A small brown bird is perched on a stalk of straw in a field of harvested grain. The background is a dense field of tall, golden-brown stalks of grain, likely wheat or barley, that have been cut and are standing upright. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day. The overall scene is a rural, agricultural setting.

Points

to

Ponder

Note on Transliteration

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 when it has Faṭḥ on it, i when it has Kasrah on it, u when it has Ḍamma on it, preceded by a very slight aspiration, like h in the English word 'honor.'
- ث th, pronounced like th in the English word 'thing.'
- ح ḥ, a guttural aspirate, stronger than h.
- خ kh, pronounced like the Scotch ch in 'loch.'
- ذ dh, pronounced like the English th in 'that.'
- ص ṣ, strongly articulated s.
- ض ḍ, similar to the English th in 'this'.
- ط ṭ, strongly articulated palatal t.
- ظ ḏ, 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.

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

Short vowels are represented by a for َ (like u in 'bud'); i for ِ (like i in 'bid'); u for ُ (like oo in 'wood'); the long vowels by ā for َـ or ِـ (like a in 'father'); ī for ِـ or ِـ (like ee in 'deep'); ai for ِـ (like i in 'site'); ū for ُـ (like oo in 'root'); au for ُـ (resembling ou in 'sound').

In transliterating Urdu/Persian words, we have followed the above Royal Asiatic Society.

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' in 'feign' without the element of diphthong thus َـ is transliterated as 'Kei.' For the nasal sound of 'n' we have used the symbol ñ. Thus Urdu word ڻ would be transliterated as 'mein.' These transliterations are not included in the system of transliteration by Royal Asiatic Society.



Points to Ponder

“Points to Ponder” is a translation of Urdu booklet *Sochneñ kē Bāteñ* consisting of stories collected by ‘Aṭa’ullāh from the writings and lectures of *Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Bashīruddīn Maḥmūd Aḥmad* (1889-1965), the Promised Reformer, raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu. In this volume, the stories have been translated into English by Syed Sājid Aḥmad, with assistance from Noor Butt, Samra Aḥmad, and Yūsuf Aḥmad. The manuscript has been reviewed thoroughly by Maulānā Dāūd Ḥanīf and Maulānā Munīr-ud-Dīn Shams, Additional Vakīlut-Taṣnīf, London, UK.

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Points to Ponder

Stories and Anecdotes

Related by

Ḥadrat

Mirzā Bashīruddīn Maḥmūd Aḥmad

(1889-1965)

The Promised Reformer

raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu

Collected by

‘Aṭā’ullāh

Translated into English by

Syed Sājīd Aḥmad

Publisher's Note

This is not a word by word translation. We have tried to convey the content of the story staying as close to the original as possible.

Translation of this book into English was done by Syed Sājīd Aḥmad and reviewed by Maulānā Dāūd Ḥanīf. Additional review and revision was done by Maulānā Munīr-ud-Dīn Shams, Additional Vakīlut-Taṣnīf, London, UK. May Almighty Allah reward them abundantly, Āmīn.

Some highlights of this edition:

1. A table of contents is provided in the beginning.
2. A glossary of names and terms is added at the end for the benefit of the reader.
3. An index is added at the end of the book for easy reference.

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful

Foreword (to 2011 Edition)

The stories related in this collection share a common theme, that is, they describe incidents in which the main characters consistently display the ability and the courage to say or to do ‘the right thing,’ no matter what.

By exemplifying virtues such as piety, integrity, honesty and self-discipline, these people confirm to us that standing up for what is right during times of challenge and controversy is the best way to teach others. They bring truth to the adage that states: ‘Setting an example is not the main means of influencing another, it is the only means.’

The Holy Qur’ān tells us:

“Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet, the immaculate one, whom they find, mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel which are with them. He enjoins on them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful for them the good things and forbids them the bad, and removes from them their burden and the shackles that were upon them. So those who shall believe in him, and honor and support him, and help him, and follow the light that has been sent down with him—these shall prosper.” (Chapter 7, Verse: 158)

It is our hope and prayer that the examples set forth in this collection will influence the reader to follow the light that has been sent down, and to take time to reflect on whatever lessons may be derived from these narratives. May Almighty Allah enable us to implement them in our own lives, Āmīn.



Wajeeh Bajwa
Sadr, Majlis Ansārullāh, USA
August 23, 2011

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful

Foreword

Allah, the Almighty, had blessed Muşliḥ Mau'ūd with extraordinary oratory capabilities. His addresses were so charming and simple that his description of a very difficult point looked trivial and easy to understand, and a person with ordinary knowledge and education could grasp the point adequately. It was a part of his style to tell a joke or relate an anecdote or an incident. Through this practice, he developed interest of the audience and expounded the subject matter for every level of understanding so the matter was imprinted on the heart. His speeches were so absorbing that the audience lost the track of the passage of time. Some of his speeches continued over eight hours without affecting the interest and the enthusiasm of the listeners, and the audience left with their minds saturated with the treasures of knowledge.

This book, which is presented before you, comprises historical events and wit told by Muşliḥ Mau'ūd and the moral and training lessons he extracted from them, are very effective and impressive. Majlis Khuddāmul-Aḥmadiyya Markaziyyah is grateful to Malik Aṭā'ullāh who compiled this book with great effort and research. Majlis also values the help of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad, ex-Şadr Majlis Khuddāmul-Aḥmadiyya Markaziyyah, and Khālīd Mas'ūd, who reviewed the book. May Allah reward them with the best of the rewards.

Maḥmūd Aḥmad
Şadr Majlis Khuddāmul-Aḥmadiyya Markaziyyah
December 8, 1981.

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Delhi is still far away

Kings do not matter to the ones who have found God. Prophets, though, are at quite a different level—even their servants and slaves achieve such a status that kings are rendered insignificant before them.

Nizāmud-Dīn Auliya, a saint from Delhi, was the sage of many saints. Through him, enlightenment spread far and wide in India.

A king of the Tughlaq Dynasty ruled India at that time. An action of Nizāmud-Dīn Auliya annoyed the king. The king was about to embark on a journey. So he said that he would punish Nizāmud-Dīn Auliya after his return from journey.

This news worried the followers of Nizāmud-Dīn Auliya. Their worries increased as the king started his journey back to Delhi.

They suggested that an effort for conciliation should be undertaken before the king arrives back. Nizāmud-Dīn Auliya responded, “All is in the hands of God. I cannot do much. God will act as He wills.”

When the king had proceeded further, the followers became even more alarmed. They told him again that now there is only a very short distance to cover. He replied, “Do not worry, Delhi is still far away.”

Finally, the king reached very close to Delhi. It has been a tradition of the Muslim kings not to enter the city at night. As a matter of fact, it was the tradition of the Revered Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and the kings acted upon it. Therefore, as the king arrived near the city, he stayed outside the city, and an announcement was made that the king planned to enter the city the following day.

The anxious followers again said that the king was about to enter the city. He responded again, “Delhi is still far away.”

As the daylight spread, his devout followers became extremely worried about the wrath of the king on arrival in the city. But instead the news came that the king had suddenly died in some accident. So, the king’s body entered the city in his place.

Therefore, even the kings are insignificant against the beloved ones of Allah. Only those find true happiness who have a relationship with the Almighty.



Honor

I remember that we had an adobe structure and during our childhood we would ascend upon it to play. The stairs we needed to climb were near the house of the late Mirzā Sultān Aḥmad. At that time, our tā'ē—who became an Aḥmadi later—on seeing me, used to say, “jeho jeyā kāñ, oho je'ē koko.” I could not understand this Punjabi expression because of lack knowledge in childhood and as my mother was Urdu-speaking. I asked my mother, “What does it mean?” She replied, “It means that the baby-crow is just like the crow. Crow, God forbid, is your father and you are the baby-crow.”

Then I have seen those times that the same tā'ē, whenever I went to her home, she received me with great respect; she laid down a cushion for me and seated me with honor, and tended me with reverence. And if I said, “You are weak, you are frail, do not move, do not overbear.” She responded, “You are my sage.”

So, I saw the times when I was a *koko* and I saw also the times when I became a sage.

Looking at all these things you can understand that when God wants to change the world, He brings about a transformation.

Therefore, bring about that change in yourselves which may make you the beloved of God and you enter the circle of God.



Debate

Ḥaḍrat Ḥakīm Maulānā Nūrud-Dīn used to say that he had a teacher named *Maulawī* Raḥmatullāh, who moved to Medina later in his life.

Maulawī Raḥmatullāh was very pious and eminently devout, but he did not have much knowledge about the religion of Christianity. Once, a debate was arranged between him and Christians. His opponent was a clever and knowledgeable person while *Maulawī* Raḥmatullāh knew only the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth. Being wise and intelligent, he said, “If I present Qur’ān and Ḥadīth, my opponent will say, ‘I do not believe in them.’ My argument should be acceptable to my opponent too, but I am not aware of any.”

Finally, he said, “Why should we seek help from people and instead let us pray as we do not have much of a choice but to pray to God.” He then occupied himself in prayer.

At about eleven in the night, someone knocked at his door. He opened the door. A man in a robe entered and said, “Tomorrow you are debating with that priest, I am also a priest, but, with regards to the unity of God, I consider you in the right. Therefore, I want you to note down some references because it is possible that you may not be aware of them.”

The mysterious priest dictated all the references to *Maulawī Raḥmatullāh*.

When the debate took place the next day, the opposing priest was amazed by what was taking place in the debate that *Maulawī Raḥmatullāh* did not know any references but he was citing Greek books at some place and Hebrew books at another, and he was also presenting English extracts. He was citing the unity of God from the Bible.

In short, *Maulawī Raḥmatullāh* debated excellently and the opposing priest was defeated squarely.

The stranger showed up in the same manner every night, dictated the citations, and in the morning, *Maulawī Raḥmatullāh* presented them forcefully.

When a person stands up to do a good deed, Allah Himself moves the hearts of people, and people start supporting and aiding him.



Old Lady's Wish

The Qur'ān is the greatest wealth. How can a true Muslim like to see his home without this wealth?

Ḥaḍrat Ḥakīm Maulānā Nūrud-Dīn used to relate that there was an elderly lady who was very pious. He used to visit her from time to time.

Once he asked her, “Dear Lady, tell me if you need anything. I will get it for you.”

She said, “Son, I am in quite a comfort. I do not need anything.”

He used to say that he insisted, “You must need something.”

But each time she said, “I am comfortable. Every peace is here. There is no inconvenience.”

Then she elaborated, “We are a son and a mother only. Allah sends us two loaves of bread, morning and evening. I eat one and my son eats the other. We go to sleep on the same bed because we have only one blanket. When my side gets cold, I ask him to change side and he complies. So, that side too becomes warm. After a short while, when his side gets cold, he asks me to change my side, and I change my side, and he

becomes comfortable. Therefore, we do not need anything.”

He used to relate that when he asked her persistently, “Please, let me know if you need anything’.”

She said, “Due to my advanced age, my eyesight has become weak, and I cannot read comfortably the copy of the Qur’ān I have because of the small writing. So, if you have to give me something, give me a copy of the Qur’ān printed in large font so that I may read it easily.”

For a believer, the greatest bounty is the Holy Qur’ān.



A Knock at the Door

The sign of a true friend is that he is ready to sacrifice everything for his friend and beloved. Imagine a beloved and a friend who is not only a beloved and a friend but also is the Creator, the Master, and the Lord.

A famous story states that a young man was in the habit of wasting his father's wealth on his friends all the time. He always had a gathering of flatterers and they wasted money day and night.

His father always told him, "They are flattering and selfish young men. They do not have real love for you. Do not destroy your wealth on them." But the young man never accepted his father's advice and responded, "They are my true friends."

The father said, "How come you have gathered so many friends around while I have been able to find only one close friend? How come there is a large gathering of friends around you all of the time?"

A long time passed, and the young man did not accept his father's advice. One day, the father said, "If you do not trust me then conduct a trial and test your friends, then you will know how many real friends you have."

The son asked, "How may I test my friends?"

His father replied, “Go to every friend’s home, and tell them that your father has evicted you from his house and has taken away your access to the property. Ask them to provide you with some money so that you may arrange some source of livelihood.”

When he went to his friends’ homes and told them that his father had evicted him, one sent a message out through a servant that he was sick and regretted that he could not meet him at that time. Some excused saying that they had the money but had given it to someone else just that day.

The young man returned home empty handed and said to his father that what his father had been saying was proven true; no one helped him.

The Father said, “Let me show you my friend now.”

The father took his son to the wilderness, and outside the town he reached a house, and called out. There was a query from inside, “Who is this?”

The father announced his own name.

The voice from the house said, “Okay.”

Then there was silence without a response for half an hour.

The son said, “Your friend has proven to be like my friends.”

The father said, “Do not be impatient; you will know soon why he has taken so long to come out.”

A few minutes later, the father's friend came out holding the hand of his wife. He had his scabbard fastened to his waist and had a sword in the other hand.

As he came out, he said, "Forgive me my friend, you came at midnight and I have been delayed since you knocked at the door. I assumed that your coming at midnight has some purpose in it. I thought, maybe you are in trouble and you have come to me for help. On this thought, I picked up my sword because that is what I would use to help you. Then I thought that although you are a billionaire, even billionaires can have financial problems and need any penny they can get. I had collected four to five hundred dollars penny by penny throughout my life and had buried them. I dug the ground and extracted that bag. I was further delayed on thinking that maybe your wife is not well and there may be some need to tend to her so I awoke my wife and brought her with me. All these three things are at your disposal. How can we be of help?"

He said to his son, "Such ones are the friends."

This example bears a lesson in it: If a man's friend can be like this, then how should a friend of God be?



Courage

I always enjoy this story.

Once the Turks and the Greeks were at war. The Greeks had a well-fortified castle on a mountain. The Europeans thought that the Turks would not be able to overtake it quickly and that in the meanwhile they would intervene and bring peace.

Though Turkish generals mostly have been adventurers, some of them did excel. One such commander had great regard for his homeland and nation.

He gathered the small contingent of army under him. He addressed them, firing them up, and convincing them of the significance of dying with good name. Then they attacked with their whole might.

The Turks, being at the foot of the hill, had to ascend to attack as the enemy was on the top. The enemy could inflict damage on them easily, while the Turks could not inflict much damage on the enemy. The Turks charged many times but could not advance. Suddenly, a bullet struck the general and he fell down. The enemy raised a cry of joy. The enemy thought this would bring about the defeat of the Turks. But, in

reality, the wound to the General was a sign of their defeat and Turkish victory.

When the general fell down, his people wanted to carry him to a secluded area to bandage him and treat him. He loved them and they also had love for him. He said to them, “By God, do not touch my body. If you love me, and you want to show me your love during my last moments, then there is only one way to do so. Make my grave in this fort. If you cannot do this then leave my body here for crows and dogs to devour.”

These thoughts of the General excited the army. They raised the slogan of *God is the Greatest* and attacked with such might that they overtook the fort and occupied it. Europe was stunned to learn that the Turks had taken that Greek fort.

Students might have read a similar story of an English woman in an English Reader. An eagle took the child of a woman to the top of a mountain. The woman went after the eagle, climbed the mountain, reached the nest, and brought the child out of the nest.

After she had hugged her child and was overjoyed, she realized that it was impossible for her to go down the mountain. People brought her down with much difficulty and asked how she was able to go up. She said, “I do not know how I was able to climb. All I know is that I saw that the eagle was taking my child to that direction and I was following them.”

A woman could do in the search of her child what strong men were not able to.

So, you tell me: Should you not have more love for the faith of God than the love of the woman for her child and the love of the Turk army for their general... Can you bear to look on and keep sitting idle while the enemies have thrown insults at God, His messenger, and the body of Islām?



The Robe of Honor

This is a well-known historical incident.

Shiblī was a great saint. He came from an affluent family and was a governor under the king of Baghdad. He came to the capital for consultation concerning some issue. During the same days, a commander-in-chief had been sent to face an enemy who had defeated many armies previously. The commander defeated the enemy and won the lost lands back for the country.

On his return, the commander was given a grand reception in Baghdad. The king summoned a special court to reward the commander. The king proposed that a robe of honor be given to the commander to recognize his services. Unfortunately, on his way back from the journey, he had developed a runny nose, and he had also forgotten to bring his handkerchief with him. After the bestowal of the robe, according to the tradition, he was to respond saying, “I am grateful to you that you have been gracious to me, and my generations will be your servant because of these four yards of cloth.” While the commander was getting ready for the speech, suddenly he sneezed, and had a nasal drip. If he had spoken with a runny nose, he might have been killed. He searched in confusion, and not finding the handkerchief, he sneakily

cleaned his nose with a portion of the robe. Unfortunately, the king saw the incident.

The king roared, “Take away his robe. He has disgraced our robe. He cleaned his nose with our gift.”

As the king said this, Shiblī let out a shriek and started crying. As there was piety in the heart, there was righteousness in him; God had kept an opportunity for his guidance. When Shiblī let out a shriek, the king said, “I am angry with the commander. Why are you crying?”

Shiblī stood up and said, “O King, I present my resignation.”

The king said, “What is this untimely request? What has come over you, and why are you resigning?”

Shiblī said, “Oh King, I cannot carry out my responsibility.”

The king said, “What is the matter?”

While weeping, Shiblī submitted, “This commander left this place two years ago. He was sent to a war which many great generals had lost. He was sent to an area which could not be retaken. He stayed away for two years. He went to the forests, mountains, and continuously fought with the enemy. He died every day, every morning, every evening. Every night his wife thought that she would wake up as a widow in the morning. Every morning, as she woke up, she thought that the evening will come and she will be a widow. Every evening as his children went to sleep, they thought that they would wake up orphans. Every morning when they woke up, they imagined that they would be orphans by the evening. He conquered that

country after a persistent sacrifice, and brought it back under your rule. In return you gave him a few yards of cloth, which did not have much value. Just because he was compelled to wipe off his nose with the robe, you became so angry with him. Then, how will I respond to that God who gave me a body which cannot be built by any king? Who has given me this robe and I am dirtying it for your sake. What answer will I give to my Lord?"

Shiblī said this and left the court. But he was such a cruel and merciless person that when he went to a mosque and wanted to repent, everyone responded the same: "Get out of here. Can the repentance of a Devil be accepted?" He started visiting all of the places nearby but no one had the courage to accept his repentance. Finally he visited Junaid Baghdādī and told him of his improprieties and that he wanted to repent. "Can my repentance be accepted?" he asked. Junaid said, "Yes, but with a condition. First you will have to accept that condition."

Shiblī said, "Tell me what it is, for I am ready to accept any condition."

Junaid said, "Go back to the city where you were the governor. Knock at every door and ask for their forgiveness. Ask for the forgiveness of the excesses you have committed."

Shiblī said, "I accept."

So, he went to the city. He knocked at every door. When the people responded, he said, "I am Shiblī who was the governor here. I have made mistakes, and I have committed excesses against you. I ask for your forgiveness." The people said, "We forgive you."

The seed of piety always grows and bears fruit. After he had passed by a dozen or so homes, the news spread through the town like fire that the governor, who was known to be cruel, was going door to door today, and was asking for forgiveness. Spiritual fountains erupted out of people's hearts. They said, "Our Lord is so great that He provides opportunities for piety and repentance and righteousness even to such an aggressor."

So it passed, that Shiblī, following the instructions of Junaid, knocked door to door, bare-foot, but rather than having the doors opening with complaints and disenchantments, people came out weeping, saying, "Do not embarrass us, you are an honorable person to us. You are our spiritual leader. Do not embarrass us like this."

In short, Shiblī asked the whole town for forgiveness, and then he returned to Junaid. Junaid accepted his repentance and included him among his students.

Now, Shiblī is considered among the greatest saints of Islam.



The Gatekeeper

Tolstoy was a great writer from Russia who played a pivotal role in the propagation of Bolshevism after Lenin and Marx. His works have been translated in most of the languages of the world.

Seven or eight generations ago, one of his grandfathers was the gatekeeper during the time of King Peter. One day the king was busy in some important task. He was devising a plan for the betterment of his people. He ordered Tolstoy not to allow anyone to enter the castle that day. He was afraid that if someone came in, his attention would be diverted and he would not be able to prepare his plan adequately.

As soon as the king left, however, a prince arrived and wanted to enter the castle. Tolstoy spread his hands across saying, “You cannot enter because the king has specifically ordered that no one should be allowed to enter.”

At that time, Russian law was not as fairly respected. Lords, dukes and members of the imperial household were thought to have a lot of rights. According to the prevalent tradition, no one could stop the prince from entering the castle.

When the gatekeeper stopped him, the prince said, “Don’t you know who I am?”

The gatekeeper said, “Of course, I know who you are. You are the grand Duke.”

The prince said, “Do you realize that I am permitted to enter whenever I want to?”

The gatekeeper said, “Of course, I do.”

Hearing this, the prince stepped forward to enter, but the gatekeeper stopped him again saying the king has directed that no one should be allowed today to enter.

The prince became angry. He picked up a whip and started beating the gatekeeper. After some beating, the prince thought that the gatekeeper would have come to his senses, so the prince again tried to enter the castle. Tolstoy again blocked the entrance, pleading that it was the king’s order not to let anyone enter. The prince again started beating the gatekeeper. The gatekeeper accepted the beating humbly. The prince tried to enter for the third time but the gatekeeper again spread his hands across saying that the king has ordered not to allow anyone to enter. The prince started beating the gatekeeper.

Per chance, when the prince beat the gatekeeper the first time, the noise reached the king, and the king started viewing the scene from upstairs. When the prince was beating him the third time, the king called out, “Tolstoy, come here.”

When Tolstoy went to the king, the prince also went along in great fury, and said, “The gatekeeper has insulted me today.”

The king asked, “What happened?”

The prince said, “I wanted to come in, but your gatekeeper would not let me come in.”

The king, as though he knew nothing of what had happened, said, “Tolstoy, why did you stop the prince from coming in?”

Tolstoy said, “It was your order that no one should be allowed to come in.”

The king looked at the prince, and asked, “Did he tell you that I had ordered that no one should be allowed in?”

The prince said, “Yes, he told me, but no one can stop a prince from entering the castle.”

The king said, “I know that no one but the king can stop a prince from entering. Despite being a prince you have desecrated the law while Tolstoy being a gatekeeper realized the sanctity of the law. And despite the fact that he had told you that it was my order, you beat him. Now your punishment is to be beaten by the gatekeeper as you have beaten him.”

Then the king ordered Tolstoy to stand up and beat the prince. According to the Russian law, no civilian could beat a soldier. The prince said, “I am a soldier and he is a civilian. He cannot beat me.”

The king said, “Captain Tolstoy, I order you to beat him up.”

He picked up the whip to beat him. The prince said, “I am a general of the Tsar and no non-general can beat a general.”

The king said, “General Tolstoy, I order you to beat this prince.”

Then the prince referred to the Russian constitution that a non-lord could not beat a lord.

The king said, “Count Tolstoy, rise and beat the prince.”

So he raised Tolstoy to the level of a count from a gatekeeper and had the prince punished by him.



Death of the Piglet

A person cannot fully experience the emotions and feelings of another person. If someone's chicken dies, he is pained more than he would be on hearing about the death of another's son. In truth, most people copy the pain of another person while showing their support for him. They do not have the same pain in them. When they see that person, they make a sad face and utter a few words of support while their hearts are empty of the feelings of sadness. On the contrary, even if an insignificant thing of theirs is lost, they cannot bear the loss.

There is a well-known story that tells of a cleaning lady who cleaned the house of the king. Once, as she walked out of the house, she leaned against a wall in the entrance and started crying. She cried with such depth that the gatekeepers thought that someone had died in the house of the king. On this thought, without understanding the situation, they also started lamenting. They leaned against the wall and started weeping so that no one would think that they were insensitive. Seeing them, others also started crying, then more joined in, so much so that the matter reached the court.

Since the courtiers were ordered to wear black at a death in the king's house, they ran to their homes and put on black clothes. When they returned, they sat with their heads hanging down, and held a handkerchief over their eyes so that they looked like they were crying.

The chief minister was a little wiser. He came into the court without black clothes and asked the person sitting next to him what had happened. The man said that he did not know, but the person next to him might, as, on seeing him in mourning clothes, he also had put on mourning clothes and had come there, assuming that there was a misfortune in the king's house. When the next person was asked, he referred to the one next to him. The second one referred to the third, and the third to the fourth. The matter reached the gatekeepers. They referred to the cleaning lady.

When they called her to ask, she said that everything was fine in the castle. "I had a piglet, and it died this morning," she explained. "It was the time of my cleaning shift so I suppressed my sorrow and came to the castle in a hurry. But as soon as I came out of the castle, I could not bear it anymore and I started crying in the entrance."

The crying of the cleaning lady was real. The piglet was hers and she felt genuine sorrow for its death. However, the tears of the gatekeepers and the courtiers were artificial because they did not have real relations with the king or the queen.



Pain of the Beloved

I am always amazed, and I say in my heart, “Lord, what a doing of Yours. How You have implanted the feeling of love for me in the hearts of the people.”

Whenever there is a chance of going on a journey and I am riding a horse, at least one young man walks on foot alongside for my security. And when I get off the horse, he starts massaging my feet, and says, “Your Holiness may be tired.” I realize that I came on the horse and he walked on foot along the horse, but because the love he has for me, it does not occur to him that I was on the horse, so how could I be tired? He thinks that he was on the horse and I was on foot. Despite my insistence that I am not tired as I was riding the horse, he starts massaging my feet saying, “Your Holiness must be tired. Please let me avail the opportunity to serve you.”

Where there is love, a person sees his own trouble less and that of the beloved more. But in ordinary circumstances, a person feels his own pain more and another’s less.

Non-believers captured a companion of the Holy Prophet by deceit. A Meccan had been killed with his hands so they sold him to the Meccans. They wanted to kill this companion with torture in retaliation for their

relative's death. They kept him in confinement for a few days. One day they decided to martyr him, so they started preparing to kill him.

At that time they thought that he would be frightened. They asked the companion, "Do you not wish that (*Hadrat*) Muḥammad would have been in your place at this moment and that you were sitting in peace with your wife and children?"

He said, "You ask if I want *Hadrat* Muḥammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, to be here and I want to be with my wife and children in Medina, but I do not even desire that I would be sitting in my home and he be pricked by a thorn while walking in the streets of Medina."

Now observe that the companion forgot his pain at that time, but being filled with the love and compassion for the Holy Prophet, the perceived pain of the Holy Prophet made him restless..



Eid

God Almighty has ordered us to eat and drink on the day of Eid, and the Holy Prophet has said that the one who fasts on the day of the Eid is Satan. The reason for this is that Eid is the day on which God, the High, says to His servant, “Eat and drink for me today.” Therefore, whether you eat a morsel or you take a sip of water, the true eating and drinking is that which is done under the direction of the Lord. Therefore, eating today is faith. How beautiful is this faith that according to it, apparent enjoyments become worship.

It seems that a prophet among the Hindus may have said something similar to it which was misunderstood and resulted in producing the Pāndas¹. Islam explains everything in detail, but the older religions only had clues to follow. To feed a Brahman is considered a source of blessing among the Hindus.

During the days of Sharādh², affluent Hindus feed the Pāndas well. Then they assign an award for them for eating more. Initially, they give a rupee for every laddu one eats. Later, they start giving two or three

¹ Pānda: A Hindu priest.

² Sharādh: Festival. Food given to their priests by Hindus for the dead.

rupees for every laddu eaten. The Pāndas start practicing overeating many months in advance. A family or clan that has had more deaths related to overeating is considered more respectable.

There is a well-known story about a Brahman mother-in-law who said to her daughter-in-law, “Your husband and your father-in-law are coming back from Sharādh. They will not be able to sit due to overeating. Therefore, make their beds for them so that as soon as they are here, they may lie down.”

Hearing this, the daughter-in-law started wailing and praying, “O God woe onto my father that he demeaned me.”

The mother-in-law tried to silence her and tried to ask for the reason of her crying but she kept on crying and wailing harder and harder. The mother-in-law entreated and besought her in most humble terms saying, “What did I do to upset you?” But the daughter-in-law would not reply.

She continued crying. Hearing the noise, the neighbors started gathering. They also asked her the reason for crying.

After much pleading, she explained, “My fate is destroyed. I am wed in such a family that their people come home walking from Sharādh while our people cannot even walk after eating. They are carried home on cots.”

Though Sharādhs now have reached this state of affairs among Hindus, it appears that they really originated from the same source. At one point their

purpose was the same as that of our Eid. Because God has directed us to eat on this day, so, the real eating is eating on this day. But because of misinterpretation, it has turned into a strange tradition.

In fact, the directive would be, “Eat for the sake of God.” But, as the misunderstanding mullas have thought Eid’s meaning is to eat so much that either you become flatulent or invite cholera; similarly the pundits have also understood it incorrectly.



Gift

God knows how to care for His people. It is His practice since beginning that He brings some people over to Himself over a thorn-ridden path, while some others over bouquets of flowers. If God wants to bring someone near to Him through fasting, then they will get their virtue that way. Virtue at that time is, therefore, in fasting. If God wants to captivate someone through feasting, then eating is the virtue to win the pleasure of God at that time.

Once, during the time of the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, a significant amount of wealth came. He said to the Anṣār³, “Come and I will give you some of the God-sent wealth.” At that time, the Anṣār said, “O Messenger of God, give all this to the Muhājirīn⁴. Whatever we have is sufficient for us.”

This seems like a great sacrifice by the Anṣār to refuse the wealth and say, “We already have a lot, let this bounty be given to our brothers.” However, it did not count as a sacrifice in the eyes of God. The Holy Prophet said at that time in response to the Anṣār’s

³ Native Muslims of Medina.

⁴ Muslim immigrants in Medina.

reply, “I wanted to give you a bounty from God and you refused; now you will not get any material rewards in this world. Claim your rewards when you are at the fountain of Kauthar in the next world.”

Notice that, after the Holy Prophet, when the empire came to Muslims, none of the Anṣār became a king. Through Islam, during the 1,300 years, Muhājirīn became kings, slaves became kings, and servants became kings. Through Islam, Rājpūts, Mughals, Pathān, Iranians, Tripulians, and Islanders became kings. The people about whom it is related that they vacated their homes for those who had believed in God and his Messenger, they did not get to have an empire.

The people about whom it is related that they vacated their home for the believers in God and His Messenger, they did not get to have an empire. Not that they had not starved in the way of Allah but because they did not eat for their God’s sake. Without doubt they had refused this bounty due to not understanding, and not because of arrogance, therefore, God did not deprive them of the reward and gave them the promise of rewards at the fountain of Kauthar. However, they never had an empire in this world.



Sacrifice

When an effort is made in the cause of the community, it is not necessary that a person's sacrifice may bear fruit in his lifetime. It is possible that many make sacrifices without seeing any results, and some others may make sacrifices and see the results. The results of national striving should not be seen at an individual level. The nations, who learn this lesson, continue seeing celebration after celebration. But the nations who forget this lesson can never succeed in their objectives.

During the early days of the war between Germany and England, I read in a newspaper that the only son of an eighty years old lady died in the war. The lady was of a good stature so the government thought of consoling her. She received a letter from the war minister inviting her to see him.

It was decided that the war minister himself would honor her and convey the news of the death of her son. The lady came, and the war minister thanked her on behalf of the king, and said, "You have presented the highest sacrifice for your country. Alas, your son has been killed in the war."

As the lady emerged after listening to the news, her body was shaking with sorrow. It was difficult for her to

stand. Her back was bowing. But to show that the death of her son was not a big deal to her, she laughed a fake hysterical laugh, saying, “If my son died, so what! He gave his life for the nation and the country.”

Despite that the observer of this incident was a German enemy, he writes that seeing that scene, his eyes swelled. Imagine that internally her sorrow to her was so great that it was difficult for her to keep standing but to show the observers she made a hard effort to get support from her stick, and said laughing, “It is not a big deal that my son has died. He died for his country.”

These are the people who are not promised a reward in the hereafter. They do not believe in life after death. Their lives pass telling others that there is no life after death. They make a sacrifice and they are not blessed with a celebration. But yet they do not avoid offering sacrifice. They do not ask, “Tell us, will we get a reward for this sacrifice or not?” They know that the life of the nation is their life.

Do not look at your sacrifices wondering whether they will benefit the person making the sacrifice. We should not look at the sacrifices with the point of view of how they will benefit us during our lives. Rather we should look at them with the viewpoint of a member of Ahmadiyyat: If I do not see the day of celebration, but my nation sees that day of celebration one day, it is like I saw that celebration.



Fame

Ḥaḍrat Ḥakīm Maulānā Nūrud-Dīn, Khalīfatul-Masīḥ I, may Allah be pleased with him, used to relate the following story.

A Muslim association was established at one place. Big differences arose among the members.

I asked, “What happened?”

They said, “There has been quite a bit of in-fighting. One says that he will be the president, the other says that he will be the one.”

I said, “Why do you not make one the president, give the name of ṣadr to the second one, name of murabbī to the third one, and declare the fourth person as the chairman?”

They liked this suggestion, and they did follow the suggestion.

They declared one person as the murabbī, and whispered in his ear, “Look, murabbī is the biggest of all. What is a ṣadr compared to a murabbī?”

Then they went to the second one and said, “You are the ṣadr, and, well, ṣadr is above all, as he has the

most visible position. There is not much to a murabbī. He just sits at home.”

Then they went to the third one and started saying, “You are our president. Şadr is a word used by clergy and locals. Look at the enlightened brains of the time; they appoint their best person as the president. So we make you the president.”

They went to the fourth one and said, “You are our chairman.”

Everyone was pleased because they were not worried about service or performance. All they desired was that whenever they had to write a letter to an official, they could write their title below it. The first one could write, “Murabbī of the Muslim Association,” the second one, “Chairman of the Muslim Association,” the third could write “Şadr, Muslim Association,” the fourth person could write, “Chairman, Muslim Association”—just to say that they were the leaders of the Muslims. Otherwise they did not perform any service.

Some people have the habit of joining associations to gain such titles.

It is the work of God to make leaders. Whoever God wants to make a leader, he grabs him and makes him a leader. The Promised Messiah, may peace be upon him, has written in his books that *I was in seclusion and no one knew me, neither did I have the desire that someone may recognize me. He took me out of the corner of seclusion by force. I wanted to stay hidden and die hidden, but he said, I will give you fame throughout the world with admiration.*



The Worn Hat

Thousands of people are seen in every age who attained the nearness of God Almighty by following the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and benefited others from their blessings.

Once, during the time of ‘Umar, the Caesar developed a severe headache. Despite all kinds of treatments, he was not cured. Someone advised him to write his situation to *Ḥaḍrat* ‘Umar and ask him for benediction and have some relic brought.

“He will pray for you and will also send you benediction,” he was advised. “You will certainly be cured by his prayer.”

The Caesar sent his ambassador to ‘Umar.

Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar thought, “These are haughty people. He would not have come to me, but now that he has a problem, he has sent his ambassador to me. If I send something of significance, he may not use it thinking it to be inferior. So I should send him something which may be used as a benediction but which would also remove his haughtiness.”

He sent him one of his old hats as benediction. The hat had marks on it and was discolored due to weathering.

When the Caesar saw the cap, he felt bad and he did not wear the hat. But Allah, the High, wanted to show him that at that time he could attain blessings only through Muḥammad, the prophet of God, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

He had such a severe headache that he asked his servants to bring the hat sent by ‘Umar so that he could put it on his head. He put the hat on his head and his headache went away.

He used to have the headache every few days. So it became usual for him to sit in the court donning that soiled hat of Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him.

This sign, which Allah, the Almighty, showed him, had another matter hidden in it. A companion of the Holy Prophet was imprisoned by the Caesar. He had ordered to feed him pig-meat. The companion accepted starvation and did not go near the bacon. After many days of fasting, when he was about to die, Caesar gave him bread. When he had gained some strength, he again ordered him to be fed pig-meat. He neither let him die nor live.

Someone said to him, “You have this headache because you have imprisoned that Muslim. Its remedy is that you request ‘Umar to pray for you and send for benediction from him.”

When Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar sent him the hat and his headache subsided, he was so impressed that he released that companion of the Holy Prophet.

Now observe that a Caesar hurts a companion, and Allah, the High, initiates pain in his head as a punishment. Someone else advises him to send for benediction from 'Umar and request him to pray. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar sends the relic and the headache goes away. In the same way, Allah, the Almighty, creates circumstances for the release of the Companion and manifests the truth of Muḥammad, prophet of God, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.



The Prince

There are two kinds of pleasures, one which is personally gained and one which is inherited. Personal pleasure, in any way, is a pleasure but the happiness inherited is not worthwhile until accompanied by personal experience of that happiness.

Joy of a nation is in receiving both types of happiness. One pleasure is that they get a chance for individual sacrifice and the second pleasure is that their ancestors were also blessed with the opportunity to sacrifice in the way of God. When a nation has attained both these types of happiness, then their pleasure is complete. When a person sees that his parents were revered and respected but he is in disrepute, his heart is filled with sorrow.

It is related in history that a rich poet went to a public bathhouse to take a bath. The rich poet asked for a servant to massage his body. The owner of the bathhouse sent a strong young man from his employees to give him a massage. After donning the underclothes and taking off the rest, the poet sat down in a Jacuzzi, perfumed water flowing over his body. The servant started rubbing fragrant lotions on his body. The poet went into a state which took his self to melody and he started muttering a couplet.

When the poet was reciting the couplet, the condition of the employee changed. He uttered a cry and fell down unconscious. The poet suspected that the employee had an epileptic fit. He called the bath owner and complained, “You have sent an afflicted and sick person to attend on me.”

The owner apologized and said, “I did not know of the sickness of the young man until today. He was quite healthy.”

Anyhow, they revived the servant and asked, “What is the matter? You did not have an epileptic fit until today.”

The young servant asked the poet in a nervous manner, “The couplets you recited, who did you hear them from?”

The poet said, “They are mine. I love them very much because I used to be very poor and longed even for a piece of bread for dinner. Then I found out that a son was born to Faḍl Barmakī who was a minister from among the ministers of Hārūnur-Rashīd, and was a son of the prime-minister, Yaḥyā Barmakī. Poets were invited to write and bring poetry for a contest, and whoever won the contest was to be rewarded. So, to judge my fate, I also wrote a few lines and came to the meeting. On my turn, I recited those couplets. Faḍl Barmakī, his brothers and father liked those couplets so much that they gave me millions, and many servants, and horses and many camels, and silverware and gold utensils, and carpets and floor coverings, and handed over a big treasure of perfumes. I was stunned viewing all that. I said that I did not even have enough space in my home for them. They told me not to worry as their

servants had bought for me just then such and such large building in so and so neighborhood, and that their servants would take all that to that building right then.

I am counted among the rich since that day. These couplets are quite beloved to me because they changed my condition and took me out of poverty and introduced me to affluence.”

The servant said, “Do you know that I am the son for whom the couplets were written, which has raised your status to this height? When I heard these couplets from your tongue, I remembered the occasion about which I had heard from my caretakers, that on my birth a poet was given so much reward. I thought, that child on whose birth this reward was given and for the couplets that award was given, a stranger is reciting those couplets today in the bath with comfort and peace, and that boy for whom those couplets were recited is massaging him as a servant.”

The poet was affected so much by this that he hug him and started crying and said, “All my wealth has been given to me by your grandfather and it actually is yours. Come to my home and I will serve you as a servant and will not let you experience any inconvenience.”

That boy replied, “The humiliation we have seen already is quite overwhelming. I do not want to face more humiliation by using the award which was given away by my forefathers. As my secret is now out, I cannot live here either. I will go away to some other land where no one knows me and would not remember the humiliation of my ancestors.” Saying this, he left that place and no one knows where he disappeared.

Look, this is an example of the reverence of ancestors in which the progeny lost their share, and could not benefit their children, but rather became a source of sorrow for the children.



The Violin

A divine saw a king's servant playing a violin. He grabbed the violin from him and broke it.

The servant complained to the king and said, "Today he broke my violin. Tomorrow he may belittle a minister or you."

The king was enraged. He called for the divine and had a violin by his side. The divine came to the court. The king did not say anything to the divine but picked up the violin and started playing it. The divine just kept sitting unhappily.

The king said, "You broke my servant's violin yesterday, why do you not break mine today?"

The divine answered, "Mighty King, the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has said, if you see evil, and you have strength, use it to bring about reform. If you do not have the ability to do that then try to stop it through speech. If you do not have even that much courage then at least feel bad in your heart. Mighty King, yesterday I could reform evil using strength so I broke the violin of the servant. But today I do not have the strength to counter evil with strength, neither can I dare to counter it with speech

and advice, but O mighty king, I am feeling averse to it in my heart.”

I have read a piece from the works of an American poet. She has related a fine subject in her poetry. She says, after my death when I will be in the presence of God, the rich will present before God the diamonds and pearls that they would have given away in charity. The public servants will present their service before Him that they would have rendered to their nation and they will say that is what they did. I will be watching with dismay sitting alone that I did not have any wealth to distribute, to give in alms; neither did I have power or knowledge that I would have served my country and nation with, but I would have shed tears in the love of God and they will be lying near His throne. I will present that gift to Him. And, O reader, do you know whose gift will be accepted by Him? He will accept the gift of my tears.”

A Muslim, in the same way ... can shed tears falling at the throne of the Almighty. If Muslims can do this then this is their Eid. Otherwise, the Eid is not the real Eid.



The Fast

People celebrate Eidul-Fiṭr considering that their fasting has been accepted. They are pleased that God provided them the opportunity to worship.

But the question is whether God did in fact give us the opportunity to worship and whether He did in fact accept our worship. If we availed the opportunity to worship, then do we know if our worship has been accepted? Some of our prayers are not accepted ... in the same way the fasting of some people is not accepted. There are also some who could not avail the opportunity to fast because of their illnesses and inabilities. There are others who do not fast despite their ability. All these people ... participate in the celebration of Eid. Rather, the latter are ahead of the others in the celebration of festivities.

A joke is well known in our country. A servant lady arose diligently during Ramaḍān to eat in the morning but did not keep the Fast. One day her mistress said, “You get up in the morning to eat but you do not keep the Fast despite eating before dawn. Why then you need to get up before dawn?” She responded, “Neither do I offer Prayers, nor do I keep the Fast; should I become an infidel by not even eating before dawn?”

It seems as though there were three pillars of Islam in her view: Prayers, Fasting, and eating before dawn in Ramaḍān. In her view, a person still remains a Muslim if the former two, Prayers and Fasting, are not observed, but if the third one is left out, it makes a person a nonbeliever.

This is a joke but if pondered upon, it appears that there are many people who do not offer Prayers, do not keep Fast, but celebrate the Eid more than everyone else.



German Sermon

In France, a girl started having seizures. During her seizures, she repeated prayers in German language. The girl was French and did not know German language. Physicians started saying, “This girl does not know German language but she is speaking German, therefore, it has been proved that she is possessed by a ghost.”

A medical practitioner became interested in the matter. He was a renowned expert on memory. When he started searching, he found that her mother used to work for a German priest when the girl was two or two and a half years old. The girl used to be in a cradle while the priest was delivering the sermon in German. After finding this out, the doctor set out to find the German priest. He came to know that the German priest was in Spain at that time. On arriving in Spain, he found that the priest had retired and had gone to Germany. He went to Germany in his search. On arriving there, he found that the priest had died. He did not abandon his effort. He asked his family to show him the old papers of the priest if they had any. The family searched the house and found some papers. They gave the papers to the physician. He looked at the papers and discovered that they were the sermons of the priest and they contained

the same prayers that girl verbalized when she had a seizure.

Note that the few things the priest uttered in the presence of the girl when she was only a couple of years old were saved in her brain by Allah, the Almighty.

This is the reason that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has directed that when a child is born in the house of a Muslim, immediately recite the call for Prayer in one ear of the child and the call for the start of the Prayer in the other ear of the child.

European scholars have found now that old things stay saved in human brain for many years, while Muḥammad, the prophet of Allah, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, pointed to this fact fourteen hundred years ago.



The Idlers

The habit of sitting idle creates problems for people.

Examples of inactivity related in different countries reflect the conditions in that country. They present the character of that nation.

There is a well-known story in our country (that is, the Indian subcontinent).

A policeman was traveling, and suddenly he started hearing calls, “O policeman, please come this way for a moment! Please hurry! An important chore needs to be done.”

The policeman was going on an important errand. This call was coming from fifty to sixty yards away. He proceeded there. He saw that two men were lying down. One of them said, “Please pick the berry from my chest and put it in my mouth.”

He was furious on hearing this request. He said, “You are crazy. I was going on an important journey. You called me from a distance of fifty to sixty yards. You could pick the berry from your chest all by yourself and eat it. You are not lame or handless that you called me from such a distance to come and help you.”

Hearing this, the other person lying next to the first one, said, “Dear policeman, come on, why are you so upset over this? This person is like that, and is useless, and cannot be corrected. He is so lazy that all night a dog licked my face and he did not even hush the dog away.”

In this example, a picture of idleness in our country (that is, the Indian subcontinent) has been presented. There is no doubt that such people are found in every country but more so here, and the ones who are active, they also are comparatively lazy.

I have mentioned many times that the laborers here who pick and move bricks around, they handle them like they are eggs. They pick them up very slowly. They relax while picking them up and relax again while putting them down. After every little while they say, “Let us take a break for a few puffs off the water-pipe⁵.”

⁵ hookah



The Grinding Wheel

Intelligence and knowledge are separate and different from each other. Knowledge is a good thing to have but knowledge is worthless without intelligence.

There was a king. He called for a renowned astrologer of his kingdom. The king put his son in the custody of the astrologer. The king directed the astrologer to teach his son the knowledge of astrology.

The astrologer took the son of the king to his home and educated him. After teaching him all he knew about astrology, he brought him to the king, and said: “Your Excellency, the King! I have taught him all the knowledge of astrology. If you like, you can give him a test.”

The king hid the diamond of his ring in his hand and asked the boy, “Using your knowledge of astrology, tell me what is in my hand.”

The boy calculated and said, “The grinding wheel of a mill.”

The king looked towards the astrologer and said, “What did you teach him?” He said, “Sir, the grinding wheel of a mill is made of stone and a diamond also is a stone. My knowledge is correct but if your son does not have the intelligence to realize that a mill’s grinding

wheel cannot fit in your hand then what can I do? My knowledge is accurate.”

I have related a joke many a time on the same lines, which I have heard from Maulānā Nūrud-Dīn.

The elders of a village sent a boy to learn medicine in some other land because there was no physician in the village. They thought that when the boy returns after learning, their needs will be met, and the day-to-day inconvenience they had for the lack of a physician will go away.

The boy reached a renowned physician in another part and said, “The elders of my area have sent me to learn medicine because we do not have a physician.”

The physician said, “That is commendable. What can be better than service with medicine as one gets to serve the community, and people also benefit. This task is of great blessing. Stay with me and I will teach you everything about medicine.”

The boy took residence with him. The very next day, the physician went to see a patient. He took the boy with him. When they arrived at the patient’s house, they sat down. The physician checked patient’s pulse, asked about his condition and in the course of the conversation, asked, “Did you, per chance, eat garbanzos yesterday?” The patient replied, “Yes, I ate some garbanzos.” The physician said, “Your stomach is weak; you cannot digest such hard food. This is the cause of your stomachache; you should not eat such things.” Then the physician wrote the patient a prescription and they came home.

Upon arrival, the boy said, "Please give me permission to go back." The physician said, "That quick! You had come to learn medicine." The boy answered, "I have learned the medicine. It is not very difficult for an intelligent person." The physician said, "I have not even given you one lesson. Where did you learn the medicine from?" The boy said, "Intelligent people do not need any lessons. By the grace of God, I am intelligent, and I have learned all the medicine." The physician tried to convince him that he should stay longer and study medicine in a disciplined way, but the boy did not agree and went back.

People of his town were surprised to see him back so soon. He said, "It is not difficult for an intelligent person to learn medicine. And I learned the medicine right upon arrival there."

Anyhow, a rich person fell ill and called the boy for treatment. The boy felt the pulse, asked about the condition and then said, "You are a rich person. How can you digest such things? Tell me, did you eat horse's straps?" The patient said, "What stupid things you are saying, does anyone eat horse's straps?" The boy said, "Whether you accept it or not you did eat horse's straps." When the servants saw that he was putting down their master, they beat him up. They continued beating him up and he continued insisting that his diagnosis was correct whether they believed him or not.

Finally they asked him what he meant. He said, "The matter is so because the physician I learned medicine from went to see a patient. I examined his movements carefully. I saw that the physician looked around and picked up the few garbanzo beans fallen

under the bed and played with them and then said to the patient that it seemed that he had eaten the garbanzos. He accepted that in reality he had eaten garbanzos. I understood immediately that when you have to go to see a patient you should look under his bed. And whatever you see under the bed, you should imagine that he got sick by eating that. When I came here and looked under his bed, I saw the strap of the horse so I understood that he had become sick due to eating that strap of the horse.”

The thing which he thought was intelligence. In reality that was stupidity and idiocy.



Wisdom

Whatever is in the heavens and in the earth glorifies Him.

Every atom in the world bears witness that there cannot be an objection to whatever He does. Though some things may appear to be objectionable in a superficial view, whenever they are researched, man will have to accept that every action of Allah, the Almighty, is flawless and filled with wisdom.

A story is well known that a rigid person visited a garden once. He saw that the fruit on a mango tree was small but a large pumpkin was attached to a delicate vine. He thought that though people say that Allah, the Almighty, is the Wise but I do not see any wisdom in having small fruit on the large tree and a large pumpkin attached to a delicate vine. Afterwards, he lay down to take a restful nap under the same mango tree. He was asleep when suddenly a mango broke and fell and hit his head hard. He got up immediately all puzzled and said, “Forgive me, O Lord, now I understand your wisdom. If the pumpkin had fallen on me, I would have died.”

Glossary

Aḥmad, Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Bashīr-ud-Dīn Maḥmūd (1889-1965): Second successor (1914-1965) to Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (1835-1908), the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, may peace be upon him.

Aḥmadī احمدي : A member of the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Community founded by Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (1835-1908), the Promised Messiah and Imām Maḥdī, may peace be upon him.

Aḥmadiyya احمديه : see Aḥmadiyyat

Aḥmadiyyah احمديه : see Aḥmadiyyat

Aḥmadiyyat احمديت : Muslim sect believing Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (1835-1908) to be the Promised Messiah (second coming) and the Maḥdī awaited by Muslims, may peace be upon him.

Anṣār انصار : Plural of nāṣir. Helpers. Native Muslims of Medina. Medinites who helped and supported the Holy Prophet Muhammad, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa sallam, and the Muslim immigrants from Mecca. Members of Majlis Anṣārullāh. Anṣār is already a plural so it will be wrong to add an s to it (anṣars) to make its plural.

Barmakī, Faḍl: Son of Yaḥyā Barmakī. A minister in the court of Hārūn-ur-Rashīd.

Barmakī, Yaḥyā (died 806): A prime minister in the court of Hārūn-ur-Rashīd.

Benediction: A relic given or received as a blessing.

Brahman: Hindu priest. Member of Hindu elite class.

Eid عيد : See ‘Īd.

Eidul-Fiṭr: See ‘Īd al-Fiṭr.

Ḥadīth حديث : Saying of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.
Plural Aḥādīth.

Ḥaḍrat حضرت [Hadhrat, Hazrat]: His Holiness

Ḥāfiẓ حافظ : A person who has memorized the Arabic text of the Holy Qur’ān.

Hārūn al-Rashīd, Hārūnūr-Rashīd (763-809): A Muslim king, ruled 786-809.

Hookah: Water-pipe. A contraption to smoke tobacco.

‘Īd: Muslim religious celebration, festival. Eid.

‘Īd al-Fiṭr, ‘Īd-ul-Fiṭr, ‘Īdul-Fiṭr عيد الفطر : Celebration at the end of Ramaḍān. Eid al-Fiṭr, Eid-ul-Fiṭr, Eidul-Fiṭr

Islām اسلام : submission. Name of the religion introduced by Muḥammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be on him, in A.D. 610.

Junaid Baghdādī: Famous Muslim Mystic. Lived A.D. 830-910.

Kauthar كوثر : A fountain in paradise.

Khalīfah, khalīfa خليفة : Vicegerent. Successor. Also calif, caliph, kalif, kaliph, khalif.

Khalīfatul-Masīḥ, Khalīfat-ul-Masīḥ خليفة المسيح : Successor to Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qadian (1835-1908), the Promised Messiah, may peace be upon him.

Laddu لڈو : A sweet common in Indian subcontinent.

Mahdī مهدی : Rightly guided.

Majlis Anṣārullāh مجلس انصار الله (Literal meaning:

Organization of Helpers of God): The organization of all Aḥmadī men over 40 years of age.

Majlis Aṭfālul-Aḥmadiyya (society of Aḥmadī children)

مجلس اطفال الاحمديه : The organization of all Aḥmadī boys between 7 and 14.

Majlis Khuddāmul-Aḥmmadiyya مجلس خدام الاحمديه :

(Organization of Servants of Aḥmadiyyat): The organization of all Aḥmadī men from 16 to 40 years of age.

Maulānā مولانا : our master, our lord, our chief. Title of respect for Muslim religious scholars. Revered person.

Maulawī مولوی : Muslim priest, Muslim divine.

Mecca, Makkah مكة : A city in Arabia where Abraham and Ishmael (may peace be upon both) built a structure over old ruins in inhabitant desert, according to Islamic tradition. Muḥammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was born in and grew up in Mecca. Birthplace of Islam. Muslims from all over the world go to Makkah every year for pilgrimage.

Mirzā Sultān Aḥmad: A son of the Promised Messiah, may peace be upon him, from his first wife.

Muhājirīn مهاجرين : Muslim immigrants in Medina.

Muḥammad محمد : Praiseworthy, commendable, laudable. Holy Prophet and founder of Islām (571-632), may peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him.

Mullā مُلَّا : Muslim clergy, teacher. Commonly spelled as Mullah with an h at the end probably to indicate a long a.

Murabbī مربی : Trainer. Teacher.

Muṣliḥ Mau‘ūd, Muṣliḥ-i-Mau‘ūd, Musleh Mau‘ood: مصلح

(The Promised Reformer): *Ḥaḍrat* Mirzā Bashīr-ud-Dīn Maḥmūd Aḥmad (1889-1965), Khalīfatul-Masīḥ II, may Allah be pleased with him, who fulfilled the prophesy of the Promised Messiah, may peace be upon him, about the advent of a Reformer.

Nizāmud-Dīn Auliyyā A Muslim saint who lived in India A.D. 1238-1328.

Nūrud-Dīn, Nūr-ud-Dīn *Ḥaḍrat* Ḥakīm Al-Ḥajj Maulānā (may Allāh be please with him): First successor (1908-1914)to the Promised Messiah, may peace be upon him)

Pānda: A Hindu priest.

Pandit, pundit: Scholar. Teacher. Hindu priest.

Qur‘ān, Quran, Koran, Coran قرآن : recitation. The Holy Book revealed to Muḥammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in Arabic over 22 years and 5 months. The most recited book.

Ramaḍān (Ramadhān) رَمَضَانَ : Islamic lunar month ascribed for prescribed fasting.

Rupee: South Asian currency

Ṣadr صدر : President.

Sārangi سارنگی : Fiddle. Violin.

Scabbard: sword casing.

Sharādh: Festival. Food given to their priests by Hindus for the dead.

Shiblī: A Muslim mystic. Died A.D. 945.

tā'ē ٱت : Wife of father's elder brother.

Tughlaq Dynasty: A succession of rulers in India during
A.D. 1321-1398.

Tzar, Czar: Emperor. King of Russian Empire.

'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb: The second successor to the Holy
Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allāh be upon
him).

Yaḥyā Barmakī: prime minister of Harūn al-Rashīd

Water-pipe: A contraption to smoke tobacco. Hookah.

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The Holy Prophet

Muḥammad

Peace and blessings of Allāh be on him

The greatest prophet ever to live, Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), was born in 571 at Mecca in Arabia. The city of Mecca had grown around an ancient holy site rebuilt by Abraham and Ishmael (peace be on them), which came to be known as the Ka'bah (literally meaning, 'a cube'). His father had died a few months before his birth. His mother died when he was six years old. He was cared for by his grandfather 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib until he died two years later, his uncle, Abū Ṭālib, then became his guardian.

In his teens he joined an organization whose members pledged to help the needy and the oppressed. Due to his honesty and consistent support of the oppressed, he came to be known as the Truthful and the Trustworthy.

At age 25, he accepted a marriage proposal from a pious trader Khadijah (may God be pleased with her), 15 years senior to him.

He preferred to spend his time in worship and meditation, retreating often to the cave of Ḥirā for days at a time to pray in solitude. He received his first revelation in the cave of Ḥirā when he was 40. His wife Khadijah, his close friend Abū Bakr, his cousin Alī (may God be pleased with them), were some of the first people to accept his call to the religion of Islam that he was commanded to spread.

His fervor to spread the anti-idolatry message of equity and goodwill met with extreme opposition and severe persecution of the faithful, his followers. To escape the persecution in Mecca, a group of Muslims immigrated to the Christian state of Abyssinia in 615. Meccans declared a boycott of the Muslims and segregated them outside Mecca for three years. The year 619 was one of great sorrow for Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). His uncle and protector, Abū Ṭālib, and his wife, Khadijah (may God be pleased with her), who stood by him during the early years of his call, both died.

While the resistance to Islām in and around Mecca was relentless, he found acceptance to his message 250 miles to the north in Yathrib with a deputation from the town accepting Islam in 620. He migrated to Yathrib in 622 escaping Meccan persecution. Yathrib, today's Medina in Arabia, came to be known as Madīnatun-Nabī, city of the prophet. Meccans followed the Muslims with swords to their new haven, were defeated in the Battle of Badr, but inflicted damage to the Muslims in the Battle of Uḥud. Muslims continued spreading the message of peace in spite of persecution and attacks culminating in the bloodless fall of Mecca to them in 630. Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) entered the city at the head of "10,000 saints" fulfilling the Biblical prophecy about the advent of a prophet among the Ishmaelite (Deuteronomy 33:2, 18:15).

After Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) passed away in 632, his long time companion, Abū Bakr, was elected to lead the Muslims until 634, followed by 'Umar until 644, Uthmān until 656, and his cousin Alī until 661 (may Allāh be pleased with them). Barely half a century had elapsed since the first revelation to Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) and Islam had already made in-roads to the banks of the Indus River to the east and gained strength across North Africa to the west. (Reference: Words of Wisdom, Zīrvī, Mīān and Aḥmad, 2000)

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi
Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad

Peace be on him

Born in 1835 in Qadian, India, Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (peace be on him) remained devoted to the study of the Holy Qur'ān, and to a life of prayer and solitude. Finding Islam the target of foul attacks from all directions, the fortunes of Muslims at a low ebb, faith yielding to doubt and religion only superficially followed, he undertook a vindication and exposition of Islam, first in his epochmaking Barāhīn-i-Aḥmadiyya, issued in four volumes. The book gave Muslims pride in their religion, confidence in the integrity of their faith and cemented the robustness of its tenets. The book came to be known as the best written in defense of Islām in centuries, with high praise in recognition for its author as the defender of Islām.

Islām, he said, was a living faith through which man could establish contact with his Maker and enter into communion with Him. The teachings contained in the Holy Qur'ān and the Law promulgated by Islām were designed to raise man to moral, intellectual and spiritual perfection. He advocated undertaking defensive wars with the power of the written word through Jihād of the pen, rather than through use of the sword, and clarified that Islām forbids murder of innocent people in the name of Jihād.

Most of the friends of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (peace be on him) turned into his enemies when he announced that Jesus (peace be on him) of old had actually died, though not on the cross, and God had appointed him the Messiah mentioned in the prophecies of the Bible and the Holy Qur'ān. In 1889, he began to enroll for his Movement now established in centers and mosques for the preaching of Islām all over the world. Though he and his community faced extreme persecution from the very first day, he announced that God had told him that He would cause his message to reach the corners of the earth.

He wrote more than eighty books, mostly in Urdu and some in Arabic and Persian. He showed his truthfulness not only through the prolific words but also through prophecies revealed to him by God. Timely fulfillment of the prophecies and exposition of his claims led to miraculous growth of his community during his lifetime. Not only some of the great scholars of the time but a large number of seekers after truth from among the masses saw his truth and joined his community.

After the death of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (peace be on him) in 1908, his first Khalīfah (successor) was *Maulawī Nūruddīn* (may God be pleased with him) until 1914, followed by Mirzā Bashīruddīn Maḥmūd Aḥmad (may Allāh be pleased with him), the promised son of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (peace be on him) as the second Khalīfah until 1965. Mirzā Nāṣir Aḥmad (Allāh's mercy be on him), a grandson of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (peace be on him) was the third Khalīfah until 1982. Mirzā Ṭāhir Aḥmad (Allāh's mercy be on him), a grandson of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (peace be on him) was the fourth Khalīfah until 2003. Mirzā Masroor Aḥmad (may Allāh be his support), a great-grandson of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (peace be on him) is the fifth Khalīfah since 2003. Thus the Khalīfat of the promised Messiah (peace be on him) remains intact and ongoing.

Today, while celebrating the hundred years of Khalīfat, with missions in almost every country of the world, the Aḥmadiyya community is privileged to broadcast 24-hour satellite programs, televised on Muslim Television Aḥmadiyya (MTA), in defense of Islām and to promote Islāmic values the world over. (Reference: Introductory note in Three Questions by a Christian Answered, 1972)

Conditions of Initiation

by **Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān**
The Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace be upon him)

The initiate shall solemnly promise:

I. That he/she shall abstain from *Shirk* (association of any partner with God) right up to the day of his/her death.

II. That he/she shall keep away from falsehood, fornication, adultery, trespasses of the eye, debauchery, dissipation, cruelty, dishonesty, mischief and rebellion; and will not permit himself/herself to be carried away by passions, however strong they may be.

III. That he/she shall regularly offer the five daily prayers in accordance with the commandments of God and the Holy Prophet (*peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him*); and shall try his/her best to be regular in offering the Tahajjud (pre-dawn supererogatory Prayers) and invoking *Darūd* (blessings) on the Holy Prophet (*peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him*); that he/she shall make it his/her daily routine to ask forgiveness for his/her sins, to remember the bounties of God and to praise and glorify Him.

IV. That under the impulse of any passions, he/she shall cause no harm whatsoever to the creatures of Allāh in general, and Muslims in particular, neither by his/her tongue nor by his/her hands nor by any other means.

V. That he/she shall remain faithful to God in all circumstances of life, in sorrow and happiness, adversity and prosperity, in felicity and trials; and shall in all conditions remain resigned to the decree of Allāh and keep himself/herself ready to face all kinds of indignities and sufferings in His way and shall never turn away from it at the onslaught of any misfortune; on the contrary, he/she shall march forward.

VI. That he/she shall refrain from following un-Islamic customs and lustful inclinations, and shall completely submit himself/herself to the authority of the Holy Qur'ān; and shall make the Word of God and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet (*peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him*) the guiding principles in every walk of his/her life.

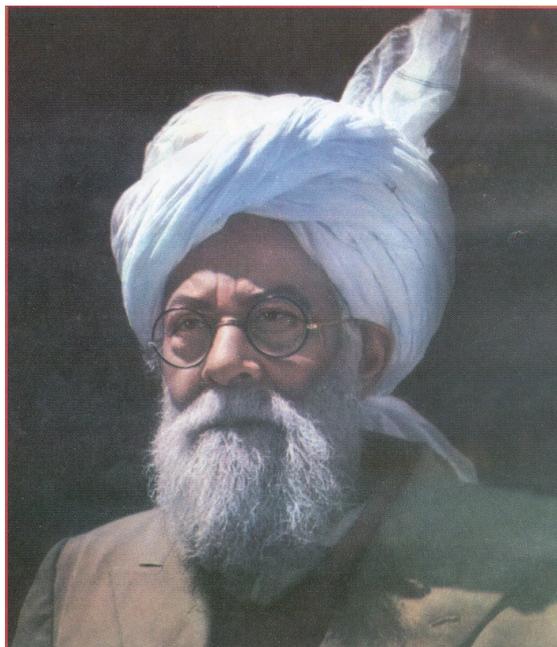
VII. That he/she shall entirely give up pride and vanity and shall pass all his/her life in humbleness, cheerfulness, forbearance and meekness.

VIII. That he/she shall hold faith, the honor of faith, and the cause of Islam dearer to him/her than his/her life, wealth, honor, children and all other dear ones.

IX. That he/she shall keep himself/herself occupied in the service of God's creatures for His sake only; and shall endeavor to benefit mankind to the best of his/her God-given abilities and powers.

X. That he/she shall enter into a bond of brotherhood with this humble servant of God, pledging obedience to me in everything good, for the sake of Allāh, and remain faithful to it till the day of his/her death; that he/she shall exert such a high devotion in the observance of this bond as is not to be found in any other worldly relationship and connection demanding devoted dutifulness.

(Translated from *Ishtihār Takmīl-i-Tablīgh*, January 12, 1889)



Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Bashīr-ud-Dīn Maḥmūd Aḥmad
Khalīfatul-Masīḥ II, raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu
1889-1965

Promised son of *Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad*, the Promised Messiah and Maḥdī, *‘alaiḥissalām*, head of the worldwide Aḥmadiyya Muslim Community 1914-65.

He established the city of Rabwah in Pakistan after his migration from Qadian (India) at the partition of the subcontinent in 1947 that has now grown into a world renown center for religious research.

A great scholar of Islam, God-given gifts of oratory and exegesis accompany his research on comparative religion. He left behind an immense treasury of speeches and writings on all aspects of the faith.

Points to Ponder is a collection of stories.



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