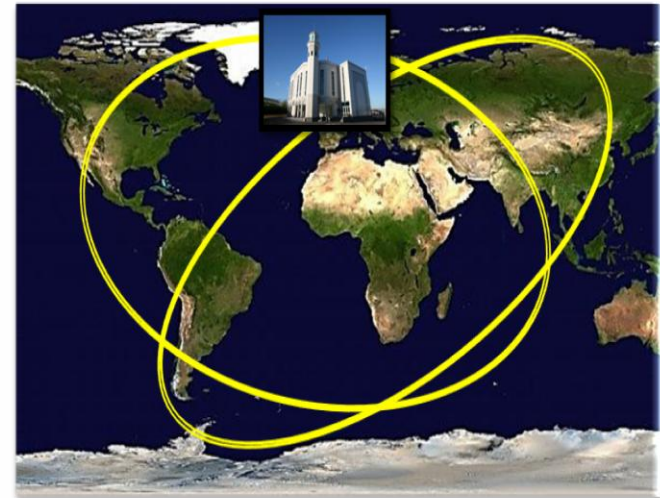


ESSENCE OF TRUE LOVE FOR ALLAH



SERMON DELIVERED BY HADHRAT
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HEAD OF THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM
COMMUNITY



RELAYED LIVE ALL ACROSS THE
GLOBE

4th April 2014

NOTE: Al Islam Team takes full responsibility for any errors or miscommunication in this Synopsis of the Friday Sermon

Summary

In today's Friday sermon Hazrat Khalifatul Masih gave a discourse on love of God with reference to the writings of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace).

In these extracts love of God is defined and its reality is expounded as well as the secret of its attainment is given along with explanation of its profundity and philosophy.

These extracts also explain what should be our standards, as regards to love of God, and what expectations did the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) have of us

Each extract is thought provoking and a beacon of guidance. It is important to pay heed so that we understand the essence and the spirit of the subject and can progress in it and reform ourselves.

Adopting Divine attributes is an expression of love of God.

Signs of true love of God and ways to attain a personal love of God.

The philosophy of sin is that it results from one's estrangement from God and, therefore, can only be avoided by establishing a relationship with Him.

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'Love is not pretence or ritualistic, rather it is a faculty among human faculties.

Its reality is that the heart likes something and is drawn to it. Just as the real qualities of something are made evident when it reaches a state of excellence, so is the case of love. Its treasures are made apparent when it reaches its climax and highest point.

Allah the Exalted states: '...and their hearts were permeated with *the love of the calf...*' (2:94). In fact when a person completely loves someone it is as if he permeates him or consumes him and is imbued with his morals and manners.

The greater the love, the more one is naturally drawn to the qualities of his beloved **so much so that he becomes an image of the beloved**. This is also the indication **when man loves God he attains God's light on a reflective basis in accordance with his own powers**. And those who love Satan acquire the darkness which is in Satan' (Nur ul Haq, Part II, p. 430, Ruhani Khaza'in Vol. 9)

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‘The reality of love necessities that a person truly likes all the attributes, morals and adorations of his beloved and endeavours with all his heart and soul to be completely devoted to them so that **having being absorbed in him, he can acquire his beloved’s life.**

One who truly loves is wholly devoted to his beloved ... has such a representation of his beloved in his heart, it is as if the beloved permeates him. He is imbibed in the beloved and makes it evident to people that he is completely absorbed in the beloved’s love.’ (Nur ul Haq, Part II, p. 431, Ruhani Khaza’in Vol. 9)

Huzoor explained that **adopting Divine attributes is an expression of love of God**, unless one is aware of all attributes of God one cannot have His knowledge and understanding. Love of God is the next step up and **when Divine attributes are adopted one receives Divine light.**

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In response to an objection raised by a priest regarding the Islamic concept of love of God the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) wrote

‘Let it be clear that in reality this objection is applicable to the Gospels and not the Holy Qur’an because the Gospels certainly do not teach to have personal love of God and to worship Him out of personal love. The Holy Qur’an is replete with this teaching.

The Qur’an clearly states: ‘...celebrate the praises of Allah as you celebrated the praises of your fathers...’ (2:201) and ‘...loving them as they should love Allah...’ (2:166)

That is, remember God much more than you remember your fathers and **it is the distinction of believers that they love God the most; they do not love their fathers, mothers, other dear ones and themselves as they love God.**

It is then stated: ‘...endeared the faith to you and has made it *look* beautiful to your hearts...’ (49:8).

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‘Verily, Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others; and giving like kindred...’ (16:91)

This verse constitutes rights of Allah and rights of mankind and its supreme eloquence is that Allah the Exalted has explained both aspects in it.

As regards rights of Allah this verse signifies to obey God Almighty with عدل (fairness) because He has created you, has nurtured you and continues to do so at all times. **It is His right that you too should obey Him.**

And if you have greater insight then do not merely obey Him owing to His right to be obeyed, but do so as احسان (doing of good) because God is the Benefactor Whose favours are unlimited. Obviously the stage where احسان (doing of good) is kept in view is a higher stage than عدل (fairness).

Constant reflection and pondering over [the concept of] احسان keeps the countenance and qualities of the Benefactor ever in view, therefore the definition of احسان includes to worship God as if God is watching.

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Firstly are those who do not ponder over Divine favours properly because God is Unseen whereas material objects are evident. The passion that is instilled by reflecting on the greatness of God's favours is not generated in them and the love that is stirred by reflecting over the great benefactions of the Benefactor is not stirred in them. They accept God Almighty as the Creator ... and do not at all deliberate over the details of Divine benefactions, a close scrutiny of which brings the True Benefactor before one's eyes. **The haze of materialism does not allow them to fully see the Countenance of the True Creator.** ... Their flawed understanding of God is adulterated with materialism and because of this they cannot properly appreciate God's favours. ... Their understanding and knowledge of God is blurred.....

In fact people who are obedient to God Almighty are of three types:

The reason for this is partly because they rely on their own efforts and ... means and partly because **they accept the Divine qualities of Khalqiyyat (quality to create) and Razzaqiyyat (quality to provide and sustain) only as a concept.** As Allah the Exalted does not burden anyone more than his insight, therefore as long as these people are at this stage He only wills them to be grateful of His rights and in the verse 'Verily, Allah enjoins justice...' the significance of justice or **fairness is that they obey Him out of fairness.**

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Man has a greater stage of knowledge and understanding of God where, as mentioned earlier, he is completely free from the apparent ways and means and appreciates God's grace and favours and comes out of the obscurities of ways and means. Phrases like, 'my crop flourished only because I irrigated it' or 'I was successful because of my own endeavour', or 'my such and such purpose was fulfilled because of Zaid's kindness' or 'I was saved from ruin because of Bakr's vigilance' appear trivial and false. **One sees only One Being, One Power, One Benefactor and One Hand. It is then that man sees favours of God Almighty with clarity and with no hint of the murkiness of relying on ways and means**

احسان; To consider God to be present when one worships God

This manifestation is so clear and certain that man does not consider the Benefactor God absent when worshipping Him, rather he definitely considers God to be present when He worships God. The Holy Qur'an has called such worship as احسان and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) has also explained the same meanings of احسان in [Ahadith of] Sahih Bukhari and Muslim.

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The next stage is of: ‘...giving like kindred...’ Its particulars are that when a person appreciates Divine favours free from ways and means and worships God understanding

Him to be present and as the direct Benefactor, **this concept and perception ultimately results in personal love of God being instilled in him.** Lasting appreciation of constant favours certainly creates this effect in the heart of a grateful person and his heart is filled with personal love of God Whose limitless favours impress upon him. In such instance he does not worship out of feeling احسان, rather **God’s personal love is instilled in his heart just as a child has personal love for his mother.** Now he not only sees God at the time of worship but also derives pleasure like one who truly adores. **All selfish desires are exterminated and are taken over by personal love of God.**

The Third stage personal love of God

This is the stage that God Almighty has likened to ‘...giving like kindred...’ and has pointed to this in the verse: ‘...celebrate the praises of Allah as you celebrated the praises of your fathers...’ (2:201)... God Almighty has cited all three stages of human understanding and knowledge of God and has called the third stage as the stage of personal love. **This is the stage where all selfish motives are eradicated and the heart is filled with love like a bottle made of glass is filled with perfume.**

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It is this stage that this verse indicates to: 'And of men there is he who would sell himself to seek the pleasure of Allah....' (2:208) and it is also stated: 'Nay, whoever submits himself completely to Allah, No fear *shall come* upon such, neither shall they grieve.' (2:113). That is, **God and God's love becomes their object of desire and God's blessings is their reward.** God states in another place: 'And they feed, for love of Him, the poor,the prisoner, *Saying*, 'We feed you for Allah's pleasure *only*. We desire no reward nor thanks from you.' (76:9-10). It is worth reflecting how clearly all these verses demonstrate that the Holy Qur'an has deemed the excellent station of worship of God and good works as the stage when the heart sincerely seeks love of God and pleasure of God

Worship God out of personal love for Him

...the question arises if the Gospels also have this fine teaching which has been elucidated in the Holy Qur'an? We assure every one that the Gospels do not cite it as clearly and with as much detail. **God Almighty has named this religion Islam with the objective that man should worship God Almighty owing to his inherent passion and not selfish motives because Islam is the name of abandoning all motives and submitting to the will of God.** There is no other religion in the world save Islam which has these objectives. No doubt, as a sign of His grace God Almighty has promised the believers all kinds of blessings. However, the believers who aspire to higher stations have been taught to worship God out of personal love for Him.' (Nur ul Haq, Part II, pp. 436-441, Ruhani Khaza'in Vol. 9)

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) wrote about signs of true love

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'Love is a wonderful thing. Its fire consumes the fire of sin and extinguishes the flame of disobedience. There can be no question of 'punishment' where there is perfect and true love. One of the signs of true love is that the lover dreads the very thought of being estranged from his beloved. He thinks himself doomed at his smallest fault, and sees the beloved's displeasure as a deadly poison. He is also beset by a great longing to meet his beloved, and absence and separation takes the very life out of him. That is why he does not only regard as sinful, actions..— e.g., murder, adultery,—rather, he considers even the slightest estrangement from God, and the slightest inclination towards anything other than Him, as a grave sin. He, therefore, constantly seeks forgiveness (*Istighfar*) from his Eternal Beloved. Since he can never bring himself to accept separation from Him .., the slightest neglect—which he might commit due to his human weakness—appears to him like a mountain of sin

It is for this reason that those who enjoy a holy and perfect relationship with God always occupy themselves with *Istighfar*. A true lover is always apprehensive lest his beloved should become annoyed with him, and his heart is filled with the thirst to please Him perfectly, and he is not content even when God Himself informs him that He is pleased with him. Just as a drunkard is not satisfied with drinking once and is constantly asking for more, in the same way, when the spring of Divine love gushes forth in a man's heart, he naturally wants to win God's pleasure as far as possible.

True salvation is a personal love of God

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Thus greater love leads to even greater *Istighfar*. This is why those who are perfect in their love for God are constantly seeking Allah's forgiveness, and **the surest sign of a sinless person is that he occupies himself in *Istighfar* far more than other people.**

The true meaning of *Istighfar* is to pray to God that He may remove the possibility of any transgression or error which a person might commit due to the weakness of human nature, and that He may cover his faults and not allow them to be exposed. The meaning of *Istighfar* also extends to the common people, and, in their case, it means: to pray to God that He may protect the supplicant from evil consequences and poisonous influences of his transgressions and misdeeds, both in this world and the hereafter. **The source of true salvation, therefore, is personal love for God, which, in turn, draws His love through man's humility, supplication and constant *Istighfar*.**

When a person carries his love to perfection and the fire of love consumes his carnal passions, then, all at once, a flame of God's love—which He has for his servant—falls upon his heart and cleanses him of the dirt of his mundane existence. He then acquires the complexion of holiness of God, Who is *Hayyi* and *Qayyum*, and partakes of all Divine attributes by way of reflection (*zill*). **He then becomes a manifestation of Divine glory,** and all that is hidden in God's eternal treasure is disclosed to the world through him. Since God—Who created this world—is not a miser, His blessings are everlasting, and His names and attributes are never suspended.' (Chashma e Masihi, Fountain of Christianity, pp. 57-59)

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) wrote about removal of sin:

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'...Sin is a poison that is born when man does not obey God, does not love Him fervently and does not remember Him with love. A person whose heart has become estranged from God's love is like a tree which, having been uprooted from the soil and, therefore, being unable to absorb water, withers with each passing day and soon loses all its verdure. Sin devastates man just as dryness kills a tree.

Divine law has prescribed three remedies for this condition: **Firstly, love; Secondly, Istighfar** i.e., the desire not to expose something. As long as a tree's roots remained covered by the earth, it has every chance of remaining green; **Thirdly, repentance**, i.e., turning to God in all humility to absorb the water of life, to attain nearness to Him and to be released from the darkness of sin through righteous deeds.

This is man's ultimate bliss. Just as a tree sucks and absorbs water from the earth, and expels harmful substances through it, **when a person's heart is nourished by the water of Divine love, it is easily able to get rid of all poisonous influences.** Having immersed itself in God it continues to receive pure nourishment that causes it to grow and flourish and bear good fruit.

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Verbal repentance is not enough; true repentance must be accompanied by good deeds which bring one nearer to God. **Prayer, too, is a form of repentance because through it we seek nearness to God.** This is why when God breathed life into man **He called it *Ruh* [spirit], for his true happiness and peace lies in acknowledging and loving God and submitting to Him. He has also called it *Nafs* [the self] for it seeks union with God.** He who loves God is like a tree firmly rooted in the soil.

But those who do not have their roots in God cannot absorb this nourishing water. They become drier with every passing moment and all their leaves fall off leaving behind bare and unsightly branches. **Since the aridity of sin results from estrangement, the obvious remedy is the establishment of a firm relationship with God,** as the law of nature itself testifies

Referring to this, God, the Glorious, says: 'O soul that is at peace with God! Return to thy Lord. He is well-pleased with thee and thou are well-pleased with Him. So enter thou among My chosen servants, and enter thou My Garden.'
(89: 28-31)

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The philosophy of sin

Ardent and passionate love for God is, therefore, the only effective remedy for getting rid of sin. Acts of piety that result from this love help to extinguish the fire of sin

The first stage of love, which can be likened to a tree that has been planted in the earth, is to have such faith in God that one values Him above everything else, even above one's own life.

The second stage, which can be compared to a tree that has firmly taken root in the soil, is *Istighfar*, whereby man is afraid that separation from God will expose his human failings.

The third stage, which resembles a tree that brings its roots close to water and sucks it like an infant, is that of Repentance

The philosophy of sin is that it results from one's estrangement from God and, therefore, can only be avoided by establishing a relationship with Him. Ignorant indeed are those who declare another man's suicide to be the remedy for their sins.'

To see God in this very life

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‘In the Holy Quran, God has given us the perfect teaching, which, if truly followed, enables us to behold Him in this very life. He says: [‘...So let him who hopes to meet his Lord do good deeds, and let him join no one in the worship of his Lord.’ (18:111)]i.e., **whoever desires to see God—the True Creator—in this life, should act righteously.**

His actions should be free from mischief, ostentation, conceit and arrogance, and should neither be defective, nor deficient, nor contrary to one’s personal love [for God]; and should instead be imbued with sincerity and faithfulness.

He should also abstain from *Shirk* [associating partners with God] and should worship neither the sun, nor the moon, ..., nor anything else. He should also not put his faith in the physical means as though they were God’s partners.

Nor should he depend upon his own prowess, for this also amounts to idolatry— *Shirk*. Having done everything in his power, he should consider it of no consequence and should not pride himself on his knowledge or his efforts, and should think himself ignorant and worthless.

His soul should always lie prostrate at the threshold of the Almighty, seeking His grace through prayer and supplication. Therefore, **you should become like a thirsty and invalid person who finds a fountain of clear fresh water and tries to reach it stumbling and falling and, when he finally puts his lips to it, does not let go until he is fully satiated.** (Lecture Lahore, pp. 10-11)

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'If you find out that you have the capacity to love like a true and ardent devotee, who endures hunger and thirst when separated from the Beloved and has no care for food or drink or his body, **you should become absorbed in love of God in such a way that your own being is lost somewhere along the way.** Man is very fortunate if he dies in such a state. We are interested in personal love and not revelations and visions. A drinker drinks cup after cup of alcohol and experiences pleasure. Similarly you should drink cupfuls of personal love of God. Just as the drinker is never quenched, you too should never be satiated. Man should never step back until such time that he realises he has reached that stage in love where he can be called an ardent lover. He should march onwards and upwards never letting go of the cup. Make yourself desperate and anxious for it.

If you have not reached this stage then you are of no use. Love of God should be such that nothing else should matter by comparison. Do not succumb to any temptation and have no fear of any fear!
(Malfuzat, Vol. 3, p. 134, new edition)

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Personal love for God

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said: 'When man is completely at peace with Allah the Exalted and does not have any complaints, it is at such time that he develops a personal love of God.'

Unless personal love of Allah the Exalted is developed, faith is in great danger and when personal love of God is generated man comes in peace from Satan's attacks. Until this love is developed man lives under Nafse Ammarah (self that incites to evil) and is ensnared by it. **People who are under the influence of Nafse Ammarah love this world and find the Hereafter remote; they are in a very perilous place!**

And those who are under the influence of Nafse Lawwamah (self that reproves) are friends of God one moment and satanic the other moment! They do not remain the same as they are struggling with the self and **during the struggle sometimes they overcome the self and other times are vanquished by it.** Anyhow, these people are at a good station because they do virtuous acts and have fear of God

However, **those under the influence of Nafse Mutma'innah (the soul at rest) are triumphant.** They leave all dangers and fear behind and reach a place of peace and are in that abode of peace where Satan cannot reach.' (Malfuzat, Vol. 3, p. 508, new edition)

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‘A believer has the tenor of one who loves ardently and he is true in his ardent love. His passion for his Beloved, that is God, is of utter devotion, love and sincerity and he submits to God with humility, supplication and resolve. No worldly pleasure is a pleasure for him and his soul is nurtured by the ardent love of God. He is not perturbed that his Beloved is above care and does not lose courage when he experiences silence and lack of response from Him. In fact he is always treading onwards and upwards and instils greater and greater tenderness of heart. It is important to have these two aspects that **an ardent devotee believer is completely absorbed in Divine love and his ardent love is of excellent level.**

True passion of love and sense of resolve in his pledge of love should be so embedded in him that no setback should falter him when at times, there is silence and lack of attention from the Beloved.

He should have two kinds of tenderness. **One, the tenderness of love of God and the other which is generated in the heart at the pain of another person** and anxiety is experienced for their well-being and restlessness is felt to help them.

The sincerity and tenderness for love of God in conjunction with resolve separates man from humanness and places him in the shade of the Divine

Man is in danger unless his love of God reaches a stage where he is independent of all except Allah. It is difficult to overcome this danger without terminating all ties save with Allah. It is also difficult to enter the sphere of His pleasure. One needs to have tenderness for God’s creation like the true passionate love a caring mother has for her dear, fragile child.’ (Malfuzat, Vol. 4, p. 32, new edition)

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'A strong connection and pure love with Allah the Exalted is generated when one finds out about His Being. People are filled with doubts. Many have openly become atheists while there are others who have not become atheists but are influenced by them and due to this are indolent as regards faith. **The solution for them is to continue to pray to Allah the Exalted so that their understanding of God is improved.** They should keep the company of the truthful so that they can experience fresh signs of the power and dominion of Allah the Exalted. He will then increase their understanding as He will please and the way He will please and will grant them insight...

It is completely true that the greater the faith in the existence and greatness of Allah the Exalted, the more one fears and is in awe of Allah the Exalted.

Otherwise one becomes brazen regarding sins in times of negligence. **Love of Allah the Exalted and awe and fear of His greatness are the two sentiments which burn sins. It is a matter of principle that man avoids what he fears.** For examples he knows fire burns so he keeps his hand off it, for example if he knows such and such place is infested with snakes he will not go there. Similarly if he is convinced that the toxins of sin ruin him and he fear greatness of Allah the Exalted and he is convinced that God dislikes sin and gives severe punishment for it, he would not be brazen in committing sin. He walks on the earth like he has no life in him. His soul is ever with God Almighty.' (Malfuzat, Vol. 4, p. 404, new edition)

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‘God saves one who is completely righteous from calamities not in an ordinary way but as a sign. Every other cunning or foolish person claims to be righteous, but only he is righteous who is proved to be righteous through God’s sign. Everyone can say they love God, but only he loves God whose love is proven by heavenly testimony. And everyone says my religion is true, but only that person’s religion is true who is granted light in this very world. And everyone says I will be granted salvation, but only that person is true in saying so who sees the lights of salvation in this very world. So, you should try and become beloved of God so that you are saved from every calamity.’ (Kishti Nuh, p. 82, Ruhani Khaza’in, Vol. 19)

‘When man negates his entire being by falling in the fire of the love of God Almighty, the very death by love grants him a new life. Can you not understand that love is also like fire and sin is also like fire? The fire of Divine love extinguishes the fire of sin. And this is the root of salvation. (Qadian kay Ariya Aur Hum, p. 448, Ruhani Khaza’in Vol. 20)

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'How unfortunate is the person who still does not know that there is a God Who has power over everything. Our paradise lies in our God. Our highest delight is in our God for we have seen Him and have found every beauty in Him. This wealth is worth procuring though one might have to lay down one's life to procure it. This ruby is worth purchasing though one may have to lose oneself to acquire it. O ye, who are bereft! run to this fountain and it will satisfy you. It is the fountain of life that will save you.

What shall I do, and how shall I impress the hearts with this good news, and by beating what drum shall I make the announcement that this is our God, so that people might hear? What remedy shall I apply to the ears of the people so that they should listen?

If you become God's, be assured that God is yours. He will wake for you when you are asleep, you will be unaware of the enemy and He will watch over him, and will destroy his ploys. You do not know yet of the powers of your God. Had you known you would have been extremely saddened every day for this world! A person who has a treasure-trove with him does not scream and cry over losing a penny. If you had the knowledge of this treasure-trove that your God fulfils every need, why would you have been so entranced by the world! **God is a precious treasure, value Him for He is your Helper each step of the way.**

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You are nothing without Him and your plans and ways and means are also nothing. Do

not emulate other people who have become completely materialistic. They have consumed the dust of base ways and means like snake eats dust. And just as vultures and dogs eat carrion, they have gnawed on carrion. They have become very distant from God, they worshipped human, ate flesh of swine and drank alcohol like water and were ruined by being too materialistic and not seeking strength from God.

Spirituality left them like a pigeon flies off from its nest.

They have the malady of worldliness which has ruined their inner-selves. You should fear this malady.'

(Kishti Nuh, pp. 21-22, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 19)

'You should make a great effort to recognise that God in finding Whom lies real salvation and real

deliverance. That God also appears to those who look for him with sincerity of heart and love. He manifests Himself to one who becomes His. **Pure hearts are His realm and tongues which are free from lies and vulgarity represent His revelation.** And

each person who is utterly absorbed and devoted to the pleasure of God, becomes a manifestation of His miraculous powers!

(Kashful Ghita, p. 188, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 14)

May God enable us to attain the standards which the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) expected of us, may He enable us to turn to Him with sincerity and achieve His love and may we be admitted to the Gardens of His pleasure.