security. Islam makes it obligatory that all contracts of loan or mortgage should be reduced to writing, so as to avoid subsequent disputes in regard to

their terms, which are a frequent cause of disturbance of social peace. It is laid down that the bond should be written or dictated by the debtor and should be attested by at least two witnesses. A term should be fixed for the repayment of the loan; for, unpleasantness very often arises from the fact that the creditor expects to be repaid soon while the debtor contemplates the loan to be for a long period. The debtor must repay the loan before the expiry of the term fixed for repayment, but if he is unable to do so owing to circumstances which are beyond his control, the creditor should extend the term and wait till the debtor is in easier circumstances. If the creditor himself is hard pressed for money and is unable to wait further, and, the debtor is, owing to no fault of his, unable to pay, other people should subscribe the amount between themselves and pay off the debt. If a debtor dies without paying his debts, they may be recovered from his property. If he has left no property, then those who would have been his heirs had he left property must pay off his debts, and if there are no heirs, the State is responsible for the payment of his debts. It is regarded as meritorious that a debtor should, when repaying a loan, pay something over and above the amount of the loan. This additional payment, however, is not obligatory, and if the debtor intends to make such payment he should not make mention of his intention in advance, for, in that case, the payment would assume the character of interest, the giving and taking of which is prohibited by Islam.

Commerce, again, has a large share in the maintenance and progress of society, and this paper will be

incomplete if I fail to touch on some of the injunctions laid down by Islam relating to commerce. Islam forbids the use of false weights and measures and enjoins the giving of full measure. Traders are prohibited from selling defective articles or goods which are rotten and useless. A trader must not try to conceal the defects of an article which he offers for sale. For instance, he must not cover up wet grain with dry grain and attempt to sell it off as dry grain, or roll up that portion of a piece of cloth which may be defective and offer the whole piece for sale as if it were sound. If there is any such defect in an article the buyer should be informed of it. If such an article is sold without the buyer being informed of its true condition, he has a right to return it when he discovers the fault. In other cases, a transaction of sale cannot be cancelled after the goods have been delivered and the price has been paid.

Again, a trader is prohibited from charging different rates from different people. He is at liberty to fix any reasonable rate he pleases, but the rate must be the same in the case of all buyers, except when some personal relationship between the seller and the buyer justifies a reduction; for instance, when the buyer is a relative, teacher, friend, neighbour or fellow trader, etc., of the seller.

In the case of sales of goods also Islam requires that the transaction should either be evidenced by writing or by witnesses, so that no dispute as to the fact of the sale, or the quality, ownership, or price of the goods should subsequently arise between the parties.

A buyer must not resell goods purchased by him without seeing or weighing them, for this opens the door to disputes and disagreements. If there is a shortage or defect in the quality of the goods each seller will, in such a case, try to shift the responsibility on to the one from whom he had himself purchased the goods.

Again, Islam forbids false competition, or swelling prices at an auction by false bids, or deceiving a prospective buyer as to prices by procuring fictitious offers.

Traders and purchasers are forbidden to go out of the market and make bargains with intending sellers coming into a town with articles and goods for sale. The goods must be permitted to come into the market so that the owners may ascertain the state of the market with regard to their wares to avoid their becoming the victims of any sharp practices.

Islam forbids trading in unascertained goods; the goods must be ascertained and specified either by the buyer himself or his agent. Sales in the form of lotteries are prohibited and so is speculation in connection with the fluctuations of prices, for these are merely different forms of gambling and do not fall within the category of legitimate trade or commerce.

Another aspect of social relations is that relating to conferences, meetings and social functions. These are intimately connected with the social life of man and have deep and far reaching consequences. I shall, therefore, state the teachings of Islam concerning these matters also.

With regard to invitations to meals, at homes, etc., Islam teaches that persons who are invited to such functions should accept the invitation; for, participation in such functions promotes mutual goodwill and affection, and a refusal without any valid excuse may adversely affect the maintenance and promotion of friendly relations. But nobody must go to any such function uninvited. If a person who is invited should happen to be accompanied by one who is not invited, the former must obtain the permission of the host before asking his companion in. Guests should not arrive before time. In cases of invitations to meals particular regard must be had to cleanliness, and everybody should wash their hands before sitting down to eat. Before commencing to eat the grace and blessings of God should be asked. Food must not be devoured in a greedy manner, and everybody must eat of that which is placed nearest to him. The quality of the food must not be criticized, nor must it be praised in a manner which savours of flattery or adulation. All must wash their hands and clean their mouths and pray after the conclusion of the meal, asking the blessings and grace of God for the host and his people, who have been put to trouble and expense in providing the meal. Unless the host requests them to stay on, the guests must not tarry long after the meal but should leave soon after it.

With respect to meetings and conferences, Islam teaches that only three kinds of associations or meetings can be productive of good. First, those that are founded or held with the object of promoting the welfare of the poor and the needy. Secondly, those the object of which

is to promote the spread and propagation of, or investigations and research into, sciences, learning, arts, etc. Thirdly, those established for the purpose of settling disputes and removing causes of friction whether in domestic, national, political or international spheres. This includes associations for the purpose of studying and directing the political affairs of a nation or a country, for, their object also is to promote peace among mankind.

Islam teaches that on all occasions when men come together in large numbers, particular attention must be paid to cleanliness and hygiene and the feelings and susceptibilities of others in the matter of personal tastes and inclinations. For instance, nobody should go to a meeting or a gathering after eating or, using articles the uses of which are likely to offend the tastes or feelings of others, such as onions, raw garlic, tobacco, etc. Everybody should bathe and put on clean clothes and, if possible, use some pleasant perfume before proceeding to the place of concourse or meeting, so that the air may be purified and a pleasant and cheerful atmosphere may be promoted.

People should not sit very close together lest their breathing should offend each other. People suffering from infectious diseases must keep away from such occasions and places, lest infection should spread. Special stress is laid on this injunction. It is related that the caliph Umar<sup>ra</sup> prohibited a man suffering from leprosy from proceeding to the Ka'ba to perform the prescribed circuits and told him to spend the greater part

of his time inside his house and not to repair to places of public resort.

When a person addresses an assembly, all present should turn towards him and should listen carefully to what he has to say. No interruption or disturbance is permitted, however disagreeable the speech. The speaker is required to speak slowly and with dignity, so that all present may be able to follow him.

Each speaker must await his turn to speak, and more persons than one must not speak at the same time. Each speaker should address the president.

Room should be made for late arrivals, and nobody should leave without the permission of the president. When a person leaves his seat temporarily, intending to return to it, no one should occupy it. Where two persons are sitting next to each other in a manner which indicates that they wish to be next to each other, another person should not go and sit between them even when there is room between them. Where there are only three persons present, two of them should not speak to each other in a manner which should lead the third to suspect that they are talking about him.

This is a brief abstract of those social rules of conduct, which the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> has taught us or which we have extracted under his instructions from the principles of Islam. It presents an accurate picture of the social side of Islam and Ahmadiyyat.

## **Relations between the Rulers and the Ruled.**

### **Master and Servant**

I now turn to the teachings of Islam regulating the relations between the ruler and the ruled, the master and the servant and the rich and the poor. By the word 'poor' in this context I do not mean those indigent people who subsist on the charity of others, but people who are not in a position to exercise any authority over or to employ any class of persons as servants. For this purpose I have used the terms rich and poor advisedly, for what I desire to say in this connection can be more clearly conveyed by the use of these terms.

In dealing with this portion of the subject the first question with which we are faced is, how does Islam define the sovereign, or the State? In Islamic terminology the sovereign or *Khalifah* is that representative individual whom the people of a country elect for the protection and supervision of their individual and collective rights. Islam does not acknowledge any form of government other than a representative government. The Holy Quran has used the word, *Amānat* (trust), in describing the Islamic conception of government, that is to say, the *Khalifah* exercises power that is entrusted to him by the people, and not power which is assumed by him of his own will or which is inherited by him as a birthright. This word alone is sufficient to illustrate the nature and powers of the Islamic form of government. The Holy Quran does not speak of the authority to rule as something proceeding from the sovereign to the subject, but as something proceeding from the subject to the sovereign. For a full appreciation, however, of the

Islamic conception of the State, it is necessary to quote the verse, which in brief but comprehensive terms describes the nature and duties of the rulers and the ruled. The Holy Quran says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا ۚ وَإِذْ أَكَلْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ  
أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا □

'God commands you to entrust the responsibility of government to those worthy of it, and those of you who become rulers, should rule justly; God admonishes you with that which is excellent, verily He is the Hearing, the Seeing.'<sup>133</sup>

In the first part of this verse the people are told that it lies with them to choose their rulers, and that no one else can appoint a ruler over them, that is to say, sovereignty is not hereditary and nobody is entitled to become a sovereign merely because he happens to be the son or heir of a previous sovereign. Rulership is then defined as a valuable trust and the people are admonished not to entrust it to a person who is not worthy of the trust, but to place the responsibility on the shoulders of him who is capable of discharging it adequately, honestly and faithfully. Then, we are told that government is not an independent thing in itself, but is a mere delegation of powers for the purpose of enforcing and protecting certain rights which the people cannot individually enforce and protect. It is, therefore, a trust, and not property. The right to rule vests primarily in the community and not in the sovereign. The latter, how-

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<sup>133</sup> Al-Nisā', 4:59.

ever, is told that the authority vested in him is in the nature of a trust and that he must not abuse or misuse it, and must hand it over to the beneficiaries, at the time of his death, without deterioration or diminution, that is to say, he must be vigilant in the protection of national and individual interests and rights, and that he has no power to surrender or damage any part of them. Rulers and officials are next told to discharge the respective duties of their offices justly, and faithfully. The verse then goes on to indicate that the Muslims would abandon this mode of government and would, in imitation of other people, revert to the monarchial and hereditary form of government, but that the admonition of God—that is, that the Muslims should stick to the representative form of government, choose their best brains to rule over them and avoid the hereditary system of government—is the best counsel. The concluding words of the verse indicate that God has prescribed this mode of government because He is aware of the evils of other forms of government adopted by man and because He has heard the prayers of those who suffered under them, and that, therefore, the Muslims should adhere to it and thus show their gratitude for the favour that God has done them.

From this it is clear that the Islamic form of government must be based on an elective and representative system, and that the sovereign is to be regarded as the representative of the people in their collective and not their individual capacity. I shall now draw a brief sketch of the Islamic form of government, so as to illustrate its different functions and aspects.

Islam requires Muslims to elect as their ruler a man whom they regard as best fitted to discharge the responsibilities of that office. Such a man, when elected, holds office, not for a period of years like the presidents of the Western Republics but for life, and God alone can remove him from office, i.e., by death. All the power and authority of government vests in him, and it is his duty to devote the whole of his life to the promotion of the welfare of his people and not to seek his own aggrandisement. His control over the treasury is limited; he may spend national funds only on national needs and requirements, and cannot fix his own allowances. This must be done by his Advisory Council. It is the duty of the sovereign to ascertain the views of the people through this Council. On special occasions and with reference to special matters the opinion of the people may be ascertained by him through a general referendum, so that any differences between the views of the people and those of their representatives may come to his knowledge. He is expected to respect the opinion of a majority of the representatives, but as he is above all political partisanship and has no personal interests to serve, his own opinion is believed to be entirely impartial and influenced only by considerations relating to the welfare of his country and his people. Besides being the true representative of his people, Islam promises special Divine grace and help to the *Khalifah*. He is, therefore, authorized in special circumstances and in matters of special importance, to overrule the opinion of the majority of his advisers.

This, however, applies only to a sovereign who combines in his person the exercise of spiritual as well as secular authority and does not apply to a ruler or the head of a State who occupies a purely secular position. In the case of the latter the matter is left to be regulated by the provisions in that behalf of the constitution that may be framed for the regulation of these affairs. It would be for the constitution to determine the relationship between the ruler who, by virtue of his election, is the chief representative of the people, and their other representatives.

He is absolute in the sense, that he can, in certain cases, override the opinion of the representatives of the people; on the other hand, his authority is limited in the sense that he cannot override or set aside any portion of the Islamic constitution by which he is bound. He is bound to seek the advice of the people and to preserve the elective character of his own office. He is an elected ruler in the sense that, under the will and guidance of God, he is appointed to his office through the agency of the people, and he is a representative of the people in the sense that he is expected to follow the advice of their representatives except when compelled to depart from it by urgent or extraordinary necessity. He cannot, by his own authority, spend a penny out of the public funds on his own person or for his personal needs. He rules by virtue of a divine right in the sense that he cannot be removed from his office, and is promised Divine aid in the discharge of his duties and in the carrying out of his undertaking.

The details as to the method of the election or appointment of the members of the Advisory Council and the appointment of the governors and other officials, etc., have been purposely omitted by Islam so that they may be settled according to the exigencies of the time and so that human reason may have adequate scope for exercise and expansion, a principle which is essential for the intellectual development of man. The Holy Quran prohibited the Muslims from questioning the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> in regard to details, for, many matters are purposely left to the reason and judgment of man. If the smallest detail had been laid down by the Holy Quran or the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> there would have been no scope left for the intellectual development and progress of man and thus serious injury would have been done to mankind.

There are several forms of government at present in existence, but whosoever studies the constitution laid down by Islam will be compelled to acknowledge that it is not possible to devise a better form of government. On the one hand, it comprises the best form of representative government, and on the other, it is entirely free from party spirit, for the sovereign is not dependent upon the aid or cooperation of any particular party or section. He confines and devotes himself to the study of the welfare of his country and people, and as his office is held on a life tenure, the country is not deprived of the services of its best brain after a period of time.

In the case of a purely secular ruler or head of a State, however, the matter of the tenure of his appointment would be regulated by the constitution. His ap-

pointment and his removal would thus both be in the hands of the people.

We believe that this is the only perfect form of government, and we are confident that as the circle of the Ahmadiyya Movement widens and its membership increases, people will, of their own free will, acknowledge the excellence of this form of government, and even sovereigns will renounce their hereditary rights in the interests of the welfare of their people and will confine their privileges to those which they enjoy, and to which they are entitled as individuals.

As the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> was only a spiritual *Khalifah* his successors will also remain, so far as possible, outside and above politics, even when sovereigns and States join the Movement. They will perform the functions of a real League of Nations, and will endeavour, with the help and advice of the representatives of different countries, to regulate international relations. Their principal function will, however, be to look after the spiritual, moral, social and intellectual welfare of the people, so as to avoid their attention being monopolized by political matters, and vital spiritual and moral affairs being neglected as has been the case in the past. I have said that they will, so far as possible, remain outside and above politics. I have made this reservation to meet exceptional cases where the people of a particular country, in a time of difficulty or crisis, may request the aid of the spiritual *Khilāfat*, and it may become necessary to make temporary arrangements for the government of that country. But such

arrangements would be limited to the shortest possible period of time in each case.

### **The Powers and Duties of the Islamic State**

I shall now discuss the powers conferred and duties imposed by Islam on a State. The first duty imposed by Islam on a State is that it is bound to guard and promote the moral and material welfare and interests of its people and is responsible for the security of their lives and homes and for the provision of the necessities of life. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says,

'Every one of you is like a shepherd and is responsible for the persons and things that are placed under his charge. The sovereign is responsible and answerable for his subjects, and every man is responsible and answerable for the members of his family, and every woman is responsible and answerable for her home and children, and every servant is responsible and answerable for the property of his master that is in his charge.'<sup>134</sup>

This shows that Islam regards the sovereign as a shepherd who is put in charge of a flock; and as a shepherd is bound to look after and protect the flock, and provide for all its needs—as for instance, keeping the sheep from straying, guarding them from the prowling wolf, feeding and housing them, and protecting them from pestilence and disease, it is the duty of an Islamic State to secure its subjects against internal differences, disorders, disturbances and oppressions,

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<sup>134</sup> *Bukhārī and Muslim.*

and to guard them against attacks from outside, and to provide for all their intellectual and material needs—as for instance those relating to training, instruction, health, food, and shelter, etc.

These are the general duties of a State. In particular it is the duty of an Islamic State to provide for all its subjects the necessaries of life, viz., food, clothing and shelter, for without these the very persons whom it is the duty of the State to protect cannot be preserved. In the absence of adequate food and shelter physical existence becomes impossible, and a moral or social existence is not possible without proper clothes.

One or two illustrations will suffice to show how these general principles were interpreted and applied in practice by the early Muslims. I have stated that it is the duty of an Islamic State to provide the necessaries of life for people who are unable to provide them for themselves. This is well illustrated by an incident which occurred in the reign of Ḥaḍrat Umar<sup>ra</sup>, the second caliph. The caliph was one day going about incognito to find out whether the people had any grievance against anybody. At Sarar, a village about three miles from the capital, he heard someone crying. He followed the sound and presently came upon an old woman who was tending a pot on the fire and three children near her who were weeping. The caliph enquired of the old woman what their trouble was. She replied that they had had nothing to eat for two days, and as she could procure no food, she had put an empty pot on the fire to make them think that food would soon be ready; and thus to cajole them into sleep. The caliph thereupon returned to Me-

dina. He procured flour, butter, meat and dates, and put them in a bag. He then called a slave and asked him to lift the bundle on to his (the caliph's) back. The slave protested that he would carry the bundle himself. 'No doubt,' replied Umar<sup>ra</sup>, 'You can carry this bundle for me now, but who will carry my burden on the Day of Judgment?', meaning that as he had neglected his duty to provide for the woman and her children, the only atonement he could make was to carry the bundle of provisions himself to her.

As, however, it is impossible for the sovereign personally to look after the needs of every individual, a census used to be taken in Islamic countries, and the system of registration of births and deaths was instituted. The object of these measures was not, as in the case of modern governments, to help fill the public coffers, but to help empty them. The data thus obtained furnished information as to the true condition of the people, and the State was thus enabled to provide for people who deserved State aid.

But while Islam enjoins helping the poor, it disapproves of idleness and sloth. The object of State allowances was not, therefore, the encouragement of idleness. They were made only in really deserving cases. People were encouraged to work for their living and were restrained from begging. Ḥaḍrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> once noticed a person asking for alms who had a bagful of flour with him. The caliph took away the bag of flour from him, emptied it out before some camels, and turning to him said, 'Now you may beg.' It is on record

that beggars were compelled by the State to earn their livelihood by labour.

The second duty of the State is to provide for the due administration of justice. Islam has made detailed provisions in this behalf. Judges are enjoined to administer justice without fear or favour. They are prohibited from accepting bribes or acting upon recommendations, and people are prohibited from offering bribes or making recommendations to judges. It is laid down that every case must be decided on the pleas and on the evidence in the case. The burden of proof rests on the plaintiff or the complainant, but the defendant or accused may, in the absence of conclusive proof clear himself of a *prima facie* charge affirming his innocence on oath. Judges are directed to weigh the evidence of each witness with reference to his character and antecedents.

It is laid down that judges must be qualified and capable of discharging the duties of their office. A judicial decision must be accepted as final, for although judges, like all human beings, are liable to err, disputes must be decided by human beings and there must be a finality to litigation. A person who refuses to accept a judicial decision cannot be regarded as a Muslim citizen for he upsets the whole machinery of government.

The institution of Muftis or jurists was established to advise the poor and ignorant as to their rights. But a jurist could be appointed only by the State, and no man, however learned, could, of his own pleasure, undertake to advise people as to their legal rights.

The State is charged with the execution of sentences imposed by the judges, and no favour or discrimination may be shown in carrying them out. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has said that if his own daughter were guilty, for instance, of theft, he would not hesitate to impose upon her the penalty provided by the law. Ḥaḍrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> himself flogged his son as a punishment for an offence.

Another duty of the State is to safeguard the honour and security of the country. The Muslims are enjoined in the Holy Quran to guard their frontiers and to post strong bodies of men to watch them, both in peace and in war.

Another duty of the State is to promote national health. The Holy Quran directs the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> to eschew all spiritual and physical impurities. It is the duty of an Islamic State, therefore, to keep roads, thoroughfares and other public places clean. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> used to direct his companions to kill stray dogs, lest they should develop rabies and injure people.

Another duty of the State is to provide means of national education. In describing the duties and functions of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> the Holy Quran says, 'This Prophet<sup>sa</sup> teaches them the Book and the underlying philosophy. 'The book here does not mean only the Holy Quran, it includes all sciences, and learning, mentioned in the Holy Quran; for instance, astronomy, mathematics, botany, zoology, medicine, history, ethics, etc. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says: 'The acquisition of knowledge is a duty laid upon every Muslim.' He paid par-

ticular attention to the systematic instruction of the people. In the battle of Badr, the Muslims took some prisoners who knew how to read and write. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> offered to release them in consideration of their instructing Muslim children in the elements of reading and writing.

Another duty of the State is to assist people who are skilled in some art or craft, but have not the wherewithal to carry it on. The Holy Quran directs that such people should be given assistance from public funds.

It is the duty of an Islamic State to establish and maintain peace and order within its dominions. This duty is laid on it by the Holy Quran which strongly reproves those promoting disorder or disturbance, and says that the rulers whose neglect leads to disorder and oppression, are answerable for their conduct to God. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has described an ideal Islamic State as a government within whose territories a woman may travel far and wide alone and unattended, without encountering any danger.

Another duty of the State is to arrange for the procurement of supplies that may be needed by the people. During the early caliphate the *Khalifas* took pains to see that this duty was not neglected. During periods of scarcity ration tickets were issued which enabled the people to purchase provisions from government stores.

Another duty laid on the State is the maintenance of roads and thoroughfares to facilitate communication and intercourse. In the early days of Islam when no

vehicles were in use, and people either walked or rode, the minimum width of a street was fixed at twenty feet, the object being that streets and roads should be wide and open. In the present age when wheeled traffic is on the increase streets should be proportionately wider.

It is also the duty of the State to supervise the morals of the people and to seek to improve the moral tone of the people by education and instruction.

Lastly, it is the duty of the State to uplift the people, that is to say, to adopt every possible and available means for their progress. This includes the propagation of new sciences, the encouragement of the spirit of investigation and research, the solution of new social problems, etc.

### **The Duties of Subjects**

Corresponding duties have also been laid on the people. For instance, they must obey the government, even when its demands do not meet with their approval, and should lend their full support and co-operation to it. Though Islam invests the sovereign with authority in public matters, so as to empower him to issue orders for the welfare of the people after consultation with their representatives, he can exercise no authority over them in private matters. If a dispute, regarding any right, or property, arises between the *Khalifah*, and a private individual, it must be settled by the ordinary courts of the country in the same manner as a dispute between other private individuals interse. The sovereign can claim no special privilege or prerogative in the matter. Ḥaḍrat Umar<sup>ra</sup> was once summoned to court at the

instance of Uba'ī ibni Ka'ab. On his arrival the judge vacated his seat out of respect for the *Khalifah*. The latter went over and sat with the plaintiff, telling the judge that he had been guilty of an injustice. He should have made no distinction between him and his opponent. This, however, relates only to such matters in which the *Khalifah* is concerned in his private capacity. In respect of his public acts he is not subject to the jurisdiction of the courts.

### **Relations between Master and Servant**

In pre-Islamic days the relationship between master and servant was very similar to that between the sovereign and the subject and, in spite of the passage of so many centuries and a tremendous advance in social matters, practically the same relationship subsists today. Islam, however, teaches differently, and lays down the principle that the relationship between master and servant should be based on and defined by contract, the essence of the contract being that the master agrees to pay money to the servant in return for his services. The master, therefore, has no right to treat the servant as a tyrant would treat his subjects. Islam, having taken away the traditional and customary rights even of the sovereign, could not tolerate the prevailing relationship between master and servant. For instance, Islam prohibits the master from abusing or beating the servant, and a similar protection extends to a slave. A companion of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> relates that they were seven brothers and owned a slave. Their youngest brother gave a blow to the slave. When the matter reached the ears of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, he directed that the slave should be set

free. Another companion relates, 'I was once about to beat a slave when I heard a voice behind me, which I could not recognize. Then I saw the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> coming towards me, and exclaiming,

'O Abu Masūd, God has far more power over thee than thou hast over this slave.' Thereupon the whip fell from my hand out of fear, and I said, 'O, Prophet<sup>sa</sup> of God, I set this slave free in the name of God.' The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> replied, 'It is well, for if thou hadst not set him free, the fire would have scorched thy face.'

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has said that a man should not require his servant to do that which is beyond his power to do, and that if he is set to do a heavy task, his master should help him in it.

Again, he says,

'When a servant cooks food and places it before his master, the latter should invite the servant to partake of it, but if the master does not condescend so far, he should at least spare some of it for the servant, for it is he who sat before the fire to cook it.'

Concerning the wages of a servant or a labourer, he says that they must be paid before the sweat is dry on the body of the labourer. Again, he says,

'If a man fails to pay full wages to a labourer, I shall sue him on behalf of the latter on the Day of Judgment.'

It is thus the duty of the State to see that a labourer is paid his full wages.

There exists considerable misunderstanding about the teachings of Islam concerning slavery. Islam does not permit slavery in the sense in which other religions permit it. According to Islam it is permitted to take slaves from a people, only when, first, the latter make war for the purpose of forcibly converting people to their own faith, secondly, those persons who are made slaves actually participate in such a cruel and inhuman war, and thirdly, the persons who are made slaves fail to pay their share of the war indemnity to the people against whom they had fought to force them to renounce their faith. In the absence of these three conditions Islam emphatically prohibit the making of slaves, which it treats as a great sin. It can easily be appreciated that if a man joins others in drawing his sword to force people to renounce their faith, knowing that the latter not only put their faith above all worldly things and considerations but also look upon it as the sole means of limitless progress in this as well as in the next world, and if, when such a man is captured, he or his people fail to pay their share of the war indemnity, he certainly deserves to be deprived of his freedom. As a matter of fact Islam regards all those persons, who wish to propagate their religion at the point of the sword and, relying on their power, interfere with the faith of others, as outside the pale of humanity; and regards them as a danger for mankind. That is why it lays down that until such a person shows signs of real repentance and shows sincere readiness to live peacefully with his neighbours he

should be deprived of his freedom and forced to live as a slave. As to how a slave should be treated I have already briefly set forth the teachings of Islam in this connection. It would appear that, short of freedom, in many cases a slave under Islam lived more comfortably than he had done before.

### **The Relations between the Rich and the Poor, and the Power and Authority of Officials**

The question how a first balance can be maintained between the rights of different classes of people is one of the most complicated social problems of the day, and I shall deal briefly with it to indicate the solution which Islam offers.

Islam teaches that the whole universe, including the earth, the sun, the moon and the stars, has been created for the service and benefit of man. All these things, therefore, are, according to Islam the common property of mankind. On the other hand, Islam proclaims another principle viz., that God has granted full scope to man for the exercise of his faculties and talents, and that every man is by nature endowed with the spirit of competition and the desire to outstrip others in the race for progress. Islam encourages such competition. The Holy Quran says, 'Compete with and try to outrun each other in good deeds.'<sup>135</sup>

In a competition some would deserve greater rewards than others, and some would deserve no reward at all. Islam takes note of this disparity. Indeed, it claims

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<sup>135</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:149.

that this disparity is a part of the Divine scheme of things, and should not give rise to envy or jealousy. The Holy Quran says:

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ ؕ

'Do not covet that in which God has made some of you excel others.'<sup>136</sup>

That is to say, this apparent inequality which God permits is not without its use and is indispensable for the proper working of the universe. If those who work harder than others or bring a superior intellect or higher business capacity to bear on the conduct of their affairs are to be deprived of their just reward all competition and striving after higher achievement would cease and the purpose of the creation of the universe would be frustrated.

Islam, therefore, acknowledges the claim of those who have earned greater rewards than others through superior intellect or greater diligence, but it also reminds them of their duty to help their less fortunate brethren to come forward and participate in the blessings which God has bestowed on them. They are told that in the wealth which they have earned the poor also have a share, and that the latter should not be deprived of it. It should be enough compensation and happiness for the rich to provide for their poorer brethren who, in a sense, are equally entitled with them to the good things of life, and thus to manifest the Divine attribute of Providence. The Holy Quran says, 'Give to the poor out

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<sup>136</sup> Al-Nisā', 4:33.

of the wealth which God has bestowed upon you,'<sup>137</sup> that is to say, your wealth is a trust to the benefit of which the poor are entitled.

This would show that Islam encourages a spirit of competition and in order to foster this spirit, it permits people to retain that which they have fairly and honestly earned. But as all things in the universe are the common property of all mankind, the poor have also a right in the wealth of the rich and the latter should, therefore, set apart a portion of their wealth as if in payment of a royalty for the use and benefit of the poor.

This raises another important question. If it is necessary to encourage a spirit of competition among man, the competition must be open to all classes of men and institutions; and devices which would limit such competition to a few individuals reducing the rest to the position of mere outside spectators should be abolished or rectified. Islam acknowledges the justice of this and makes provision for it. It has laid down instructions and directions by following which, (a) the spirit of competition is fostered and encouraged, (b) private ownership is safeguarded and those who put forth greater diligence or contribute a higher degree of intelligence are secured proportionately higher rewards, (c) those who have in any way contributed towards the production of wealth are secured a just and fair share of it, (d) the door of progress is kept open for all mankind and admission is not restricted to the members of a particular family or

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<sup>137</sup> Al-Nūr, 24:34.

class; all classes are afforded equal opportunities of attaining to the highest positions and dignities, and wealth and power do not become the hereditary monopolies of any particular class, and (e) the needs of all classes continue to be satisfied. These directions are as follows:

(1) Islam teaches that all things in the universe being the common property of all mankind, there can be no absolute ownership of anything. A is the owner of his property, not in the sense that nobody else has any right in it, but in the sense that A's share in it is larger than that of anybody else, for he has acquired it with his labour. Islam describes the share of the poor in the wealth of the rich as a right. For instance, the Holy Quran says, 'In the wealth of the rich, those who can express their wants and those who cannot (e.g., animals) have a right.'<sup>138</sup> Again, 'Render to your relatives, the needy and the wayfarer their rights.'<sup>139</sup> Islam enjoins the distribution and circulation of wealth and prohibits hoarding, for, this deprives people of their rights. Money must be spent or invested; in either case it would be circulated to the benefit of the community, especially of the poorer classes. Concerning those who hoard money, the Holy Quran says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا □ وَالَّذِينَ يَبْنَعُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ  
وَيَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنشَأَ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ؕ وَاعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا □

<sup>138</sup> Al-Dhāriyāt, 51: 20.

<sup>139</sup> Al-Rūm, 30:38.

'God is not pleased with the proud and the vain who hoard wealth and compel others to do the same and hide that with which God has blessed them out of His grace. If they do not desist and continue to act in contravention of God's commands, an humiliating punishment will overtake them.'<sup>140</sup>

That is to say, if they go on hoarding wealth and abstain from spending it, they and their people would be humiliated.

(2) In order, however, to prevent people from spending the whole of their wealth on personal gratifications, Islam has stopped all kinds of excess and indulgence. Islam prohibits extravagance in food, dress, building and furnishing of houses, in short, in every aspect of life. A Muslim, therefore, who follows the injunctions of Islam, cannot spend so much on his own person or personal gratifications as injuriously to affect the rights of others in his property or wealth.

(3) As it might be apprehended that in spite of the direction to spend or invest money, some people would go on hoarding it, and thus deprive other people of their rights in it, Islam imposes a levy of 2.5% on all money, precious metals and merchandise, etc., which a man has been in possession of for a period of one year or over. The proceeds of this levy must be applied towards the promotion of the welfare of the poor and the needy. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> in explaining the object of this levy

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<sup>140</sup> Al-Nisā', 4:37,38.

clearly indicated that it was to be imposed on the rich, as the poor are entitled to a share in their wealth. He says, ' God has made Zakat obligatory; it must be levied on the rich and restored to the poor.'<sup>141</sup> The use of the word 'restored' indicates that the poor have a right to it and that they are entitled to a share in the wealth of the rich. As their contribution towards the production of this wealth cannot be ascertained with precision, a definite rate has been fixed at which this levy is to be recovered from all those who come within its purview. It should be noted that Zakat is not a mere tax on income, but is a levy on capital and in many instances may amount to as much as fifty per cent of the net profits.

The Holy Quran indicates that the object of Zakat is also to purify the wealth of the rich, that is to say, to separate from it the contribution made towards its production by the poor, and to leave that to which the assessee is exclusively entitled. As God says in the Holy Quran:

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا

'Levy the Zakat on their goods and purify them (by separating from them that portion to which others are entitled), and use the proceeds of Zakat to promote the welfare of the people.'<sup>142</sup>

By the institution of Zakat Islam provides for the satisfaction of all those rights that the poor have in the wealth of the rich, and thus brings about a reconciliation

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<sup>141</sup> *Bukhārī and Muslim.*

<sup>142</sup> *Al-Taubah, 9:103.*

between labour and capital and the rich and the poor, for, in addition to the wages that a labourer gets for his work, Islam imposes a levy of 2.5% on the total wealth of the capitalists for the benefit of the poor.

(4) Zakat offers a solution of the economic aspect of the problem but it leaves untouched the monopoly, enjoyed by certain classes, of all means of progress and development. Islam encourages people in the race for progress, and secures to them a first share of fruits of their diligence and industry, but it does not approve that one class should bar the progress of other classes. Every one who runs in a race has the sympathy of the spectators, and people may admire him who runs the fastest, but nobody can approve the conduct of a runner who, having obtained a start in the race, seeks to obstruct the course of other runners to prevent them from out running him. Such conduct would put an end to all healthy competition and emulation, and the few who obtain a start in the race for progress would monopolize all channels of progress and would exclude therefrom their less fortunate brethren.

Islam does not permit this and by making it impossible, it has thrown open the gates of advancement and progress to all classes of mankind. The principal factors that promote and foster this state of affairs are: (a) The rule of primogeniture and other similar rules of inheritance which involve impartibility of estates, and the unrestricted power of bequest by which property may be bequeathed according to the whimsical pleasure of the testator; (b) the lending of money on interest which enables one man, or several, to accumulate huge

sums of money in his or their hands, without labour of any kind, and by the mere exploitation of the needs and misfortunes of others; and (c) excessive profits.

These three factors have in many countries deprived the common people of all means of progress. Property has accumulated in the hands of a few and the poorer class of people can acquire no portion of it. The institution of usury or interest enables those who have once established their control over the sources of credit to accumulate as much money in their hands as they may have desire for, and people with small assets have no chance against them. Through the excessive commercial profits wealth is pouring like a cataract into the vast coffers of a handful of capitalists. Islam has devised three remedies for these three causes which lead to a monopoly of property and wealth.

(a) It enjoins the distribution of inheritance. No man has power to devise or bequeath the whole of his property to one man and thus promote its accumulation in a few hands. Under the Islamic law of inheritance and succession a man's property must be distributed among his parents, children, widow, brothers, sisters, etc., and nobody can interfere with, or divert, this mode of distribution. In a country, therefore, which follows the Islamic law of inheritance and succession, the children of a wealthy father can not afford to keep idle depending their support on the accumulated wealth of their father, for, the whole of his property, movable and immovable, must be distributed among several classes of heirs, and each of them starts afresh in life, with his share of the inheritance. Again, as immovable property continues to

be divided and sub-divided in each generation, in the course of three or four generations even large estates are parcelled out into small holdings and even a labourer can purchase a small piece of land and thus have an interest in the soil. Thus no permanent division is created among the people by a monopoly of the ownership of the soil.

(b) Islam prohibits the giving or taking of interest. The possibility of raising loans on interest enables people with established credit to go on borrowing to any extent they please. If such borrowing were not possible they would be compelled either to admit other people as partners with them, or to restrict the scope of their business, so as to leave room for other people to start similar undertakings. The huge trusts and syndicates which at present monopolize the sources of national wealth, would not be possible without interest, and wealth would be more evenly distributed among the people. The accumulation of wealth which we witness today is fatal to moral advancement, and spells ruin for the middle and lower classes.

(c) Excessive commercial profits are kept in check first by the Islamic institution of Zakat, which is levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor. This levy on capital does not leave enough to the capitalist to enable him to attempt to monopolize the wealth of the nation. Secondly, Islam lays down that the proceeds of this levy should, among other objects, be applied towards furnishing those people with capital who possess the necessary business capacity but are unable to start in business owing to want of funds. Thus fresh intelligence

is constantly added to the capitalist class and all classes of people are provided with equal opportunities of advancement. Thirdly, Islam has prohibited all profiteering devices. For instance, Islam has declared it sinful for a man to hold back a commodity from the market with the intention of making a larger profit when prices should rise. All devices, for example, the formation of trusts, etc., by which profit is unreasonably enhanced have been prohibited by Islam.

It may be objected that no commerce would be possible without interest. This is not correct. There is no natural relation between commerce and interest, but the latter is unconsciously associated with the former as Western countries have for long based their commercial system on this form of credit. If this had not been so commerce would not have been dependent upon interest and these countries would not have been faced with the unrest which has become a constant nightmare to their peace. Only a few hundred years ago, the Muslims were responsible for a large share of the world's commerce and yet they carried it on without interest. They borrowed money even from the poorer classes by way of partnership loans, and the commerce carried on by them thus contributed directly to the welfare of those classes. Interest is not essential for commerce, but as commerce is at present being carried on, on the basis of interest, it appears as if without interest it would come to a standstill. No doubt, a change in the system would in the beginning be inconvenient, nevertheless the system of commerce depending upon interest can be gradually discarded, as it was gradually adopted.

Interest is a leech that is sucking away the blood of humanity, especially of the middle and lower classes. Even the richer classes are not entirely secure against its poison, but they derive a false enjoyment from it and are reluctant to relinquish it, like the leopard who is said to have eaten away his own tongue by its persistent licking of a piece of rough stone, foolishly thinking it to be the blood and flesh of another animal. Those who may be ready to forego it are too weak to withstand the pressure and momentum of the current system.

The system of credit prevailing in Western countries is destructive of the peace of the world in two ways. On the one hand, it helps the accumulation of wealth in a few hands, and on the other, it facilitates war. I cannot imagine any government entering upon a war of the magnitude of the one which the world witnessed only a few years ago unless it relied upon its ability to raise money by means of loans carrying interest. No country would have been prepared to bear the heavy financial burden laid by the war upon each belligerent nation, if the burden of the enormous expenditure incurred had fallen directly upon the people of each country. This long and devastating war was made possible only by the institution of interest. If huge loans on interest had not been possible many countries would have withdrawn from the conflict long before the war actually terminated, for their treasuries would have become empty and their people would have rebelled in protest against the criminal waste of men and money. But the system of loans made it possible for governments to carry on a ruinous struggle as they were able to

obtain the sinews of war without having to resort to direct taxation. The people of these countries did not feel the burden which was being laid on their backs at the moment, but now their backs are bent double under the staggering weight of national debts, and future generations will be kept occupied in reducing the weight. If loans had not been possible, the result of the war would still have been the same, but the devastation of France, the ruin of Germany, the destruction of Austria and the heavy indebtedness of England would have been avoided. Nay, the war itself might have been avoided, and even if it had broken out the belligerents would soon have been exhausted, peace would have been signed within a year, and mankind could have again resumed its forward march of progress.

Efforts are being made to secure a reduction of armaments. But this is only a half measure which would afford no security against the repetition of war. If a government determines upon war, it will not find it difficult to provide itself with arms. The only sure means of preventing war is the abolition of interest. The Holy Quran says that interest leads to war, and this has been confirmed by terrible experience. Wars, whether internal or external, can be put an end to, and peace can be established only when interest is banished from the social and economic systems of all countries. Then may we indeed hope to see rivers running with milk. The rich would then cease to have the power to oppress the poor, and governments would be afraid to make war except in defence of their national honour, when they are convinced that the people would be prepared to

make every sacrifice for the national cause. It would not be possible for a sovereign or a government to plunge a country into war for the gratification of a personal whim or the promotion of a partisan policy.

Another cause which contributes towards the accumulation of wealth in a few hands is the exploitation of mineral wealth. Islam has devised a remedy for this by providing that the State must be the owner of a fifth share in all mines. This, coupled with the institution of Zakat, secures the rights of the poorer classes in the national wealth. If a person discovers a mine on his property which he is unable to work owing to lack of funds, the government will acquire the mine on payment of adequate compensation to the owner, or will permit him to sell his share to a third person.

### **International Relations**

It may be pointed out at the outset that the ideal aimed at by Islam is the establishment of world government, so as to remove all causes of international friction and wars. Each country would be free to pursue its national aims and aspirations, and would have complete autonomy in local affairs, and yet would only be a unit in a larger whole. Islam does not, however, permit any compulsion or coercion for the achievement of this ideal and leaves it entirely to the will of the people of different countries. We must, therefore, make the best of the present system till the world is filled with the spirit of unity in affairs concerning the whole of mankind, leaving local matters to be settled by local authorities, and till the people of different countries are prepared to forget their national jealousies, and to sacrifice their

national prejudices for the achievement of the common good. I shall, therefore, confine myself to what Islam teaches concerning the present aspect of international relations.

One of the causes of international disputes and squabbles is in the covetousness with which advantages enjoyed by one nation are viewed by others, and the attempt of one nation to take undue advantage of the weakness of other nations. Islam lays down a principle which removes all such causes of disputes and dissensions. The Holy Quran says:

وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لِيَتَفَتَحُوا فِيهِ ۖ وَ رِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَ أَبْقَىٰ □

'Do not lift thy eyes covetously to those material benefits which we have bestowed upon other nations in order to try them in their actions. That which thy Lord has bestowed on thee is best for thee and most enduring.'<sup>143</sup>

This means that things plundered from others are neither lasting nor can they be of any real benefit. That which is bestowed by God can alone last even unto the next world.

Another cause of international disputes are international dislikes and jealousies. For instance, one nation wrongs another and a truce is patched up at the time, but the aggrieved nation nurses a grudge against the aggressor, and looks for opportunities to injure it or take undue

<sup>143</sup> Ṭā Hā, 20:132.

advantage of it. Islam forbids this and enjoins truth and straightforwardness in all matters. The Holy Quran says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ  
شَتَانُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ آخَىٰ تَعْدُوا عَلَيْهِمْ وَإِن لَّهُمْ عِندَ اللَّهِ عِذْرًا  
اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ □

'O believers, act uprightly in all matters for the sake of God, and deal equitably with people; let not hatred of a people incite you to injustice. Do justice, for that is in accord with righteousness. Make God your shield, He is well aware of what you do.' <sup>144</sup>

If these two injunctions are kept in view no Islamic government could be guilty of disturbing international relations, for Muslims are told not to covet the possessions of or the advantages enjoyed by other people; they are enjoined to watch not only over their individual but also over their national morality.

In regard to treaties, Islam requires that treaties should be kept not only with those who are parties to them, but also with those who have entered into treaties with any of them. So, an Islamic state is prohibited from making war upon the allies of its friends even when such allies form part of an enemy empire, provided they do not openly join or actively help such enemies. If treachery is apprehended from a people with whom a treaty has been concluded, it should not be attacked unawares nor should any undue advantage be taken of

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<sup>144</sup> Al-Mā'idah, 5:9

it. It should first be warned that as it has been guilty of a breach of faith, the treaty is at an end, and if it still persists in its treachery war may be declared against it.

To be ever prepared to repel aggression, on the other hand, is also a means of promoting peace, lest a perfidious enemy may be tempted to take advantage of one's unpreparedness. Islam, therefore, enjoins that a Muslim state should be ever ready to defend itself, as there is always apprehension of war so long as there are national governments in different countries. No temptation should be offered to other states to make war by a state neglecting its defences.

If war is forced upon an Islamic state, care must be taken to avoid injury to women, children, nurses, old men and those whose lives are wholly devoted to the service of religion. It is permissible to kill in battle only those who are combatants and are actually taking part in the fighting. Quarter must in all cases be given, and unnecessary damage should not be caused. Crops, trees and buildings must be spared, unless their destruction is absolutely necessary for purposes of defence or in order to put the enemy out of action. Damage must not be caused merely to weaken a nation after the war. Proposals for truce or peace should not be rejected merely on the supposition that the other side is acting dishonestly and only desires to gain time. So long as the dishonesty does not become apparent such proposals ought to be welcomed.

For the settlement of international disputes Islam lays down rules which contemplate a body like the

newly created League of Nations, although the latter does not yet embrace functions which Islam assigns to such a body.

The Holy Quran says:

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا جَإِنَ بَغْتًا إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْآخَرَىٰ فَكَارِهُمَا الَّتِي تَتَّبِعِي حَتَّىٰ تَفِيءَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ جَإِنَ فَآرَتْ فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ □

'If two Muslim nations should fall out, make peace between them (i.e., other Muslim nations should try to prevent a war between them, and should try to remove the causes of friction and should award to each its just rights). But if one of them still persists in attacking the other (and does not accept the award of the League of Nations) then all must fight the former, till it submits to the command of Allah (i.e., till it is willing to abide by an equitable settlement) and when it so submits, make peace between them, and act with justice and equity, for God loves the just.'<sup>145</sup>

This verse lays down the following principles for the maintenance of international peace:

As soon as there are indications of disagreement between two nations, the other nations, instead of taking sides with one or the other, should at once serve notice upon them, calling upon them to submit their differences to the League of Nations for settlement. If they agree, the dispute will be amicably settled. But if one of

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<sup>145</sup> Al-Hujurat, 49:10.

them refuses to submit to the League, or having submitted refuses to accept the award of the League, and prepares to make war, the other nations should all fight it. It is apparent that one nation, however strong, cannot withstand the united forces of all other nations and is bound to make a speedy submission. In that event, terms of peace should be settled between the two original parties to the dispute. The other nations should act merely as mediators and not as parties to the dispute, and should not put forward claims arising out of the conflict with the refractory nation, for that would lay the foundation of fresh disputes and dissensions. In settling the terms of peace between the parties to the dispute care should be taken that the terms are just and equitable with reference to the merits of the dispute. The mediators should not be influenced by the fact that one of the parties had defied their authority.

If a League of Nations were established on these lines, international peace would be secured at once. All mischief arises out of the fact that when a dispute arises between two nations, the other nations either play the part of amused spectators, or take sides in the dispute. Such conduct, instead of removing the cause of friction, accentuates them. The other nations should, without expressing any opinion as to the merits of the dispute, call upon the parties to submit their differences to the League of Nations, and should reserve the expression of their opinions till they have heard all the parties and completed their enquiry. They should then make their award. If either of the parties refuses to accept the award, the nations composing the League should make

war upon it, till it makes submission, and when it does so, they should settle the original dispute between the parties and should not put forward new demands arising out of the conduct of the refractory nation. For, if the nations composing the League were to take advantage of the position of the vanquished nation and impose terms on it calculated to secure advantages to the mediators themselves, they would be laying the foundations of fresh dissensions and jealousies, and the League would cease to enjoy the respect and confidence of the peoples of different nations. Their final award should, therefore, be confined to the original dispute between the parties and should not travel beyond it.

As to the cost of such an international war, it must be borne by the members of the League by whom it is incurred. In the first place, the necessity of such a war would rarely arise. Every nation would realize that it would be futile to contend against the united will of the other nations. Secondly as the whole scheme would be based on honesty and would be free from all trace of selfishness on the part of any nation, all nations would be glad to join the League, and thus the expenses which will fall to the share of each nation would be comparatively small. Thirdly, as each nation would derive a benefit from the working of this system, each would be prepared to make some sacrifice for it, and wars as fought at present would become less frequent the resulting security and saving in men and money would be a tremendous gain compared with the price which each nation may be called upon to pay in the form of its share of the expenses of an international war. Even if, how-

ever, a real sacrifice should be involved, nations should be prepared to make it, for as it is the duty of individuals to make sacrifices for the purpose of establishing peace, it is also the duty of nations to make sacrifices to that end, they being as much bound by moral principles as individuals.

The failure of the schemes hitherto adopted for promoting international peace and amity is due, in my opinion, to the differences between the principles on which those schemes were based and the principles laid down in the Holy Quran for that purpose. These differences relate to five matters.

- (1) Each nation insists upon the observance of the terms of previous agreements entered into by it with other nations individually, and is not willing to relinquish them in favour of a common agreement and understanding between all nations.
- (2) When a dispute arises between two or more nations it is allowed to take its course, and no attempt is made by other nations to compel the nations concerned to arrive at a settlement before the matter assumes serious proportions.
- (3) Different nations take sides in such disputes and thus promote dissension.
- (4) After a refractory nation has made its submission the other nations do not confine themselves to the settlement of the original dispute; each of them seeks to derive some advantage from the situation of the vanquished nation.

(5) Nations are not willing to make sacrifices in the interests of international peace.

If these defects are removed a League of Nations could be established on the lines indicated by the Holy Quran. It is only such a League that can be safely entrusted with the maintenance of international peace, and not a League whose very existence is dependent upon the goodwill of others.

The real cause underlying all international disputes is, that whereas individual conduct is judged by the rules of morality, these rules are altogether ignored when national conduct is in question. Till such conduct is made conformable to the rules of morality, international relations cannot be placed on a satisfactory basis. Those interested in such matters should first endeavour to ascertain the causes of international disputes and then take measures to remove them. An international court of arbitration should be established on Islamic principles to settle such disputes when they arise.

The causes which give rise to such disputes are:

(1) Relations between governments and their subjects are not satisfactory. If the teachings of Islam in this respect were followed and acted upon—that is, that persons living in a country must either lend their whole-hearted support and cooperation to the government of that country or withdraw from that country, so as not to disturb the peace of the country—no nation would dare attack another nation without first reckoning the cost; for the knowledge that the people attacked would sacri-

face their all in defence of their country would sober and deter an invading nation.

(2) National prejudices are so strong that the people of every country are ready to lend their support to the aggressive policies of their government, merely because it is *their* government, without reference to the merits of the policies. This encourages a government to enter lightly upon war, confident that whether action is right or wrong it would have the support of its own people. If the principle laid down by Islam were followed, viz., that the best help a man can render his brother is to prevent him from committing an act of oppression, a large number of wars and acts of aggression would be avoided. It is not true patriotism to support one's government even in unjustifiable aggression; it consists rather in saving it from a course which is unjust.

In short, treachery on the one hand, and national prejudices on the other, are the chief causes of war and these must be remedied before peace can be hoped for.

The world must realize that patriotism and love of humanity are not compatible with each other. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has expressed this principle in a short sentence when he said, 'You must help your brother whether he is the oppressor or is oppressed—the oppressor, by preventing him from committing acts of oppression, and the oppressed, by rescuing him from oppression.' When a man tries to prevent his own people or government from acting unjustly, his conduct cannot be described as unpatriotic. On the contrary, he is actuated by true patriotism, inasmuch as he tries to

save the good name of his country from the stain of oppression. At the same time he is actuated by the true love of humanity, for he is only trying to enforce the observance of the principle, 'Live and let live.'

(3) The third cause of international misunderstanding is the idea of national superiority. The Holy Quran says:

لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ

'Let not a people despise another, haply the latter may turn out to be better than the former.'<sup>146</sup>

Again, it says, 'We cause the periods of adversity and prosperity to revolve among the different peoples.'<sup>147</sup> A nation that is advancing towards prosperity should not, therefore, despise another nation, and thus sow the seeds of hostility; it may be that the nation that is despised today may lead the others tomorrow.

International disputes cannot be put an end to till it is realized that mankind are as one people, and that prosperity and adversity are neither the hereditary, nor the permanent, attributes of a people. No people has had a uniform record of prosperity or adversity, nor can any people be secure, in the future, against an adverse change in its circumstances. The volcanic forces that raise a people to the highest pinnacle of glory or pull it down to the lowest depths of ignominy have not ceased to work, and nature pursues its designs as actively today as it has done through centuries past.

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<sup>146</sup> Al-Ḥujurāt, 49:12.

<sup>147</sup> Āl-‘Imrān, 3:141.

## **Relations between the Followers of Different Religions**

Concerning the relations between the followers of different religions, I desire to say here is that Islam teaches a far wider toleration than any other religion. For instance:

- (1) It forbids the use of disrespectful language towards the founders, holy men, or leaders of any religion.
- (2) It teaches that Prophets have appeared in all nations and no religion can, therefore, be described as wholly false.
- (3) It prohibits compulsion in matters of faith and forbids religious wars; for truth has been made manifest from falsehood, and he whom truth gives life shall live and he whom truth kills shall die.

An erroneous impression exists in some quarters that Islam permits propagation of the faith by the sword. Nothing could be further from the truth. Islam permits fighting against only an aggressor who attacks the Muslims and only so long as he keeps up the fight. Can such a religion be charged with encouraging propagation by the sword? The truth is that those who attempted to destroy Islam by the sword, were themselves destroyed by the sword; and nobody has ever condemned defensive wars.

If Islam was propagated by the sword, how were those who wielded the sword won over to Islam? The religion which could win over such adherents,—men who sacrificed their all for the faith and established it

firmly in the land in the teeth of the united opposition of all nations, not convince others of its truth?

Such a charge is a cruel libel against a religion which was the first to teach perfect toleration. God has, therefore, sent the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, without a sword, to demonstrate that Islam can conquer men by its beauty and charm, and the day is not distant when the world will acknowledge the truth of this claim.

## **The Fourth Object of Religion**

### **Life after Death**

I now turn to the fourth object of religion, viz., the explanation of the life after death. Ever since the creation of man the problem which, next to the problem of the existence of God, has attracted the attention of mankind is the question of the life after death. A religion that fails to throw light on this subject is like a body without a soul.

Islam attaches great importance to this question, so much so, that the followers of other religions have made its insistence on this question a ground of attacks against it.

The question, however, requires careful consideration. It is obvious that it is impossible to arrive at a true appreciation of it in the absence of revealed guidance, for a person living in this world cannot, by the unaided use of his own faculties, discover the conditions of life beyond the grave. It is the Omniscient Being from Whose eyes nothing is hidden and before Whose sight this world and the next are spread like a mirror Who alone can furnish a true description of the life after death. Those who have tried to discover the conditions of the life after death merely by the exercise of reason have fallen into grievous errors and their efforts have given rise to widespread misunderstanding on the subject. Some of them deny altogether that there is a life after death; others represent it as a mere copy of this

existence and yet a third class would drive the soul back into this world to be suitably dealt with for its past conduct. In short, every one has his own theory as to what ought to happen to the human soul after death. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> has, however, revealed to us a knowledge of the conditions governing the existence of the soul after death, which completely satisfies our reason and is emphatically endorsed by our instinct and by the laws of nature. Those who are granted a fuller insight into, and a personal realization of these matters in this life are able to testify, from their own experience, to the truth of the Promised Messiah's<sup>as</sup> teaching, and to attain to a condition of perfect certainty concerning it. The truth is that, as in other departments of religion, so in this, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> has revealed to us the teachings of Islam in a new light and has, as it were, uncovered hidden truths and wonderful spiritual secrets for our eyes. As, however, the life after death is entirely hidden from the view of mankind, it is not possible to explain its conditions without entering into a detailed exposition; and this would not be justified by the limited scope of this paper. I shall, therefore, content myself with a description of the barest outlines of the subject, in the hope that those who desire a fuller appreciation of it would pursue an enquiry into its details.

The first question that confronts us in connection with this subject is what is the nature of the human soul. The Islamic teaching is that the soul has a distinct existence, and that it is the means by which man is enabled to acquire knowledge and perception of things which are not susceptible of comprehension through his

external senses. It is the centre of the relationship between God and man, and is the seat of God's glory. Its relationship with the body is extremely fine and delicate which cannot be compared to any other relationship that we know of. It controls the working of the external senses through its connection with the thinking faculty of the brain and the emotional faculty of the heart. It is, therefore, more acutely affected by thoughts and feelings than by their actual manifestation in external acts. Scientists and psychologists have so far failed to discover the relationship between the soul and the heart, but those who have been vouchsafed experience of these matters realize that there is a delicate relationship between the soul and the heart which travels by some hidden means to the brain—as oil travels in a wick—and manifests itself through the working of the nerves of the brain. In fact belief in God and His attributes lead necessarily to the conclusion that the soul never dies. For, can we suppose for a moment that God has created this delicate and perfect system of the universe and all that there is in it for the service of man, merely so that man may eat and drink and explore the secrets of nature for the brief space of three or four score years and then for ever pass into obscurity and nothingness? Reason spurns such an idea, and human nature recoils from it.

The fact that there is a universe requires that man's life should have a purpose higher than, and beyond mere eating and drinking and leading a more or less circumscribed existence in this world. Islam teaches that man has been vouchsafed eternal life and that the avenues of eternal progress have been thrown open to

him. In the chapter headed, Al-Mu'minūn, the Holy Quran mentions the creation of the heavens and the earth and the setting up of the machinery of the universe, and describes the powers and faculties with which man has been endowed and then enquires whether men still imagine that their whole existence is confined to this life and that there is no life after death. It says:

□ أَوْحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ □

□ فَتَعَلَى اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْكَرِيمِ □

'Then, do you imagine that We have created you as a mere pastime and that you will not have eternal life and opportunities of eternal development after death? That surely is not so, for God is the High and the True Monarch, Who has created all things with a purpose. He is the one God and possesses attributes which command purity and respect.' <sup>148</sup>

It cannot then be imagined that God is not the Creator of the universe, or that He has created it without a purpose.

The Holy Quran teaches that the soul is not imported into the human body from outside, but grows in the body as it develops in the womb. It is an essence which is distilled from the body in the course of a long process, as beer is distilled from barley. It has at first no separate existence from the body, but the processes through which the body passes during its development

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<sup>148</sup> Al-Mu'minūn, 23:116,117.

in the womb distil from the body a delicate essence which is called the soul. As soon as the relationship between the soul and the body is completely adjusted, the heart begins to function and the body comes alive. The soul has then a distinct existence of its own apart from the body, which henceforth serves it as a shell.

Islam, therefore, teaches that the soul is created and comes into being during the period of gestation. On the other hand, Islam also teaches that once the soul is created it is never destroyed, but is granted an unending period of time for its development. What is called death is merely the severance of the soul from the body, as the result of which the heart is stilled and the body ceases to be of any further use.

According to Islam, the soul manifests its powers always through a body, and whenever the body becomes unfitted for this purpose, the soul quits it. This flight of the soul from the body is called death. Hence when we say so and so is dead, we simply mean that his soul has quitted his body, but the soul never dies and goes on living for ever. Islam, therefore, teaches that there is a life after death, and it also teaches that that life is a continuation of the life which a man leads on earth. There is no one interval during which the human soul must remain in a state of inactivity or suspense, being revived thereafter and consigned to a place, pleasant or unpleasant, according to its deserts. The human soul possesses inherent faculties which repudiate even the suggestion of a state of inactivity; it is vouchsafed an eternal existence which is protected by the attribute of God which is expressed by the term, *Qayyūm*, i.e., the

supporter of life. Death, as I have said, is merely the translation of the soul from one form of existence into another, and the Holy Quran tells us that this translation is essential for the complete development of the soul. Man has been so constituted that a complete realization of anything secures him against all errors concerning that thing. On the other hand, where a thing has been completely manifested, man ceases to deserve any reward in connection with it. For instance, nobody deserves a reward for believing in the existence of the sun at midday, or for acknowledging the existence of day and night. We reward a student who solves difficult problems, and we honour a man who discovers the hidden secrets of nature. Reward and praise are, therefore, the desert of those who exert themselves in discovering new truths and hidden secrets. There is no merit in doing and thinking that which is perfectly obvious. If the whole field of spiritual progress had been thrown open to man in this very world and spiritual rewards and punishments had been completely manifested here, succeeding generations would, by observing the rewards won by the righteous and the punishment meted out to the rebellious, have developed a faith so certain in the existence of God and the truth of the Prophets, that it would not have been possible for them to win any rewards by passing through trials and vicissitudes. It was necessary, therefore, that faith and its fruits should be manifested only partially here, so that he who strives for God should be clearly distinguished from him who devotes himself wholly to the pleasures of the world,

and each should be rewarded or punished according to his capacity and his doings.

Death serves the purpose of keeping the consequences of man's actions hidden from him, and enables him to arrive at the truth after a process of deliberation and reasoning and acting in the fear of God. It enables him to develop a spirit of freedom which would otherwise be lost to him.

Another purpose which death serves is that it enables the human soul to develop its finer faculties. The human body is too dense to observe the finer aspects of the universe of the spirit. Its severance from the body, therefore, enables the human soul to become conversant with matters which are essential to its limitless progress. As soon as the soul leaves the body it starts forthwith on a new path of progress and is not kept a prisoner in a dark cell to await the result of its trial. This misconception is the result of the theory that this life is a course of studies with an examination at the end of it, and as there is an interval between an examination and the announcement of the result, it is imagined that there is a similar interval between this life and the Day of Judgment which is the day on which the result is to be announced. While it is true that this life is a trial, it is not in the nature of an ordinary university examination with which we are familiar, but is more akin to the workings of nature. Islam has drawn a comparison between the life after death and the life of a man in its earlier stages. As a child develops from a sperm—nay from vegetable and animal life—in the womb of the mother, and after birth passes through a stage of help-

lessness and weakness in which it begins to adjust itself to the conditions of this life, so after death the human soul passes through various stages and experiences.

The Holy Quran uses the same word to describe the stage through which the human soul passes immediately after death, as it employs for the womb. Hence the first stage through which the soul passes after death is the stage of the womb in which, like the child in the womb, it undergoes a development in accord with the mode of life led by it in this world; and as, at a certain stage in the womb the child develops a soul, so the human soul after passing through certain experiences after death develops a new soul which possesses far higher and finer and more delicate faculties and perceptions than the soul from which it emanates. The old soul then serves this new soul as a body and man becomes able to perceive things through his new physical senses which he could perceive formerly only through the soul, for, the new body with which man is invested is as fine and delicate of perception as the soul was in this world. In truth it is that very soul in a new transformation.

Another process then commences which may be compared to the stage of birth of a child. This is called the resurrection of the body. It signifies that man is now equipped with a new soul and a new body which fit him for the new life before him, as the child is fitted with a body and soul in the womb. At this stage man emerges from the stage of the womb, i.e., the tomb.

The next stage is called the Day of Resurrection and may be compared to the stage of infancy. In it the

soul adjusts its knowledge and its reason to its new surroundings. The soul is now better developed than it was when it emerged from the tomb, but is perfected only after the experiences of this day, at the end of which it is like a youth fully developed and fully prepared to experience different aspects of life. On the termination of this period which is called the Last Judgment man is translated to that condition of life which is expressed in terms of heaven and hell.

Throughout these three stages man experiences pain or pleasure in accordance with his spiritual development, that is to say, he realizes the joys of heaven or the tortures of hell even during its period of gestation, its period of infancy and finally after its complete development; only its realization is defective or less perfect during the two earlier stages, becoming perfect in the last. In this stage man's realization of pleasure and pain becomes perfect, and this stage is termed heaven or hell. This stage is unending.

There is no interval between death and the feeling of pleasure or pain; only the soul in its effort to adjust itself to, and equip itself for, the new conditions of life must pass through two preparatory stages which are inferior to, and less perfect than the last stage. The human soul is continuously pressing forward and passing from one stage into the next higher. The Holy Quran says:

الَّذِينَ تَتَوَقَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ فَأَلْقُوا السَّلَامَ مَا كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ  
مِنْ شَوْءٍ بَلَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ □  
فَادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَلَيْسَ مَشْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ □  
الَّذِينَ تَتَوَقَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ طَيِّبِينَ يَقُولُونَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ اادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ  
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ □

'Those whom the angels divest of their souls while they were engaged in unjust pursuits, give the angels the salutation of peace and say: "We were not engaged in evil pursuits." "Nay, evil were your pursuits," is the reply, "and God knows best what you did. Enter the gates of hell and dwell therein, and evil is the dwelling place of the arrogant."

Again, 'Those whom the angels divest of their souls while they are pure will be greeted with, "Peace be upon you. Enter paradise as the reward of that which you did."'<sup>149</sup>

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has said, 'The tomb may be a garden of paradise or a pit of hell.'

This shows that the soul continues in a living state throughout, and begins immediately after death to tread the path which it has fashioned out of its deeds. The tradition quoted above uses the word 'tomb.' It does not, however, mean the grave dug in the earth in which the body is placed, but signifies the place where the soul dwells after death. The Holy Quran says, 'God causes

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<sup>149</sup> Al-Nahl, 16:29, 30, 33.

each person to die and consigns him to the grave.' <sup>150</sup> It is obvious, however, that every person is not put in the grave; some are cremated, others are devoured by wild beasts and yet others find a resting place in the sea. The grave signifies the tomb where the soul is housed, and not the place to which the lifeless body is consigned, there to remain and fulfil the eternal law of decay.

### **The nature of the Rewards and Punishments of the Life after Death**

I shall next endeavour to explain whether the rewards and punishments of the life after death are physical or spiritual. Islam teaches that they partake of both. They are physical in the sense, that the soul shall have developed a new body in the next life, and the pains and pleasures of that life shall be capable of being felt and experienced by that body as much as the things of this world are felt and experienced by our physical senses. They will be spiritual in the sense, that they will not partake of the material nature of the things of this world, for the object of translating the soul from this world to the next is that it should be enabled to acquire those finer perceptions by means of which it can realize those delicate conceptions, of which this denser body of ours can have no experience. It follows, therefore, that the things of the next world must be of a nature different from that to which we are accustomed in this world. If we are to be fed in the next world on milk and honey and fruit like those of this, and the fire and the smoke of

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<sup>150</sup> 'Abasa, 80: 22.

the next are to be no different from the fire and smoke of this world, then there would be no point in bringing about the severance of the soul from the body. In that case we should be permitted to carry our physical bodies with us. We have seen that the bodies with which we will be invested in the next world, will be of the nature of our souls in this world. How can it then be possible that the food of those bodies should be the milk and honey of this world, and the pains and punishments thereof should be of the nature of the fire and boiling water of this world? Can the souls that we now possess use the fire and the water and the fruits of this world, that they should be able to use them in the next? It is not correct, therefore, to say that man would be subjected to pain or pleasure after death, of the nature of the physical pains and pleasures of this world. On the other hand, the things of the next world, although not material, will assume delicate spiritual bodies and appear personified before man—evil things to evil men and good things to good. The consciousness and perception of life cannot be perfect unless the most delicate things are invested with a corresponding delicate body. Every soul is in need of a body, a coarse one needs a coarse body and a fine one fine. As each soul will be invested with a body in the next world, the things of that world will be perceptible to the external senses of that body in the same manner in which the things of this world are perceptible to our physical senses here. But as that body will be of the nature of the spirit, the personified things of the next world will also be spiritual.

As in this world there are spiritual conditions in addition to physical conditions, so for the newly created and more exalted soul of the next world, there will be spiritual conditions which will be superior to the spiritual conditions of this world; and as in this life, pleasure and pain are both physical and spiritual, so in the next life the rewards and punishments will not only be physical but also spiritual. But the conditions of the next life will be of a higher degree than the conditions of this life, so much so that the physical conditions of the next life will correspond to the spiritual conditions of this life, and the spiritual conditions of the next life will be higher still. Indeed, the Holy Quran speaks of fire, cold, stocks, etc., as the things man would be punished with in the next life, and of shades, streams of water, milk, and honey as the rewards of the life to come, but at the same time it says:

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ ۗ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ □

'No soul knoweth what joys are reserved for the righteous in recompense of their deeds.'<sup>151</sup>

Speaking of the blessings of the next life, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says, 'No eye has seen them, nor has any ear heard of them, nor can the mind of man form any conception of them.' Now if the blessings of the next life are to be the same kinds of gifts of God which we enjoy in this life, we should be able to form an idea of them, no matter how excellent they may be. But the words of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> show that the blessings of

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<sup>151</sup> Al-Sajdah, 32:18.

the next life will be quite different from the blessings of this life. The same will be the case with the pains and punishments of the next life. The Holy Quran says that when the fruits of heaven will be laid before the dwellers of paradise they will say, 'This is that with which we were provided before.'<sup>152</sup> Again with reference to this saying of theirs the Holy Quran says, 'They shall have its like given to them.'<sup>153</sup> That is to say, those things will not be of this world, but will resemble the things of this world in their external appearance. The fact is that though the soul does not use physical things as the body does, yet it does partake of the pleasures as well as the pain which are experienced by the body. Hence, as the soul is accustomed to the things of this life, so, in order to complete the measure of its pleasure or pain, the things of the life to come will be made to assume the form of the things of this life.

In order to enable us to realize to some degree the spiritual conditions of the next life, the Holy Quran cites an illustration to aid us in this realization. It says:

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا فَيُمْسِكُ  
الَّتِي كَفَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْوَمُوتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ فِي  
ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ □

'God taketh souls unto Himself at death, and during their sleep the souls of those who do not die; and He retaineth those on which He hath

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<sup>152</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:26.

<sup>153</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:26.

passed a decree of death, but sendeth the others back till a time that is fixed. Herein are signs for those who reflect.' <sup>154</sup>

That is to say, the connection of the soul is temporarily severed from the body even in sleep and the conditions of the life after death may be perceived on this analogy. As this separation is temporary, the soul retains its connection with the brain, through which man is enabled to remember what the soul has experienced during its separation from the body.

The Holy Quran says: 'Herein are signs for those who reflect,' that is to say, man can derive many benefits from a study of this condition, for, he can understand the nature and actions of the soul and its condition after death. In sleep, the body reposes comfortably in bed, yet man sees himself in other forms and visits various places. The things which he sees in his dreams have bodies like the bodies of material objects, sometimes so perfect that they leave behind evidence of their physical nature on the body of man, a fact well-known to those who have experience of such matters. I myself have experienced this many times.

Once, I was fasting and began to feel very thirsty. When my thirst became intolerable, I prayed to God, and as a result of the prayer, I entered a state of light sleep when something was put into my mouth which had the effect of allaying my thirst. This condition lasted only for a second, but I found I no longer suffered

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<sup>154</sup> Al-Zumar, 39:43.

from thirst and I felt as if I had drunk my fill. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> too has recorded many such experiences of his own. Once, in a state of complete wakefulness he saw Jesus of Nazareth in his spiritual body, and held a long discourse with him about the corruptions that had found their way into Christianity and the way in which they could be removed. On another occasion he even dined with him. To those who are strangers to these things, such experiences may savour of mental derangement and may have no greater value than mere figments of the imagination. But those who have had personal experience of such matters and are well-versed in spiritual sciences can fully understand and appreciate them. These spiritual conditions are quite different from the conditions produced by the attention of the mesmerist and are governed by a different set of laws altogether.

In short, the world of dreams and *Kashf* serves as an illustration of the life to come and enables man to judge of the nature of the next world's life. As all objects in a dream are spiritual, and yet have a body, similarly the things of the next life will have a body, but that body will be spiritual and not physical, and the soul will perform spiritual functions still higher in the scale.

The Holy Quran explains the conditions of the next life thus: It says that the deeds done by man in this life will assume a shape in the next. What we call the water of the next world will be but an embodiment of man's actions in conformity with the Law of God. The milk of the next life will be but the Knowledge of God which man acquires in the present life. The fruits of

heaven will be embodiments of the pleasure and delight which the soul of man feels in rendering obedience to God. The Holy Quran says:

وَكُلُّ رَأْسٍ فِي الزَّمَانِ طَيْرَةٌ فِي عُنُقِهِ ۖ وَنُحْرُهُ لَهٗ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَتْلُوهُ  
مَنْشُورًا □ إِنْ أَرَادَ كِتَابَكَ ۖ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا □

'The deeds of man remain attached to him and are never separated from him. Their effects are hidden, but on the Day of Judgment, We will, as it were, turn them into a book which may be read by him,' i.e., their effects would become manifest and every deed which man had done in this life would bring forth its fruit and would mould the life of the next world according to its nature, 'We will say to man, 'Now continue reading this book,' i.e., go on progressing or retrogressing according to the character of thy deeds and reap the fruits thereof. 'We need not take an account of thy deeds. Thy own self will continue to take an account of thy actions,' i.e., the effects which thy deeds have produced are sufficient for thee both as a reward and as a punishment. We need not inflict on thee any new punishment or bestow upon thee any new reward.<sup>155</sup>

See how clearly does the verse state that the rewards and punishments of the next world are the embodiments of man's deeds in this very life. Elsewhere the Holy Quran says:

<sup>155</sup> Banī-Isrā'īl, 17:14, 15.

لَآ الْاَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِنْ كَأْسٍ كَانَ مَرْجُوهَا كَافُورًا ۝

عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ يُفَجِّرُونَهَا تَفْجِيرًا ۝

'The virtuous shall drink of a cup, which will have the property of camphor,' i.e., it will have the virtue of suppressing the evil passions. 'The cups shall be filled from springs which the believers have dug with great labour,' i.e., the deeds which the believers had done in their earthly life would appear in the next world in the form of springs.<sup>156</sup>

Again, the Holy Quran says, 'One who is blind in this world will be blind in the next.'<sup>157</sup> 'That is, the man who has not seen the truth with the eye of his soul in this world will feel as if he was blind in the next, for the soul of this life will be the body of the next.

At another place, the Holy Quran says:

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُكَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ  
أَعْمَى ۝ قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِي أَعْمَى وَقَدْ كُنْتُ بَصِيرًا ۝ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ

أَتَتْكَ آيَاتُنَا فَنَسِيتَهَا ۖ وَكَذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ مَرْتَضَى ۝

'And he who is indifferent to My remembrance in this life and does not care to seek Me shall lead a life which will go on reducing his spiritual powers and the result will be evil. At the time when the soul should have perfected its powers and should be born into the next spiritual stage, such a one would be blind, (that is, he would be born blind in

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<sup>156</sup> Al-Dahr, 76: 6, 7.

<sup>157</sup> Banī-Isrā'īl, 17:73.

the life to come). Then in a state of bewilderment he would say, "O my Lord, how has all this happened? I had eyes in my previous life. Why hast Thou created me blind now?" Thereupon shall God say, "Thou didst likewise forsake My word; I have now left thee to thy fate so that thou mayest be rewarded according to thy deeds."<sup>158</sup>

This shows that blindness in the next life will be due to spiritual blindness in this life.

Thus it is clear that though the rewards and punishments of the next world will have some kind of body, yet they would be only embodiments of the actions of this life, and not anything altogether new. The details, as given in the Holy Quran, of the life of the next world also lend support to this conclusion. For instance, the Holy Quran says, that the dwellers of paradise will be given wine to drink which would purify their souls. It is clear that a material thing cannot purify the soul. Wine, therefore, here means the love of God which a man feels in this life and which will appear embodied as wine in the life to come, just as in a dream spiritual conditions appear to us in physical forms. As that wine will be an embodiment of the love of God and will not be a material thing, the drinking of it will purify the soul of man increasing thus his love of God.

In short, while Islam describes the rewards and punishments of the next life as physical, it characterizes them at the same time as spiritual; and this indeed is the

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<sup>158</sup> Ṭā Hā, 20:125-127.

only true and accurate description. Those unacquainted with the reality have either taken them as merely physical or as purely spiritual conditions. As a matter of fact both these conditions are opposed to reason. The rewards and punishments of the next life can neither be wholly physical, nor can purely spiritual perception of them serve the end in view, for a subtle and delicate object can manifest its properties only through a body less subtle and coarse than itself.

### **Where and in What Form will the Punishments and Rewards of the Next World Manifest Themselves**

It may be asked where and in what form will the punishment of hell manifest itself. Islam furnishes an excellent answer to this question, while no other religion gives an answer. Islam teaches us that hell is the name of the punishment which man will suffer through his seven senses. The Holy Quran says:

لَهَا سَبْعَةُ أَبْوَابٍ ۗ لِكُلِّ بَابٍ مِنْهُمْ جُزْءٌ مَّقْسُومٌ ۝

'Hell has seven gates through each of which shall one part of a condemned person pass.'<sup>159</sup>

But we find that the Holy Quran represents both the inmates of heaven and those of hell as complete beings and not as divided up into parts. Therefore the entry of one part of man through each of the gates of hell can mean only that man will feel its punishment through the avenues of his seven senses and thus he will, as it were, enter hell through seven gates and

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<sup>159</sup> Al-Hijr, 15:45.

through each gate there will pass one part of his body; i.e., one part through the sense of sight, another part through the sense of hearing, a third part through the sense of smell a fourth through the sense of taste, a fifth through the sense of touch, a sixth through the sense of heat and cold, and a seventh through the muscular sense. It is by means of these seven senses that man commits sins. He sins either through his eyes, when he looks at evil things with an evil eye or he sins through his ears when he listens to backbiting or foul language, etc.; or he sins through his nose when he smells things which he ought not to smell, or through his sense of taste when he eats things which he ought not to eat; or through his sense of touch when a desire for soft beds and cushions prevents him from employing himself in the service of his fellow men; or he sins through his sense of temperature when he shrinks from the performance of good deeds through fear of heat or cold; or again he sins through his muscular sense when he refrains from doing good or leaves it incomplete to save himself from fatigue. In short, it is the seven senses which cause a man to sin, and it is these senses which enable him to do good. By the seven gates of hell are thus meant the seven senses by means of which man commits sin. It is these seven senses through which he will taste punishment in the life to come, for owing to his becoming habituated to evil, the seven spiritual senses which correspond to the seven physical senses will become weakened and diseased, and will, by reason of their diseased condition, feel the punishment appointed for offenders in the next life. Accordingly we

find that all these seven kinds of punishments have been mentioned in the Holy Quran. With regard to the punishment which pertains to the sense of sight the Holy Quran says, 'Would that the deniers could picture to themselves the spectacle when they will see the punishment.'<sup>160</sup> That is to say, they shall be made to witness scenes the sight of which will cause them anguish. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says that they shall see serpents, scorpions and other terrifying things. With regard to the sense of hearing the Holy Quran says:

إِذَا رَأَتْهُمْ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ سَمِعُوا لَهَا تَغَيُّظًا وَزَفِيرًا □

'When it (hell-fire) shall see them from afar, they shall hear its raging and roaring.'<sup>161</sup>

That is to say, the flames of hell-fire shall roar in a terrible manner so that the very hearing of that roaring will be a pain and terror.

With regard to the sense of smell and taste, the Holy Quran says:

وَيُسْقَى مِنْ مَّاءٍ صَدِيدٍ □ يَتَجَرَّرُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَا يَكَادُ يُسِغُهُ

'And of tainted water shall he be made to drink; he shall sip it and will scarce be able to swallow it for loathing.'<sup>162</sup>

With regard to the sense of touch, the Holy Quran says:

لَهُمْ مِنْ جَهَنَّمَ مِهَادٌ وَ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ غَوَاشٍ ؕ

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<sup>160</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:166.

<sup>161</sup> Al-Furqān, 25:13.

<sup>162</sup> Ibrāhīm, 14:17, 18.

'They shall make their bed of Hell, and above them shall also be coverings of fire.' <sup>163</sup>

That is to say, they will be punished even through their sense of touch. Again, the Holy Quran says:

وَإِذَا أُلْقُوا مِنْهَا مَكَانًا ضَيِّقًا مُقَرَّرِينَ دَعَوْا هُنَالِكَ ثُبُورًا ۝

'And when they shall be flung into a narrow space thereof bound together, they shall then invoke destruction.' <sup>164</sup>

With regard to the punishment to be inflicted through the sense of temperature, the Holy Quran says,

'Let them taste hot boiling water as well as intensely cold water.' <sup>165</sup>

With regard to the punishment inflicted through the muscular sense the Holy Quran says, 'Downcast on that day shall be the countenances of some, full of travail and weariness.' <sup>166</sup>

In short, the Holy Quran describes in detail the punishments which will be inflicted through the seven senses. This means that the seven spiritual senses, which correspond to the seven physical senses, will be vitiated, and will become the avenues or channels of punishment. A misuse or abuse of the senses which are a boon from God, will vitiate the spiritual senses and all things will become for them a source of pain.

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<sup>163</sup> Al-A'rāf, 7:42.

<sup>164</sup> Al-Furqān, 25:14.

<sup>165</sup> Šād, 38:58.

<sup>166</sup> Al-Ghāshiah, 88: 3, 4.

But for those who make a beneficent use of their senses they will become a source of pleasure, for the right use of a thing strengthens it and enhances its properties. Accordingly we find that the rewards promised to the righteous pertain to these seven senses also. Every sense, being healthy and sound will become a channel or source of pleasure. Do you not see that the light of the sun which is so pleasant and which refreshes the eye and delights the heart becomes a source of pain and discomfort to one with a sore eye, so much so, that if the eye is not quickly shielded from the rays of the sun, it may totally lose its sight; or the man may faint? Similarly, do you not see that a sweet and charming voice which pleases all hearers is most disturbing to a man suffering from a disorder of the ear or from headache, and that which cheers other people becomes for him distressing and intolerable? Again, do you not see that when the sense of smell is vitiated, it is offended by a sweet smell, so much so that perfume causes headache to some persons although it is one of the blessings of God? Again, do you not see that when the sense of taste is impaired, a sweet thing tastes bitter, and salt tastes insipid? Every palatable thing loses its flavour, nay, it becomes positively nauseating. Again, do you not see that when a man's sense of touch is upset, a soft bed which would afford comfort and delight to another, becomes to him harder than stone and as uncomfortable as a bed of thorns which causes him to roll about in agony? Again, do you not see that when a man has his sense of temperature disturbed, the very coolness which is refreshing to others turns into fire for him and he

casts off his clothes and complains bitterly of a burning sensation in his body? Again, do you not see that in the hot season, a man who has this sense out of order begins to shiver with cold and covers himself with warm clothing while others may be using ice and may be fanning themselves? Similarly, do you not see that those whose muscular sense is weakened, consider walking an intolerable burden while for others it is a recreation; such people get tired before they have walked many paces?

In short, all these phenomena are being daily witnessed; from which one can well understand the nature of hell. It must be remembered that just as virtue has a positive existence and a misuse of the faculty of doing good is called vice, similarly, the blessings of God and bounties are positive, and pain and punishment are the consequence of the corruption which a man works in his own soul. A man came to the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and said, 'O Messenger of God, God says that paradise extends over the earth and the heavens. If this is so, where, then, is hell?' The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> replied, 'When it is day, where is the night? The same is the case with heaven and hell.' Now this cannot mean that at one time all men will be in hell, and at another, all will be in heaven, just as there is day at one time and night at another. It means, rather, that though night comes over the whole earth and day too comes over the whole earth, yet for those, who have the sun over them, it is day, and for others it is night. Similarly those who will be under God's favour, will find themselves in heaven, and the others in hell. Hence those who through the grace of

God will have developed their seven senses into a sound condition will enjoy the blessings of heaven, but for those who will have corrupted their senses, these very blessings will turn into punishment. Virtuous people will feel only so much heat as will ensure their comfort, but the wicked will feel the heat of a burning fire which will scorch them with its flames. A virtuous man will enjoy spiritual blessings resembling cool water, but when the water is given to the wicked man he will find it intensely hot so much so that it will burn his mouth. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says: 'Every man has a place in heaven and hell; those who go to heaven will occupy not only their own places but also the places which would have been occupied by those who are in hell, and those who go to hell will also occupy the places which would have been occupied by those who are in heaven.' This too means that the inmates of heaven will take up the whole bliss, and those who are condemned, the whole punishment. When a person is unable to benefit by a blessing, he says to the other, 'Thou hast taken away my share also.'

The Holy Quran says, 'There is no one of you who shall not go down into hell.' And then it adds, 'Then will We deliver those who had the fear of God.'<sup>167</sup> This shows that every man will enter hell but God will save the righteous from pain and suffering. That is to say, they will enter hell but at the same time will be safe from it. This can only mean that the righteous people will turn everything into a source of blessing and joy for

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<sup>167</sup> Maryam, 19:71-72.

themselves through the soundness of their senses. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says, 'God will say to a person: 'Leap into hell.' When he will leap into it, he will find it a place of joy.' In short, all those things which the spiritual body will experience in the next world will be the consequence of the right or wrong use of the seven senses.

There is this difference indeed that the inmates of hell will be confined to their respective places, but the dwellers of heaven will be free, just as a sick person is confined to his bed, while a healthy person moves about freely. For, hell is a prison or a hospital, and heaven is a pleasance. Hell is limited while heaven is unlimited. An inmate of hell will not be able to move beyond his prescribed limits. But a dweller of heaven will be free to go wherever he pleases. For him all space will be heaven. Even if he enters the place where the inmates of hell may be suffering the tortures of hell-fire, it will be to him like a pleasure garden. As the inmates of hell would suffer tortures and it distresses one person to see another in torture, the inmates of hell will be concealed from the eyes of the dwellers of heaven by means of a curtain so that the sight of their torture may not cause the latter any pain unless they themselves desire to see them.

The inmates of heaven will not be aware of one another's condition; each will be conscious only of his own. But if God wishes to exalt a person to a higher position, He will make him aware of the condition of the person above him. Then will that man yearn for the next higher position, and will have his wish granted.

### **Will Reward and Punishment be Everlasting?**

Another question with regard to the life after death is whether reward and punishment will be everlasting. The answer which Islam gives to this question is that reward will but punishment will not be everlasting. The Holy Quran says that man has been created so that he might become a perfect manifestation of Divine attributes. If people continue to burn in hell-fire for ever and ever, how, and when will they become such manifestations?

The Holy Quran tells us that the blessings of heaven will be unending, but this will not be the case with the punishment of hell which, under the will of God and through His mercy and grace, will at last come to an end. The Holy Quran says that the mercy of God excels His wrath. When the wicked will have experienced the wrath of God during a period long enough to be called everlasting in view of the limited vision of man, the mercy of God will come into operation. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says, 'There will come a time over hell when there will remain none in it, and the easterly breeze will shake its gates.'

The idea that the inmates of hell will undergo everlasting punishment is due to ignorance of the purpose for which God punishes the sinful. God, being Merciful, has no desire to inflict punishment on anyone; a man brings punishment on himself on account of his own wickedness. As man corrupts his own spiritual faculties, he will not be able to experience the blessings of God to be awarded in the next world, and so he will experience pain. God, out of His mercy, has ordained that diseases should find a cure. Hence, just as physical diseases are

cured, similarly, the wicked will be cured and reformed by the pain which they will experience and will then be able to enjoy the blessings of heaven. Then will they enter heaven, and God's mercy will be perfected and the purpose for which man was created will be fulfilled.

### **Will there be Action in Heaven or will it come to an End?**

Another important question without answering which any account of the life after death must remain incomplete is, what will man do in the next life? Will his actions come to an end? Will he occupy himself merely with eating and drinking like a super annuated person or will he have something to do?

The answer which Islam gives to this question is that actions constitute life and that to separate a man from action is to deprive him of life. A life without action is worse than death. If a life of inactivity had been a good thing, the ease-loving people of this world would have been looked upon as the best and most enviable people. But a person who has experienced the joy which springs from work knows that true happiness lies in action and progress. It may be well for an idiot to remain idle, but no sane person would wish to be without work. The Holy Quran says:

نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَىٰ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ  
يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَتْمِمْ لَنَا نُورَنَا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا  
□ قَدِيرٌ

'Their light shall run before them, and on their right. They will say, 'Our Lord! perfect for us our

light, and cover up our weaknesses; verily Thou hast power over all things."<sup>168</sup>

That is to say, every believer will go on progressing and will perceive new stages of advancement, which he will strive after and desire to attain. Again, the Holy Quran says, 'The believers will not experience any fatigue in heaven,' which shows that there will be work in heaven but it will not occasion fatigue or weariness.<sup>169</sup> At another place, the Holy Quran says:

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ  
الَّذِي جِئْتِ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مُّرْضِيَةً  
فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي

'O soul that hast been satisfied with Me and in whom there is left no doubt concerning Me, return to thy Lord being well-pleased with Him and He being well-pleased with thee; enter among My servants and enter the place which is under My direct patronage' (*i.e.*, the place where the perfect attributes of God are fully manifested).<sup>170</sup>

Thus, though man has work assigned to him in this life, the time of real work begins after death. It is then, that a believer becomes a perfect servant of God, for it is then that he obtains the fullest opportunity to absorb into himself and to manifest perfectly the attributes of God.

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<sup>168</sup> Al-Tahrīm, 66:9.

<sup>169</sup> Al-Ḥijr, 15:49.

<sup>170</sup> Al-Fajr, 35:28-30.

So man's work will not cease in the life after death. On the other hand, it will increase. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says, 'In paradise the believers will be taught, through revelation, new forms of the glorification and sanctification of God.' This does not mean that they will be taught new expressions for the glorification of God, for, this a man could do by himself. It means that they will be taught, through revelations, new attributes of God relating to His sanctity and majesty, so that they may try to become manifestations of those attributes also.

It may be asked what new attributes of God could there be which are not already known? The answer is that man can acquire only so much knowledge as he can learn through his senses. Hence, our present knowledge is limited by the capacity of our senses. It can be described as perfect only with reference to the capacity of our present senses. But when man acquires new senses, he will also be able to comprehend new attributes, and God being unlimited, man will continue to progress in the knowledge and the recognition of the Divine Being, and new attributes will continue to be revealed to him. He will try to realize and manifest them in his own self. The new knowledge will throw open ever fresh spheres of action. Man will continue on the path of everlasting progress, and his belief in and the knowledge of unlimited powers and attributes of God will increase daily.

In short, paradise is a place of action, just as this world is; nay, it is more. In this life a man is liable to fail and to be retarded, but in the next life there will be no such danger. Thus, in respect of spiritual knowledge

and endeavour this world is like a school, where a person may succeed or fail. But the next life may be compared to that of a person who engages himself in scientific research after graduation. He also, has to work hard, nay, he sometimes works even harder than a college student, but the difference between them is that a student is always afraid lest he should fail, but a research worker has not that fear.

This discussion shows also that the real blessings and joys of paradise lie in spiritual progress and not in the satisfaction of physical desires. The Holy Quran says that the greatest blessing of paradise is the pleasure of God,<sup>171</sup> and the greatest joy, according to the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> will be to see God.

In short, in the acquisition of true and perfect knowledge, the doing of good deeds in accordance with that knowledge, and in the attainment of nearness to and union with God by these two means lies the paradise of a Muslim. It is impossible to conceive a grander object than this.

I have here set out the teachings of Ahmadiyyat concerning all those questions with regard to which it is the duty of a religion to afford guidance. I trust that those who study what I have said with care will be convinced that the teachings of Ahmadiyyat would enable every person completely to fulfil the object of his or her existence.

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<sup>171</sup> Al-Taubah, 9:72.

The peculiar excellence of Islam lies in the fact that it actually leads man to God, and thus puts an end to all discussions and controversies. Why has man been created? The only object of his creation is that he should attain to union with God. So, only that religion can be deemed capable of fulfilling the true purpose of religion which enables us to attain union with God, and not those which seek to please us by mere words.

## **The Effect of the Teachings of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> on his Followers**

I now proceed to describe briefly the effect which the teachings of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, have produced on his followers. It must be remembered that the advent of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> was not the outcome of modern currents of thought, nor did he reflect in his person tendencies of the so-called new learning of the present day. As a matter of fact, the teachings of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> were diametrically opposed to all the currents of modern thought. If we look carefully into the matter we find that modern thought exhibits two tendencies: first, that there is no need for man to have any deep relationship with God, that man should indeed be completely independent. Accordingly, we see that all the religions, whether new or old, are making efforts to adapt themselves to this tendency. They are striving even to change the form and significance of acts of worship and so to adapt and to reduce them as to recapture and restore people's interest in them. The second tendency is, that the established ways and modes of society need not undergo any change, not because they can be proved to be truly beneficent but because people have become accustomed to them and are not prepared to depart from them. The old as well as new religions are making efforts to adapt their teachings to this tendency because they realize that they have not the power to resist it. Accordingly, we see that the followers of all

these religions are striving to restate their position with respect to such matters as the taking and giving of interest, the social separation of the sexes, polygamy, etc. They are revising the teachings of their respective religions so as to make them conform to the established social customs of the age. Unlike all these, however, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> based his teachings purely on religion and not on any modern current of thought. This distinction marks him out as the true reformer of the age, for he was not like the horn of time trumpeting out the notes blown into it by the latter. He opposed both the tendencies of the present day, i.e., (1) freedom from the bonds of religion, and (2) social slavery. He neither abolished worship nor made any reduction in it. On the other hand, he revealed to the world the spirit and reality underlying acts of worship, and by creating in the minds of the people a sincere fervour for worship, strengthened the relationship between man and his Maker. He not only called the attention of the people to the necessity of obligatory prayers but also exhorted them to cultivate the habit of performing optional ones. For, as he explained, worship is not a penalty imposed upon man, but is a certain means of spiritual progress. Fasting, which had not only been discarded by the followers of other religions but also by the educated section of the Muslims of these times, he explained the philosophy of and proved that fasting was indispensable for spiritual advancement. Similarly, he discovered to the world the spirit underlying the Divine commandments regarding pilgrimage, and sacrifice, and exhorted people to act faithfully on these commandments of God.

He released the people from the bonds of social slavery and explained to them their error in blindly following the present day laws of society. He proved the excellence of the social teachings of Islam by cogent reasons. He exposed the evils underlying the taking and giving of interest, showed the beneficence of the Islamic injunctions under the purdah or *Hijāb*, proved the need of polygamy under certain circumstances, and explained the importance of the institution of divorce. In short, he openly and vigorously advocated those teachings of Islam concerning which the Muslims were too timid to raise their voice out of fear of opposing the current of modern thought with respect to these matters.

I will not refer to the doubts and superstitions prevalent among the uneducated people, which the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> strove to root out, for it may be said that time itself was reforming them. The teachings of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> , put forth in opposition to the generally accepted ideas of his age, produced, however, this salutary effect that hundreds of thousands of men who had found themselves powerless against the current of the times gained strength to pause and reflect. As a result of this independent thinking, they came to the conclusion that the teachings of Islam were adequate in every respect and that the code of Islam was perfect in all matters. Those who were a prey to a thousand doubts and misgivings in regard to the existence of God,—nay, even those who were atheists out and out, and were steeped in materialism,—obtained a new life through him and not only became believers in the living and powerful God but also began to find bliss and joy in His

worship and remembrance. So that today they present this spectacle to an astonished world. Their minds are enlightened with the new learning of the West and are imbued with whatever may be beneficent in the new thought of the age, yet their hearts are full of Divine love and their heads remain bowed down before their Lord. They spend their days and nights in the remembrance of God and though they are equipped with the highest secular learning they set their faith above everything else, and their lives present true models of the teachings of Islam.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> liberated people from the bondage of the social laws of the time and opened out to them a field of free and independent thought so much so that despite the opposition and hostility of the followers of all religions, and despite the tendencies of the age, his followers are engaged, day and night, in the social reformation of the world in conformity with the teachings of Islam. They are striving to correct the life of ease and luxury lived by others into one of reformation, chastity, and good morals. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> has not created fanaticism or religious frenzy among his followers, neither has he made the love of his own person the essence of his religion and the centre of his system, as is the way of those who seek to inspire a spirit of sacrifice and self-denial among the people at the cost of other noble qualities. He has assigned to everything its proper place, and has made every effort to keep alive and strengthen the faculty of reason in man. Notwithstanding their rational outlook his followers are ever ready to sacrifice their lives and belongings for the

service of religion. Their example is like that of the blessed companions of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> concerning whom the Holy Quran says:

فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُ وَ مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَنْتَظِرُ ۖ

'Some of them have fulfilled the object of their lives and the desire of their hearts, and the others are waiting for the same.' <sup>172</sup>

There have been two occasions in Afghanistan when Ahmadis were called upon to lay down their lives for the pleasure of their Lord and they did so with unparalleled devotion and cheerfulness. I have said 'two occasions,' and I mean thereby only such occasions on which the Ahmadis concerned were called upon by their persecutors to renounce Ahmadiyyat and thus save themselves but they refused to do so and stuck fast to the faith which God had granted them through the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. The number of Ahmadis who have given up their lives in Afghanistan and have allowed themselves to be ruthlessly butchered for their religion runs into nearly a dozen.

It may be observed that the number of martyrs which may be claimed by a community is determined by many factors, one of them being the number of opportunities of this particular kind of sacrifice afforded to the community. It would serve but little purpose if, in order to gauge the spirit of sacrifice in a particular community, we were to look only to the number of martyrs it has produced without taking into considera-

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<sup>172</sup> Al-Aḥzāb, 33:24.

tion various other factors by which this number may be affected. It must also be remembered that martyrdom is not the only means through which man's spirit of sacrifice may find fulfilment. There are many other ways in which this spirit may fulfil itself. Indeed there are other ways which offer a higher and a nobler fulfilment of the spirit of sacrifice than even martyrdom.

To revert. One of the two martyrs was Sahibzadah Sayyid Abdul Latif<sup>fa</sup>, of Khost, in Afghanistan, who was held in such high esteem in that country that he had been selected to perform the coronation ceremony of the late Amir Habibullah Khan. When the Sahibzadah Sahib received news of the Ahmadiyya Movement his attention was caught and he began to study the literature of the Movement. As a result of this God opened his eyes and he entered the Bai'at of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. As he was desirous of seeing the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> in person he obtained the late Amir Habibullah Khan's permission to perform the pilgrimage, intending to pay a visit to Qadian on the way. So he came to Qadian, saw the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> and profited by his company. He became so much absorbed in his love for his Master that he decided to postpone his going on the pilgrimage and stayed on at Qadian to add to his knowledge and strengthen his faith. After a stay of some months he prepared to go back to his native land and, as he was leaving Qadian he remarked that he felt that his motherland was summoning him to open there the way for the acceptance of the truth through the sacrifice of his blood. 'I see,'he said,'handcuffs round my wrists and fetters on my legs.' Accordingly as soon

as, on his return, he entered the territory of the Amir he was arrested by his order, for the news of his acceptance of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> had already reached the country. On arrival in Kabul he was asked whether he had really accepted the Ahmadiyyat. He admitted that he had, and after a long discussion with the 'Ulema' and after the latter had issued a Fatwa to the effect that he should be put to death because of his apostasy, the Amir ordered that he should be stoned to death. As, however, the Sahibzadah Sahib, by virtue of his learning and piety, occupied a very eminent position in the country and commanded a following of thousands, the Amir repeatedly summoned him to his presence and tried to persuade him to recant and have his life spared. On every such occasion, however, the Amir received a firm and unshakable answer from the Sahibzadah to the effect that as he had found the truth he would never forsake it.

The Amir then ordered that the Sahibzadah Sahib should be tortured to make him renounce his faith in Ahmadiyyat. All these efforts, however, were unavailing. The Sahibzadah Sahib bore all torments without flinching and with a resignation and cheerfulness at which all marvelled. The Amir, at last, directed that the execution should be carried out. Thereupon the Sahibzadah Sahib was taken outside the city whither the Amir himself repaired, and many people from the town also assembled to watch the sight. A pit was dug and the Sahibzadah Sahib was buried in it up to his waist. The Amir now went to him again and asked him to reconsider the position and recant, but he received the same

answer, namely, that, as he had found the truth, he could not give it up. He also added that on the first Thursday after his death he would rise from the dead and come alive. Having despaired of the Sahibzadah Sahib's making a recantation the Amir himself threw the first stone at him. This was the signal for a deluge of stones being hurled at him from all sides. The Sahibzadah Sahib, however, remained firm and steadfast and looked cheerful and happy. His head was at last shattered and, the neck having been broken, hung down on one side, but his persecutors continued to rain stones at him till his body was buried under a big heap of stones and the soul of this righteous servant of the Lord departed for ever from its earthly abode. Then the people went back to the city and a guard was appointed by the Amir to watch over the body of the martyr lest his friends should make an effort to remove it and give it a formal burial. Soon, however, came the punishment of God and the 'resurrection' which the blessed martyr had predicted came on all of a sudden. On the Thursday after his martyrdom cholera appeared in the city of Kabul in an epidemic form, and soon became very virulent. The visitation was both unusual and unexpected, and so many lives were lost that the people felt and admitted that the epidemic had come in fulfilment of the dying words of the martyr. There were some deaths even in the royal family.

These events have been simply and briefly narrated by a European writer in his book, *Under the Absolute Amir*. The writer is Mr. Martin who was at the time Engineer-in-Chief at Kabul. He, being unfamiliar

with the Ahmadiyya Movement, has permitted some errors to creep into his narrative, but on the whole it presents a correct picture of the event in simple, pitiful language. Its value is enhanced because Mr. Martin was quite a disinterested person.

The second martyr was Maulawi Abdur Rahman who had been a disciple of Sahibzadah Abdul Latif. His martyrdom took place before the martyrdom of the Sahibzadah Sahib. He was ruthlessly strangled to death because of his being a follower of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>.

Besides these two martyrs who were executed by the order of the Afghan government, there have been several other cases of Ahmadis who have been martyred by the fanatic people of the country. It was only during the last month that the news came that two Ahmadis were cruelly put to death by the people on account of their faith in Ahmadiyyat.

Besides death, there are Ahmadis who have had to endure other troubles and torments for the sake of their faith. On every such occasion they have shown a spirit of complete resignation to the will of God and have borne all manner of persecution with patience and fortitude. For instance, during the course of the present year there was a rising in Khost against his majesty the Amir of Afghanistan. When the rebels found themselves helpless against the forces of the State, they, in their fury, fell upon the helpless Ahmadis of the district and burned to ashes two of their villages on the excuse that the Ahmadis had instigated the Amir against them.

Two or three times, at least, in a year it so happens that the people excite the local officials against the Ahmadis and, relying on their support, set ruthlessly to torture such of them as they can lay their hands on. Many of the followers of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> have undergone the hardships of imprisonment, many have been cruelly beaten, many have been subjected to social boycotts and inconveniences, many have been robbed and looted, and some have been accorded the shameful treatment of having their faces blackened and being made to ride on donkeys in that condition to be humiliated and ridiculed among the people.

For the last quarter of a century Ahmadis have endured all these troubles and have borne all these persecutions in Afghanistan for the sake of their Lord, but have never wavered in their faith. They are rapidly advancing both spiritually and in numbers. It would, however, savour of ingratitude not to mention that since the accession to the throne of the present Amir, his majesty Amir Amanullah Khan, the persecution of the Ahmadis has been officially prohibited and matters have considerably improved. As, however, the Amir's territory is passing through a period of transition as regards stability of government and discipline, the government has so far not been able actually to put an end to the persecution of the Ahmadis. But we hope that if the Amir's government continues to act in a spirit of justice and equity, the Afghan Ahmadis would before long not only be protected from being persecuted by the govern-

ment but would also be safe from the oppression of the minor local officials and the public.<sup>173</sup>

So far I have related the condition of the Ahmadis in Afghanistan, but as will appear from what follows, the condition of the Ahmadis in India is no better. It is true that under the British government no one dare openly put Ahmadis to death, but short of death they have been persecuted in diverse ways. They have been made the victims of cheating, trickery, falsehood and other similar practices. They are also subjected to diverse forms of physical persecution and they bear all these troubles with cheerfulness and resignation. Death is a great trial but that which sorely taxes the patience of a man is trouble that approaches slowly and continues for long. The Indian Ahmadis have had their full share of this latter kind of persecution. A vast majority of the followers of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> have had to endure such persecution. There are many whose bodies bear marks of the beatings received by them for the sake of Ahmadiyyat. Many have been forcibly turned out of their homes and dispossessed of their properties and belongings.

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<sup>173</sup> It was, however, again in 1924, same year as that of the first publication of this book, that another Ahmadi, Maulawī Ni‘mat Ullah Khan, was stoned to death in Afghanistan. This sentence was pronounced upon him by the Afghan government on finding him 'guilty' of preaching Ahmadiyyat in the country. Eye-witness accounts relate that, as this martyr of Islam was dug in the ground up to his waist for being stoned, he was again advised by the authorities to renounce his faith in order to save his skin. Maulawī Ni‘mat Ullah Khan rejected this proposal and reiterated that under no conditions he could give up the truth with which God had blessed him through the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. (Ed.)

Instances have not been wanting of boys and girls still in their teens who were beaten, turned out of home and disinherited by their parents for no other fault than that they believed in Ahmadiyyat. They cheerfully bore all these hardships and remained steadfast in their faith. There have been instances of Ahmadiis who have been either forced to resign from government service or have been dismissed on the false pretence of incompetence through the spitefulness of their Indian officers. Often a solitary Ahmadiis in a village of non-Ahmadiis is harassed and put to all sorts of embarrassments. He is abused and given a cruel beating, but when the matter comes to the notice of the police, the poor helpless Ahmadi can find no one to give evidence in his favour and so the police dismiss the case and the persecution continues unabated. Burial grounds are often closed to the Ahmadiis and at some places the dead bodies of Ahmadiis have been shamelessly disinterred and thrown out to be devoured by animals. Ahmadiis are often denied the use of wells, and they have sometimes been forced to travel miles to obtain a supply of drinking water in the hot weather. Cases have occurred where boys and girls, even infants hardly able to walk and speak, have remained without drinking for long periods on account of their being the children of Ahmadiis parents. This treatment was accorded to them in a country where the daily temperature sometimes rises as high as 115°F in the shade. Ahmadi shopkeepers have been boycotted and crops of Ahmadi farmers have been destroyed. Ahmadi lecturers and preachers are stoned while they are engaged in addressing meetings and

disturbances created to prevent the people from listening to them. There have been cases in which Ahmadi wives have been forcibly separated from their husbands and married off to others. Children have been separated from their fathers. Ahmadi women have been beaten and turned out of their homes by their non-Ahmadi husbands. Ahmadi lawyers and doctors have been boycotted. Men belonging to other professions have been similarly persecuted and brought to the verge of destitution. But the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> has infused into them such a spirit and has breathed into them such firmness of faith that they cheerfully bear all these trials, and in defiance of all persecution, they continue openly to proclaim their faith and to prove by their conduct that they put their faith above every worldly object.

The teachings of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> have had such an effect on the members of the Ahmadiyya Movement that although they do not differ from others in their dress and external appearance, they are easily picked out by the people. This is due to the moral qualities which distinguish them from others. Their speech, free from vulgarity and obscenity, their readiness to serve others, their self-denial and their abhorrence of fraud, deceit and similar practices make them conspicuous in all assemblies. Any person who is acquainted with their character can pick out an Ahmadi in a railway train or a public meeting or any other place of gathering, though he may not know him.

Even an uneducated Ahmadi is generally found to be intelligent and fairly conversant with religious subjects. The teachings of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> have

wrought an astounding transformation in the character of Ahmadis. On the one hand they have abandoned the irreligiousness and indifference found everywhere in the world, are inspired with love for the Word of God, His apostles and the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, endeavour constantly to convert themselves, as it were, into mirrors for the reflection of Divine attributes, pass their days and nights in the remembrance and worship of God, and are eager to acquire spiritual blessings in exchange for their material benefits in this age of worldly competition, and, on the other, they are among the most exacting critics who are not prepared to accept anything which is not founded on reason. They accept only a rational explanation of everything and try to persuade others of the truth of their affirmations by reason. They are not only opposed to, but promote the spread of modern sciences and learning. They do not look upon science as being opposed to religion but as subservient to it. In short, they maintain their independence in all matters, that is to say, they neither blindly believe in the sayings of their forefathers, nor do they necessarily accept every new idea as true. They test everything by the criteria of knowledge and reason, and accord every fact the position which has been given to it by God.

Another wonderful change wrought by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> among his followers is that they maintain a much higher standard of education than other communities. The proportion of educated persons in the Ahmadiyya Community is much higher than among other communities of India, although on account of their poverty the Ahmadis have not been able to establish any

schools of their own. There are many among them who have taken to education in old age. The women are so fond of learning and teaching that many homes in Qadian have been turned into private schools. Old women above seventy years of age occupy themselves with learning translation of the Holy Quran. There are always present in Qadian a large number of men and women of every age who have come from different provinces and countries to receive education. If there is one place where East and West appear to be united it is Qadian. At other places where there is provision for Western education, there is none for religious instruction, the home of which is the East, and where the study of religion is provided for there is indifference towards modern sciences, the centre of which is in the West. Among the Ahmadiyya Community, and particularly at Qadian which is the headquarters\* of the Movement, both these are united. Here, notwithstanding, Mr. Rudyard Kipling's observation to the contrary, the East and the West have met. While Ahmadis are engaged in learning the Western sciences, they have so strong a faith in the teachings of their religion and are so devoted to it, that the sacrifice of life, property, and home for the sake of religion is to them a trifle. Even the minor commandments and directions of their religion are carefully observed by them in their pure and true form.

Particular attention is among them paid to the rights of women and to their release from undue re-

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\* see Appendix II

straint, without doing anything contrary to the teachings of their religion.

They are much more deeply tolerant than the members of other communities. They look upon the disputes, which constantly recur between different communities of India in connection with the observance of certain religious ceremonies, as childish. They constantly try to inculcate a spirit of tolerance among other people. They permit even the opponents of Islam to address them in their mosques and calmly listen to their arguments and endeavour to explain their own points of view to them.

A very important revolution which the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> has brought about in his followers is that they give to religion priority over all things of the world. Every Ahmadi looks upon his property as a sacred trust from God. Those who have been properly instructed in the teachings of the Movement contribute one-sixteenth of their income monthly towards the funds of the Movement for religious and charitable purposes. Besides this—the normal monthly subscription—they contribute towards many other funds. Thus every member of the organized portion of the community contributes from one-tenth to one-third of his income to the funds of the community according to the degree of his zeal and spirit of sacrifice. This appears so strange in the eyes of some people that they imagine the community to be very rich while others suspect that they receive aid from government. The truth is that the government neither does, nor can, aid them, and the Ahmadiis are so poor that there is perhaps no other

community in India so poor on the whole as they are. But every one of them, at the sacrifice of his personal requirements contributes what appears to others to be a heavy proportion of his income for the religious, moral, and intellectual reformation of the world.

The Ahmadi women are not behind Ahmadi men in this respect. They have proved by their example that they live not for ornaments and dress but for God. Last year I made an appeal for the construction of a mosque in Germany and called upon the women of the community alone to contribute towards the fund. Thereupon hundreds of them sold their jewellery ornaments and their best dresses to provide their quota of contributions to the fund, which swelled to more than twice the amount they had been asked to collect.

In short, so deep and so marked is the effect of the teachings of the Movement on every member of the community that all observers are struck by it. This is admitted even by the bitterest enemies of the Movement, but they try to draw a veil over it, ascribing it to ostentation and hypocrisy. How blessed is this hypocrisy which has healed the sick and quickened the dead. Would that such hypocrisy were to prevail everywhere in the world!

I now close this paper with a word.

'Hear all men and women! We have been created by God so that we may absorb His attributes in our own persons and become manifestations of His glory. So long as we do not attain this object we cannot claim to have achieved success. Of what value is our material

progress? It is nothing but a pastime. Of what benefit can all this progress be to us if we displease God, and thus close upon ourselves the door of eternal spiritual advancement? We may make great inventions but if we do not seek the knowledge which would light up our eternal life we would be like a school-boy who spends his whole day in play and is content with defeating his adversary in the field of sport but pays no heed to the contest which will reform all his life.

Real life is that which knows no end; real pleasure is that which is never destroyed; real knowledge is that which is always on the increase. Therefore, turn to eternal life, everlasting joy and real knowledge, so that you may enjoy peace, both here and hereafter, and may succeed in pleasing God and thus achieve the object of your existence.

God, Who has seen your perplexity and distress, has thrown open for you the door of His mercy and has Himself come to call you towards Him. So prize His favour and His love, and reject not His blessings. Do not look down upon or turn away from His favours, for He is the Creator and the Master before whom no pride or conceit is of any avail. Come forward and enter the door of His grace so that His mercy may embrace you and the mantle of His grace may enfold you.

O people of England! God has bestowed on you honour in this world, which has increased your responsibility, for he who has a larger share of favours carries heavier responsibilities. Through God's grace you have ruled the oceans for hundreds of years, your country is

called the queen of the oceans, but have you ever turned your attention to that King Who is the Fountainhead of all honour and a favourable glance from Whom has raised you to this eminence? Have you ever tried to discover the ocean of Divine knowledge which surges in the heart of a true seeker? Ah! you went to the north and you went to the south, you examined all waters on the face of the earth, you ransacked the deeps, but alas! you never dived to sound the depth of the ocean of spiritual knowledge, nor did you ever send out expeditions to discover it. You have roamed round the globe in search of land, exploring new regions, and your fleets have scoured the seas in all directions, but you never went forth in search of the Beloved One Who is the Creator of land and sea. Is it wise to collect the dry leaves that drop from a tree and throw away the fruit?

I convey to you the glad tidings that God's mercy has again been stirred, as it had been stirred hundreds of years ago,—in the days of Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, in the days of Jesus<sup>as</sup> of Nazareth, of David<sup>as</sup>, Moses<sup>as</sup>, Isaac<sup>as</sup>, Abraham<sup>as</sup> and of Noah<sup>as</sup>.

The sun of knowledge has risen today as it used to rise in the time of the former Prophets. So, instead of staying in the close air of your chambers come out and inhale the cool and refreshing air of Divine mercy in the expansive regions of the world of the spirit, and brighten your eyes with the pleasant light of the sun of Divine knowledge, for these suns do not rise every day. I say to you and to all those peoples who are living in peace under the British flag: 'Look! The hand of God's

blessings is over you, so bend your knees respectfully before Him.'

I say to the people of Wales, O Wales! look at thy industry and labour and see how much of thy labour is for God.

O Scotland! thou art proud of thy freedom and liberty but, hast thou given proof of thy love of freedom in trying to understand and accept the words of God as thou hast in other matters?

O people of Ireland! your patriotism and zeal are proverbial, but have you been equally zealous in your love for God? Have you been as anxious to obtain a knowledge of God as you have been for the attainment of home rule?

O you founders of colonies, you possess the aptitude and the eagerness to colonize new lands, but why are you indifferent to the colonization of that island of Divine wisdom which has made its appearance in the ocean of knowledge.

I say to you all again, See! God has laid the hand of His blessings over your heads. So bend your knees respectfully before Him, for He is the King of kings and the Emperor of emperors. Bow your heads before Him so that He may anoint them with the blessings of Faith, just as he has anointed them with the blessings of this world.

The blessings of God are unlimited. He is the God of all lands and of all peoples. His true servant shuns the limitations of boundaries and forms. He is

indeed a lover of his own country and of his own nation, but the range of his sympathy travels far beyond his own country and of his own people. He transcends all such limitations. He is a well-wisher of all mankind, and feels bound to all men with the bond of brotherhood which is the peculiar heritage of man, all being creatures of the One God Who is the Lord of the worlds. The black and the white, the Western and the Eastern, his fellow-nationals and foreigners, are in his eyes all alike. Sympathy for every one of them is deeply rooted in his heart, and his breast swells with the love of all of them. He is in reality a true manifestation of the Lord of the worlds. So I do not confine my address to any particular people or to any particular country. I invite all nations of the earth to the message of that God Who has not been niggardly towards any one in the distribution of His favours, Who has thrown open the doors of His Mercy to the people of all countries alike. And I say, ' O people of America and Europe! O inhabitants of Australia and Africa! and O residents of Asia! wake up from your sleep of indifference and open your eyes, for, the sun of the love of God has risen from the unknown land of Qadian so that it may remind every one of the love of the Eternal King which He bears towards His servants, so that the darkness of doubt and suspicion may be dispelled, the coolness of indifference and carelessness may be removed, the highwaymen of vice, wickedness, oppression, murder, strife, and all sorts of evils,—who are always lying in ambush to rob man of the riches of his faith and peace, may take to their heels and hide themselves in the dark caves which are their real abode;

that pure-minded and holy men who live heavenly lives on this earth may, in the light of this sun, crush the head of the serpent that bit Adam and Eve, and may break the poisonous fangs of Satan and deliver the world from his wiles.

O ye who dwell in the lands of the East and the West, be of good cheer and do not be cast down, for, the bridegroom has come at last, whose coming had so long been awaited. Be not sad or sorrowful. It is not the time to grieve or to be sorrowful, rather is it the time to rejoice. It is not the time to despair but to be hopeful and aspiring. So deck yourselves with garlands of holiness and adorn yourselves with the ornaments of purity, for your long-felt desires have been fulfilled, and that, for which you had been longing for centuries, has come to pass.

The Lord, your God has Himself come to your homes: your Master Himself seeks to be agreeable to you. Let us forget our petty squabbles, and let us all be united at the hands of the blessed Messenger of God, to sing the songs of our Lord's praise and chant hymns of adoration. Let us lay such a firm hold on His mantle that our Beloved may never again be separated from us. Amen!

وَ اٰخِرُ دَعْوَانَا اِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

And our last words are that all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

## Index

### A

Ā'ishah, 300  
Aaron, 31  
Abdul Ḥaq, 159  
Abdul Karīm, Maulwi, 156, 170, 171  
Abdul Latif, Sahibzadah Sayyid, 422, 424, 425, 426  
Abdul Rashid Ibrahim, Sheikh, 9  
Abdullāh bin Umar<sup>ra</sup>, 312  
Abdullāh Sannourī, Miān, 161, 162, 163  
Abdur Raḥīm Khan Khālid, Miān, 183  
Abdur Rāhmān, Maulawī, 426  
Abraham, 95, 99, 105, 119, 136, 138, 439  
Abu Masūd, 343  
*Adal*, 245, 246, 248, 250  
Adam, 41, 260, 271, 442  
*Adhān*, 275  
Advisory Council, 328, 330  
Afghan, 428  
Afghan Government, 427, 429  
Afghanistan, 7, 9, 421, 422, 427, 428, 429  
Africa, 10, 59, 441  
Agadir, 151  
Ahmadiyya Movement, 1, iv, 5, 6, 12, 16, 19, 25, 26, 30, 33, 34, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 50, 128, 156, 160, 332, 422, 426, 432  
Ahmadiyyat, 2, i, iv, 1, 11, 41, 59, 113, 143, 259, 324, 415, 421, 423, 424, 427, 429, 430  
Ain-ul-Yaqīn, 120  
Alfazal, 202  
Allah, 1, 2, 3, 51, 77, 81, 86, 98, 101, 127, 167, 366, 443  
Allies, 151  
Amānat, 325  
Amānullah Khan, Amir, 428

America, v, 10, 59, 75, 142, 148, 188, 441  
Amir, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428  
Amritsar, 158  
Apostle, 33, 228  
Arab, 144, 145, 149, 151, 201, 287  
Arabia, 7, 10, 23, 61, 139  
Arabic, 106, 139, 235, 239  
Argonaut, 192  
Arya, 37  
Asia, 59, 143, 441  
Asia Minor, 22, 149  
Astronomy, 23, 339  
Aṭa Muhammad, 155  
Australia, 11, 441  
Austria, 360

### B

Bābar, 6  
*Baghī*, 248, 249  
Barāhīni Ahmadiyya, 175  
Batālā, 7, 155, 175, 176  
Bible, 20, 150  
Bokhara, 10  
Boston, 195  
Botany, 339  
Brāhīn Ahmadiyya, 149  
Brahmo, 37  
Brazil, 11  
British Exhibition, 111  
Buddha, 61  
Buddhist, 37  
Burma, 9

### C

Caliph, 1, 312, 323, 335, 336  
Caliphate, 340  
Ceylon, 9

## Ahmadiyyat or the True Islam

Chicago, 11, 190  
China, 9  
Christianity, 33, 144, 394  
Colonies, 440  
Conference of Religions, 4, 141, 147  
Constantinople, 22  
Constitution, 168, 330, 331  
Costa Rica, 11  
Czar of Russia, 148, 149, 151

### D

Daniel, 32  
Dante, 140  
David, 308, 439  
Dharamkot, 157  
*Dhikr*, 87, 100  
Dowie, John Alexander, 190, 191, 192,  
193, 194, 195  
Dunnville Gazette, 194

### E

Egypt, 10, 23, 97, 139  
Elijah, 32, 190, 195  
England, 10, 141, 143, 146, 184, 360,  
438  
Ethics, 339  
Europe, 10, 59, 75, 90, 97, 142, 143,  
144, 148, 188, 441  
Eve, 442  
Ezekiel, 32

### F

Faḥshā, 248  
Fateh Dīn, Maulawī, 157  
*Fatwā*, 424  
France, 10, 151, 360  
French, 10, 150

### G

Germany, 151, 360, 436  
Gold Coast, 10  
Government, v, 6, 7, 20, 48, 49, 145,  
187, 201, 211, 226, 325, 326, 327,  
328, 331, 332, 333, 337, 340, 341,

359, 360, 361, 364, 372, 373, 428,  
429, 430, 436  
Great Britain, 151  
Great War, 148  
Griffin, Sir Lepel, 6  
Gurdaspur, 155

### H

Habibullah Khan, Amir, 422, 423  
Hādī Beg, Mirza, 6  
Hadith, v  
Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashīruddīn Maḥmūd  
Ahmad, 1, 2, iv  
Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, 1, 6, 7,  
19, 25, 27  
Ḥaḍrat Sahib, 155  
Ḥaḳīqatul Waḥī, 149  
Ḥaḳq-ul-Yaqīn, 120  
Herald (of Boston), 195  
*Hijāb*, 282, 284, 418  
Hindu, 8, 16, 18, 19, 145, 176  
History, 5, 282  
Holy Quran, 1, v, 4, 5, 12, 30, 33, 35,  
36, 39, 40, 41, 51, 52, 55, 56, 59,  
61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 67, 69, 71, 72,  
73, 76, 77, 80, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87,  
88, 89, 91, 95, 98, 99, 101, 103,  
104, 108, 114, 119, 126, 129, 132,  
134, 138, 150, 196, 204, 211, 214,  
215, 216, 217, 219, 224, 225, 227,  
230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236,  
237, 240, 241, 251, 255, 256, 257,  
258, 260, 263, 268, 270, 272, 279,  
286, 290, 291, 295, 305, 309, 314,  
325, 331, 338, 339, 340, 346, 347,  
349, 352, 360, 362, 363, 366, 370,  
371, 374, 380, 381, 383, 385, 387,  
388, 391, 392, 393, 395, 397, 399,  
400, 402, 403, 404, 407, 409, 411,  
414, 421, 434  
Hyderabad State, 9

### I

*Ihsān*, 246, 247  
Iḥtiqār, 235  
Ilm-ul-Yaqīn, 119  
India, 6, 7, 8, 9, 18, 97, 139, 146, 186,  
187, 189, 192, 429, 433, 435, 436

## Ahmadiyyat or the True Islam

Indian, 19, 36, 188, 429, 430

Iran, 10

Iraq, 10, 23, 151, 200

Ireland, 440

Isaac, 439

Isaiah, 32

Ishā'at-us-Sunnat, 175

Ishmael, 33, 105

Islam, 1, 2, 3, i, ii, iv, v, 1, 7, 8, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34, 38, 40, 41, 45, 50, 51, 56, 57, 59, 61, 65, 66, 71, 72, 73, 75, 78, 80, 83, 85, 87, 88, 89, 91, 93, 94, 96, 97, 100, 101, 103, 104, 106, 108, 113, 114, 121, 123, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 132, 134, 136, 142, 143, 144, 152, 167, 175, 186, 191, 195, 203, 205, 211, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 220, 223, 225, 227, 229, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 238, 239, 240, 242, 244, 249, 252, 253, 254, 255, 259, 260, 261, 262, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 274, 275, 277, 278, 279, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 287, 288, 289, 291, 292, 297, 298, 299, 301, 303, 305, 307, 312, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 324, 325, 328, 330, 331, 333, 334, 336, 337, 340, 341, 342, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 371, 372, 375, 376, 377, 378, 380, 382, 385, 389, 399, 400, 409, 411, 415, 418, 419, 420, 429, 435

Islampur, 6

Israelites, 33

Istanbul, 9

Istighfār, 266

Ītā'ī dhil Qurbā, 246

*Izāla-i-Auhām*, 38, 142, 143

### J

Jamaspi, 20

Jesus, 19, 27, 31, 32, 33, 34, 61, 99, 119, 136, 137, 138, 166, 172, 174, 179, 180, 182, 190, 193, 197, 394, 439

Jew, 27, 28

John, 137, 175, 190, 191

Judaism, 33

### K

Ka'bah, 95, 323

Kabul, 423, 426

*Kāda*, 24

Kāde, 24

Kadiān, 24

Kasauli, 170, 171

*Kashf*, 129, 132, 141, 144, 147, 161, 162, 186, 395

*Khalifa*, 33, 183, 325, 329, 332, 341

Khan Muhammad Alī Khan, 183

Khilāfat, 333

Khost, 422, 427

Kipling, 434

Krishna, 19, 61

### L

League of Nations, 332, 366, 367, 368, 371

Legislatures, 298

London, 1, iv, 141, 142

Ludhiana, 163

### M

Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, 183

Mahdi, 17, 18, 19, 21, 24, 27, 145, 159

Malay States, 9

Martin, 426

Mecca, 87, 104

Medinah, 335

*Mehr*, 293

Mesio Darbahmi, 17, 18, 19

Messiah<sup>as</sup>, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 32, 34, 36, 137, 139, 141, 145, 149, 154, 156, 160, 161, 162, 163, 166, 171, 172, 174, 175, 177, 178, 179, 181, 182, 183, 185, 186, 187, 188, 192, 197, 199, 378, 394, 416, 419, 420, 423, 432

Morocco, 10

Moses, 31, 32, 33, 34, 61, 99, 119, 136, 138, 439

MUBARAK Ahmad, vi

*Mufī*, 337

Mughal, 6

Muhammad, v, 3, 30, 33, 34, 40, 99,  
119, 138, 172, 258, 439  
Muhammad Ḥussain, 175  
Mullah, 157  
Munkar, 248  
Muslim World, 9  
Mustapha Kamal Pasha, 151

**N**

*Naqam*, 221  
Natal, 10  
Nehā Kalank Avatār, 17, 18, 19  
New Commercial Advertiser of New  
York, 192  
New Oxford Dictionary, 251  
New Testament, 180  
New York, 194  
Nigeria, 10  
Nizam's Dominion, 170  
Nūr-ūḍ-ḍīn, Ḥaḍrat Maulawī, 183  
Nūr-ūḍ-ḍīn, Ḥaḍrat Maulawī, 7

**P**

Pakistan, v, vi, 8, 10  
Palestine, 151  
Panama, 23  
Panther Division, 151  
*Pardah*, 282, 284, 418  
Patiala, 161  
Persian, 9, 19, 36, 60  
Pharaoh, 34  
Pharisees, 32  
promised One, 18, 20, 21, 22, 41, 199  
Punjab, 6, 8, 140, 187

**Q**

Qadian, 6, 10, 24, 28, 146, 159, 169,  
176, 183, 187, 188, 189, 194, 201,  
423, 434, 441  
Qāzān, 9  
Qiyāmat, 196

**R**

Rabbānī, 251

Ramadan, 21  
Ramchandra, 61

**S**

*Sā'at*, 196  
Sa'dullah, 163, 165, 166  
*Ṣalāt*, 87, 93, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100,  
104  
Ṣālih, 115  
Ṣālihīn, 135  
Samarkand, 6  
San Francisco, 192  
Saras, 335  
Saudi Arabia, 10  
Scotland, 440  
Scribes, 31  
Sermon on the Mount South America,  
32  
Shahīds, 115, 134  
Shakespeare, 140  
*Shirk*, 76, 77  
*Ṣiddique*, 115, 134  
Sierra Leone, 10  
Sikh, 6, 8, 139, 176, 178  
Straits Settlements, 9  
Suez Canal, 23  
Sufī, 31  
Sumatra, 10  
Syria, 10, 23, 61, 140, 188

**T**

Tabdhīr, 239  
Tafsīr Kabīr, 1  
Tafsīr Ṣaḡhīr, 1  
*Taqwā*, 103  
*Taubah*, 81, 84, 228, 266, 269, 352,  
414  
the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, v, 33, 40, 60, 63,  
75, 83, 89, 119, 142, 145, 236, 257,  
261, 286, 297, 300, 306, 309, 311,  
312, 313, 331, 338, 339, 343, 391,  
406, 414, 420  
the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, iii, iv, 17, 24,  
27, 34, 38, 39, 41, 42, 128, 136,  
138, 139, 141, 143, 148, 150, 155,  
159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 165, 166,  
169, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177,  
178, 179, 182, 183, 186, 187, 190,

## Ahmadiyyat or the True Islam

191, 193, 194, 199, 201, 315, 324,  
332, 376, 378, 416, 419, 421, 423,  
426, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433,  
435

The Truth Seeker of New York, 194

Torah, 32, 34

Trinidad, 11

Turk, 149, 151

Turkish Empire, 23

### U

Ubayy-ibni-Ka'ab, 342

Ulema, 145

United Provinces, 8

### W

Wales, 440

*Walī*, 156

Winjwan, 155

World War, 25

*Wuḍū*, 94, 95

### Z

Zacharias, 157

Zakat , 351, 352, 353, 357, 361

Zanzibar, 10

Zion city, 195

Zion City, 190

Zoology, 339

Zoroaster, 61

Zoroastrian, 17, 18, 19, 20



## **Ahmadiyyat or the True Islam**

by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad

*Ahmadiyyat or the True Islam* was first published in 1924 and has been published many times since. It is an extended treatise of a lecture read at *The Conference of Living Religions Within the Empire* in London.

The treatise exhaustively deals with the subjects as the conception of God, His relation to man and attainment of Communion with Him. It also deals with the Islamic teachings on morals and their social aspects—relations within family, the community, between partners in business and between government and people. Nature of the human soul, life after death and the nature of heaven and hell have also been addressed. Most important of all is that all the issues dealt with in the treatise have been supported and documented from the Holy Quran and Hadith which places this unique dissertation among the most authentic works on Islam. It is as relevant today as it was when first published to present the true teachings of Islam and to counter hostile propaganda against it.