

**THE ESSENCE OF
ISLĀM**

VOLUME II

Extracts from the Writings, Speeches,
Announcements and Discourses of the
Promised Messiah
Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad
of Qādiān
[May peace be upon him]

Published under the auspices of
Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Masroor Aḥmad
Fifth Successor to the Promised Messiah
[May Allāh be his help]

The Essence of Islām Volume II

**A rendering into English of Extracts from the writings,
speeches, announcements and discourses of Ḥaḍrat Mirzā
Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān, the Promised Messiah and
Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā'at.**

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1

ARABIC, THE MOTHER OF TONGUES

It is not true to say that language is the invention of man. Research has established that the inventor and the creator of human languages is God Almighty, Who created man out of His perfect power and bestowed upon him a tongue that he may be able to speak. Had language been the invention of man, it would not have been necessary to teach a baby to talk. It would have invented its own speech, as it grew mature. But it is patent that if a child is not taught speech, it will not be able to speak. Whether it is nurtured in a Greek forest or in the British Isles or at the equator, he has to be instructed in the art of speaking, and in the absence of such instruction he would not be able to speak.

The notion that languages undergo changes under human influence is an illusion. These changes do not result from conscious human effort, nor can we determine any rule or principle whereby the human mind brings about changes in languages at certain times. Deep reflection would reveal that linguistic changes also take place under the direction of the *Causa Causans* like all other heavenly and earthly changes.

It cannot be established that at any particular time the whole of mankind collectively, or its different sections separately, had invented the different tongues that are spoken in the world. It may be asked why should it not be supposed that, as God Almighty constantly brings

about changes in languages, in the beginning languages might have been originated in the same way without the need of revelation? The answer is that in the beginning God had created everything simply through His power. Reflection on heaven, earth, sun, moon and on human nature itself would disclose that the beginning and origin of everything was through the pure operation of Divine power, in which no physical means were involved. Whatever God created was a manifestation of His supreme power, which is beyond the concept of man.... The circumstances of today cannot serve as a precedent for the beginning and origin of creation. For instance, today no child is born without the agency of parents, but if in the beginning the same condition had been essential, man could not have come into being. Moreover, there is a world of difference between changes that naturally occur from time to time in languages and the birth of speech itself in the original void. The two concepts are entirely different.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 358-404]

Are Languages the Invention of Man?

Some ignorant Āryās, holding Sanskrit as the language of Permashwar, consider all other languages, which comprise of hundreds of Divine wonders and curiosities, as the invention of man; as if while Permashwar revealed one language, men invented scores of languages better than that one. We would inquire from the Āryās that if it is true that Sanskrit was issued from the mouth of Permashwar, and all other languages are the inventions of men and have no relationship with Permashwar, what are the particular characteristics of Sanskrit which are not to be found in other languages; for the speech of Permashwar must have superiority over the inventions of

men. He is called God because He is Matchless and Supreme in His Being, attributes and works. If we are to suppose that Sanskrit is the language of Permeshwar, which was revealed to the ancestors of the Hindūs, and that other languages were invented by the ancestors of other people who were cleverer and wiser than the ancestors of the Hindūs, then could we also suppose that those other people were somewhat superior to Permeshwar of the Hindūs in that they, through their perfect power, invented hundreds of languages and Permeshwar could invent no more than one? Those whose very natures are permeated with polytheism consider Permeshwar to be an equal entity with themselves in many respects, perhaps because they esteem themselves as uncreated and, therefore, partners in the Godhead. The objection as to why God did not content Himself with the creation of just one language, results from lack of reflection. If a wise person were to observe the diversity of modes and temperaments of people of different countries, he would be convinced that one language would not have suited all of them. The people of some countries can easily pronounce certain letters and words, but for the people of some other countries the pronouncing of those letters and words would be a great hardship. How was it then possible that the All-Wise One, loving only one language, should have ignored the principle of:

وَضَعَ الشَّيْءَ فِي مَوْضِعِهِ¹

and should have abandoned that which would have been appropriate for the diversity of temperaments. Would it have been proper that He should have confined people of

¹ Putting a thing in its proper place. [Publisher]

different temperaments in the narrow cage of one language? Moreover, the creation of a diversity of languages would have been proof of the multiple power of God Almighty. The praise of God offered by His humble creatures in a variety of languages is in itself a most attractive spectacle.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 447-456]

Announcement for the Book *Minan-ur-Raḥmān*

This book is a wonderful production to which we have been directed by some of the verses of the Holy Qur'ān which are replete with wisdom. Among its other bounties the Holy Qur'ān includes one whereby the true philosophy of the diversity of languages has been set forth, and we have been apprised of the deep wisdom underlying the source of all languages. We also learn therefrom how greatly those people are mistaken who do not admit that all languages **have developed under Divine direction**. In this book it has been established as the result of research that the Holy Qur'ān is the only revealed book which has come down in the language which is the mother of tongues, which has been revealed by God, and is the source and fountainhead of all other languages. It is patent that the whole beauty and superiority of a Divine book consists in its being in a language that has proceeded from the mouth of God Almighty and possesses higher qualities than other languages, and is perfect in its pattern. When we find such qualities in a language that are superhuman and beyond human skill, and of which all other languages are bereft, and we discover in it such properties as cannot be invented by any human intellect and proceed only from God's true and eternal knowledge, we are compelled to confess that such a language has proceeded from God Almighty. Our perfect and deep

research has revealed that **Arabic is that language**. Many people have spent their lives in such research and have made great efforts to discover which language is the mother of tongues, but as their efforts were not rightly directed, nor were they bestowed the relevant capacity by God Almighty, they could not achieve success. An additional reason was that they were prejudiced against Arabic and did not pay due attention to it. Thus, they failed to discover the truth. Now we have been guided by the Holy Word of God Almighty, the Holy Qur'ān, to the truth that the mother of tongues, to which the Parsees, the Hebrews and the Āryās have laid separate claims, is **Arabic**, and that all other claimants are in error....

Why Arabic is Superior to Other Languages?

In contrast with Arabic words, the words of other languages appear lame, maimed, blind, deaf and leprous, and entirely bereft of a natural pattern. The vocabulary of those languages is not rich in roots, which is a necessary characteristic of a perfect language....

If any Āryā or other challenger of ours is not convinced by our research, we wish to inform him by means of this **announcement** that we have set out in this book, in detail, the reasons in support of the superiority, perfection and excellence of Arabic which fall under the following headings:

- (1) The perfect pattern of the roots of Arabic words.
- (2) Arabic possesses an extraordinarily high degree of intellectual connotations.
- (3) The system of elementary words in Arabic is most complete and perfect.
- (4) In Arabic idiom, a few words convey extensive meanings.

- (5) Arabic has the full capacity for the exposition of all human feelings and thoughts.

Now everyone is at liberty after the publication of our book to try, if possible, to prove these qualities in Sanskrit or any other language.

[Dīā-ul-Ḥaq, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 9, pp. 250,320-321]

Characteristics of the Holy Qur'ān

The Holy Qur'ān is such a brilliant ruby and a glorious sun that the rays of its truth and the flashes that indicate its Divine origin are being manifested not only in one aspect, but in thousands of them. The more the opponents of Islām strive to put out this Divine light, the stronger becomes its manifestation, and the more it attracts the hearts of those who possess insight, with its beauty and loveliness. Even in this dark age, when the Christian missionaries and the Āryās have spared no effort to denigrate it and to bring it into contempt, and have on account of their sightlessness attacked this light in every form that could be employed by the bigoted and the ignorant, this eternal light has furnished every type of proof of its being from God. One of its grand characteristics is that it sets forth its claims with respect to its guidance and its excellent qualities and itself furnishes the proof of those claims. This grand characteristic is not possessed by any other book. Out of the reasons and proofs that it has set forth in support of its Divine origin and its high-grade superiority, one great proof is that for detailed exposition of which we have compiled this book. It is a product of the holy spring of the mother of tongues, whose water shines like the stars, slakes the thirst of those who are thirsty for comprehension, and washes out the dirt of doubt and suspicion. No previous book has set forth this proof in support of its truth. If the

Vedās or any other book has set forth such proof, then the followers of such a book should present the claim for such proof in the words of that book. The purport of this proof is that a comparative examination of different languages discloses that all languages are related to each other.

Further and deeper study establishes that the mother of all these related languages is Arabic, from which all these languages have emerged. A complete and comprehensive research then discloses that its extraordinary qualities compel the acknowledgement that Arabic is not only the mother of tongues but is a revealed language which the first man was taught by the special design of God Almighty, and that it was not invented by any man. This leads to the conclusion that Arabic alone is **suited for the complete and perfect Divine revelation**, inasmuch as it is necessary that the Divine Book that has been revealed for the **guidance** of the whole of mankind should be expressed in a **revealed language** which should be the mother of tongues so that it should have a natural relationship with every language and the speakers of every language, and that being revealed it should possess the blessings with which everything that proceeds from the blessed hands of God Almighty is invested. But as the other languages were also not deliberately framed by men and have all emerged under Divine direction from this holy language, and have been corrupted but are all the progeny of this language, it was not inappropriate that for particular people guidance should have been revealed in those languages. Yet it was necessary that the highest and most perfect Book should be revealed in Arabic because Arabic is the mother of tongues and is the true revealed language, having issued from the mouth of God

Almighty.

As this proof is presented only by the **Holy Qur'ān** and it alone claims to be from God, and no other Arabic book makes this claim, we are compelled to acknowledge the Qur'ān as manifestly proceeding from God and its being a **Guardian** over other books. Therefore, I have compiled this book so that with God's help I may establish the mutual relationship of all languages, and may thereafter set forth the proofs of Arabic being the mother of tongues and the true revealed language; and then, on the basis of the speciality that it alone is the perfect, pure and revealed language, should **expound** the certain and conclusive proof that out of all revealed books the Holy Qur'ān alone is the highest, most exalted, most complete, most perfect and *Khātam-ul-Kutub*, and that it alone is the **Mother of Books** as Arabic is the mother of tongues. In this research project we would have to pass through three stages:

First stage: Proof that all languages are interrelated.

Second stage: Proof that Arabic is the mother of tongues.

Third stage: Proof that on account of its extraordinary qualities Arabic is a revealed language....

The **interrelation of languages** has been established so clearly in this book that no further research in this respect can be imagined....

The second issue is that out of interrelated languages, Arabic alone is the mother of tongues, the proof of which has been set out in detail, and we have established that one of the special qualities of Arabic is that it possesses a natural pattern and displays the beauty of Divine manufacture in the same way as the other works of God Almighty. We have also established that all other lan-

guages present a distorted picture of the Arabic language. To the degree to which this blessed language has been preserved in those languages in its true form, to that degree they shine like a ruby and attract the hearts with their charming beauty. But to the degree to which a language has been corrupted, to that degree its beauty and attractions have been reduced. It is obvious that a thing that proceeds from the hand of God continues to display extraordinary characteristics so long as it retains its original form, and man is not able to produce its match. But as soon as it falls away from its original condition, its shape and beauty are debased....

The Arabic language operates like the wise person of refined taste who can express his meaning in diverse ways. For instance, a clever and intelligent person can sometimes accomplish with the movement of a brow, nose or hand that which normally requires expression in words; that is to say, he can convey his meaning through delicate nuances. This is a method also employed by Arabic. Sometimes by the use of the **definite article** it conveys a meaning that would need several words in other languages. Similarly **vowel points** often serve a purpose which would require long phrases in other languages. Some brief words have surprisingly rich connotations; for instance, *'araḍtu* means 'I have visited Mecca and Medina and their environs', and *ṭahfaltu* means 'I am accustomed to eating bread made of *Cheena*² and have decided not to eat any other kind'....

One of the characteristics of Arabic is that all the miscellaneous qualities of other languages are comprised in

² A kind of cereal. [Publisher]

Arabic.... Thus as careful study and deep research reveal that Arabic is comprehensive of all the miscellaneous qualities of other languages, it has to be acknowledged that **all other languages are branches of Arabic.**

Some people raise the objection that if one language is acknowledged as the root of all languages, it becomes difficult to accept that within three or four thousand years languages, which had emerged from one root, became so diverse. This objection is an instance of a fallacy upon a fallacy. In the first place, it is not definitely established that the world is only four or five thousand years old and that heaven and earth had no existence before. On the contrary, there are clear indications that the earth has been peopled since a very long time. Besides, distance in time or place is not the only cause of diversity in language. A powerful cause of this diversity is that every region of the earth affects the throats, tones and pronunciation of its inhabitants in a particular way in consequence of its latitudinal situation, or its juxtaposition *vis-à-vis* other planets, or on account of some other unknown causes, and these factors produce a particular form of speech. That is why the peoples of certain countries are not able to pronounce **Z** or **R** properly. As complexions, spans of life, manners, morals and constitutions differ from country to country, likewise speech also differs, for the same causes affect speech also; and the degree of difference is determined by the degree of the causes. This difference is not arbitrary but is determined by physical laws. Thus a change, which occurs in the shape, or manners, or morals, or thinking of people under the influence of earthly or heavenly causes, also affects their speech. If a foreign word or phrase finds its way into their language, they change it about. This is clear proof

that speech is affected by earthly and heavenly causes.

The Jews and the Christians are compelled to acknowledge that Arabic is the mother of tongues as the **Torah** clearly affirms that there was only one language in the beginning....

Some people raise the objection that the relationship of some languages with Arabic, for instance that of Hebrew, is much closer than that of other languages like Sanskrit or European languages. The answer is that despite this difference it has been ascertained that the elementary words and phrases of these languages have been derived from Arabic and have been further developed through natural changes.

Special Characteristics of Arabic

There are five special characteristics of Arabic, which prove conclusively that Arabic is a revealed language, which we shall expound in detail in their proper places. These are:

First Characteristic: Arabic has a perfect pattern of roots, which is suited to human needs. Other languages lack this pattern.

Second Characteristic: The names of God, and of heavenly bodies, vegetables, animals, solids, and human limbs in Arabic comprise great wisdom. Other languages cannot compete with Arabic in this respect.

Third Characteristic: The Arabic system of elementary words is perfect, and comprises all nouns and verbs of the same roots, and illustrates their mutual relationship by arranging them in a wise pattern. This characteristic is not found in other languages in the same perfect degree.

Fourth Characteristic: In Arabic idiom a few words

comprise extensive meanings. Arabic conveys extensive connotations through the use of the definite article and vowel points and sequence, for which purpose other languages have to employ several phrases and sentences.

Fifth Characteristic: Arabic possesses such roots and idioms as furnish a perfect means for the expression of the most subtle of human thoughts and reflections.

As we have undertaken to prove and illustrate all these special characteristics of Arabic, it is necessary that we should do so in Arabic, thereby furnishing illustrations of all of them in that language, so that we might require anyone, who may claim another language to be revealed and the mother of tongues, to illustrate these characteristics in the same way.... If we should be proved false in our claim that Arabic possesses those five characteristics to a special degree, and any scholar of Sanskrit or any other language should succeed in proving that their language partakes of these characteristics to the same or even to a greater degree than Arabic, then we make a firm and definite promise that we shall immediately pay him five thousand rupees....

What we demand from the advocates of other languages is that they should prove that their respective languages possess the qualities that we have established in the case of Arabic. For instance, it is indispensable that a language, which is described as revealed and the mother of tongues should comprise a full stock of roots, for the purpose of transmuting human thinking into words in such a manner that when a person should desire to make a detailed exposition of a subject, for instance, of the Unity of God, or polytheism, or the obligations due to God, or the rights of man, or religious doctrines and the

reasoning supporting them, or love and human intercourse, or rancour and hatred, or the praise and glory of God and His holy names, or the refutation of false religions, or stories and biographies, or commandments and penalties, or the hereafter, or commerce and agriculture and employment, or astrology or astronomy, or physics, medicine, or logic, etc., the roots of the language should be capable of helping him in such a way that there should be available a root against every idea that may arise in his mind. This is necessary so that it may be established that the Perfect Being Who created man and his ideas also created from the very beginning roots for the expression of those ideas. Our sense of justice would compel us to acknowledge that if this characteristic is found in a language—that it comprises in itself a beautiful pattern of roots corresponding to the natural structure of human ideas, and is capable of illustrating in words every subtle distinction between acts, and its roots are adequate to fill all the needs of ideas—then that language is, without a doubt, a revealed language, inasmuch as it can only be the act of God Almighty that, having invested man with the capacity of expressing a complex diversity of ideas, he should have been supplied with a stock of verbal roots corresponding to his ideas, so that the word and the work of God Almighty should correspond to each other at the same level. However, to possess the quality of utilizing roots in particular formations in the expression of ideas is not the speciality of any particular language. Many languages suffer from the defect that they are compelled to employ compounds in place of elementary words, which shows that those compounds were formed at the time of need by those who used those languages for the conveyance of their

ideas. Therefore, the language that is secure against such deficiencies, possesses the capacity of filling its needs with its roots and elementary words, and is capable of matching its words to the works of God Almighty—that is to say, to the upsurge of ideas at their proper level—would doubtless deserve to be called a revealed language in accord with Divine nature, on account of its extraordinarily high level and its possession of a speciality which is not shared by other languages. Honesty would require the affirmation that the language that is characterised by the high rank that it had issued from the mouth of God Almighty, possesses extraordinary qualities, and is the mother of tongues, is the only language which truly deserved that the highest and the most perfect revelation should be clothed in it. Other revelations are only branches of this revelation as other languages are branches of this language. Therefore, we shall at a later stage expound that the Holy Qur’ān alone comprises the true, complete and perfect revelation that was to be sent to the world. We shall also develop the thesis that, by acknowledging Arabic as a revealed language and the mother of tongues, not only must we acknowledge that the Holy Qur’ān is the Word of God, but we have also to acknowledge that it is the Qur’ān alone which is the complete, perfect and true revelation which should be designated *Khātam-ul-Kutub*. We will now proceed with the Arabic part of this book to demonstrate the system of roots and other qualities.

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ³

[Minan-ur-Rahmān, Rūhānī Khazā’in, vol. 9, pp. 128-142]

³ There is no strength or power except through Allāh, the Exalted, the Almighty. [Publisher]

Faculty of Speech is the Basic Reality of Man

It is necessary to point out that observation of **the book of nature** compels us to acknowledge that the principal sign of all that has been created by the hand of God, or has issued from Him, is that it serves to bring about the recognition of God according to its respective rank and station, and that it proclaims in its own peculiar manner that the true purpose of its creation is to serve as a means of the recognition of the Divine. This is confirmed by the study of the diverse species of God's creation. Thus as the Arabic language has issued from the mouth of God Almighty, it was necessary that it should also display this sign so that it may be established with certainty that in truth, it is one of those things which have proceeded solely from God Almighty without the intervention of any human effort. All praise, therefore, belongs to Allāh that the Arabic language displays this sign most plainly and clearly. As the verse:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ⁴

declares the true purpose of the creation of man and his faculties. In the same way, the same verity is established about Arabic, which is man's real language and is a part of his creation. There can be no doubt that the creation of man can be deemed complete and perfect only when it is accompanied by the creation of speech also. For that which reveals the true beauty of humanness is the faculty of speech, and it would be no exaggeration to affirm that humanness means speech accompanied by all its essentials. Thus the affirmation of God Almighty that He has

⁴ 'And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me.'—Al-Dhāriyāt, 51:57 [Publisher]

created man for His worship and comprehension means, in other words, that He has created the reality of humanness which is the faculty of speech, together with all the capacities and actions that are subordinate to it, for His own service.

When we reflect on what is man, it becomes obvious that he is an animate who is completely distinguishable from other animates by virtue of his faculty of speech. This shows that the faculty of speech is the basic quality of man, and that his other faculties are its servants and are subordinate to it. If it were said that human speech is not from God Almighty, it would amount to saying that man's humanness is not from Him. But it is patent that God is man's Creator and is, therefore, also the Teacher of his speech. Of which language He is the Teacher can be determined by the consideration that it must be the language which can serve man for the purpose of the recognition of God, as the other faculties of man serve him according to the purpose of the verse:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِي⁵

We have already explained that Arabic alone possesses those qualities. Its service is that it possesses such power for conveying to man the comprehension of God as it displays beautifully in its elementary words the distinctions between Divine attributes, which is found in the law of nature. It makes manifest the delicate and subtle distinctions between Divine attributes which appear in the book of nature, and the proofs of the Divine Unity which are indicated in the same book, and the diverse

⁵ 'And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me.'—Al-Dhāriyāt, 51:57 [Publisher]

types of Divine designs relating to His creatures which are also discoverable from it, in such manner as to present a delightful picture of them. It illustrates very clearly the subtle distinction between the attributes and qualities of God Almighty on one side, and His designs and works on the other, which are testified to by His law of nature. It thus becomes obvious that God Almighty has created the Arabic language as an adequate servant for the manifestation of His attributes, works and designs, and for illustrating the accord between His words and His works, and has from the beginning appointed this language as the key for resolving the mystery of all that relates to the Divine. When we appreciate this wonderful and majestic characteristic of Arabic, all other languages appear to suffer from darkness and deficiency. No language possesses the quality, which is inherent in Arabic, that it serves as a mirror for Divine attributes and Divine teachings, and presents a simple reflective diagram of the natural pattern of all aspects of Divinity. When we observe, with the aid of sane reason and clear intellect, the division between Divine attributes, which is naturally reflected in the book of the universe from the beginning, we find the same division in the elementary words of the Arabic language. For instance, when we consider into how many aspects the mercy of God Almighty is elementarily divided, according to intellectual research, the law of nature instructs us that His mercy has two aspects: before any action on our part and after our action. The system of providence clearly testifies that Divine mercy was manifested for mankind in two aspects according to its primary division.

Two Aspects of the Mercy of God

First is the mercy which was manifested for man without any action having proceeded from man. For instance, the creation of the earth, heaven, sun, moon, planets, water, air, fire, and all other bounties upon which man's life and survival are dependent. Without doubt all these bounties are a mercy for man, which have been bestowed upon him without any right, through pure grace and beneficence. This is a grace which came into operation even before the existence of man who didn't even have to ask for it....

The **second type** of mercy is that which follows upon the good actions of man. For instance, when he supplicates God earnestly his prayer is accepted, and when he cultivates the earth laboriously and sows seed, Divine mercy fosters the seed, with the result that a large quantity of grain is gathered. In the same way, careful observation would show that Divine mercy accompanies every one of our righteous actions whether they are religious or secular. When we labour according to the laws prescribed by God, Divine mercy comes into operation and makes our labour fruitful. These two types of mercy are such that we cannot survive without them. No one can doubt their existence. These are the bright manifestations which support the whole pattern of our lives.

When it is established that Almighty God has caused the springs of two mercies to flow for our sustenance and perfection, and they are two of His attributes which are manifested in two aspects for the watering of the tree of our being, we must find out how these two springs are designated when they are reflected in the Arabic language. By virtue of the first type of mercy, God Al-

mighty is called *Raḥmān* in Arabic, and He is called *Raḥīm* by virtue of the second type of mercy. It is in order to illustrate this quality of the Arabic language that we have mentioned the expression *Raḥmān* in the very first line of our Arabic discourse. As the attribute of mercy by virtue of its elementary division comprises two types according to the Divine law of nature, the Arabic language has two elementary words for it.

A seeker after truth would find it most helpful to adopt as a criterion the Divine attributes and works that are visible in the book of nature, for the purpose of discerning the subtle distinctions of the Arabic language, and to seek for these divisions, which appear according to the law of nature in the elementary words of Arabic. Whenever it is desired to highlight the distinction between such Arabic synonyms as are related to the attributes or works of God, attention should be directed towards the division between those attributes and works which is exhibited in nature, inasmuch as the true purpose of Arabic is to serve Divinity, as the true purpose of man is **the enlightened recognition of God Almighty**.

The qualities of any thing can be appreciated only by keeping in mind the purpose for which it has been created. For instance, an ox is created for the purpose of ploughing or transport. If we overlook this purpose and seek to use it as a hunting-dog, it would fail utterly and would prove useless and valueless. On the other hand, if we try it in the field of its true purpose it soon proves that it carries a great responsibility within the system of the means of maintenance of human livelihood. In short, the worth of everything is proved by its being utilized for its true purpose. Thus the true purpose of Arabic is to illustrate the bright countenance of all manifestations of

Divinity.

As the proper carrying-out of this delicate and subtle operation, and to be safeguarded against mistakes, was beyond human capacity, God the Noble and Merciful revealed the Holy Qur'ān in the Arabic language, a miraculous illustration of the qualities of the Arabic language, and of the delicate distinction between the different elementary words, and the extraordinarily rich connotations of its compounds, in such manner that all heads bowed to it in acknowledgement. All these qualities of the Arabic language were not only acknowledged by the highest contemporary linguists, but their failure to match them established that human faculties are not able to set forth those verities and insights, to illustrate the true and real beauty of the language. We have learnt the distinction between *Rahmān* and *Rahīm* from the same Holy Book which we have cited, as an instance in our Arabic discourse. Every language contains many synonyms, but until we become aware of the distinctions between them, and so long as those words do not relate to subjects pertaining to Divinity and religious teachings, we need take no account of them.

It should also be remembered that man cannot invent these elementary words, but once they are created by Divine power, man can, by study, discover their subtle distinctions and their proper use. For instance, the grammarians have not discovered anything new, nor have they framed any rules which other people must conform to; but, having studied this natural language they discovered that it was illustrative of a system of rules, and they proceeded to formulate those rules in order to facilitate the study of the language. Thus the Holy Qur'ān, by using every word in its proper place,

illustrated how the Arabic elementary words can be manipulated, how they serve the subjects of Divinity, and how subtle are their mutual distinctions....

The Connotation of Some Arabic Words

Now we proceed to set forth some of the connotations of another Arabic word which we have selected from the Holy Qur'ān and which is *Rabb*. This word occurs in the very first verse of the first chapter of the Holy Qur'ān where Allāh, the Glorious, says:

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ⁶

Lisān-ul-'Arab and *Tāj-ul-'Urūs*, which are the two most reliable Arabic lexicons, have set forth that the word *Rabb* comprises seven connotations: Master or Owner (*Mālik*); Master or Chief (*Sayyed*); Regulator (*Mudabbir*); One who nurtures (*Murabbī*); One who safeguards (*Qayyim*); Bestower (*Mun'im*) and; Perfector (*Mutamim*). Of these seven, three refer to the personal grandeur of the Almighty. Of these, one is *Mālik*. In Arabic lexicon, *Mālik* connotes that He owns the universe and can use it as He likes. His ownership of it is not shared by any other. This word in its true meaning cannot be applied to anyone except God Almighty, inasmuch as full control and complete power of disposal and perfect rights cannot be attributed to anyone except God Almighty.

Sayyed, according to Arabic lexicon, is one who has subordinate to him a large number who should serve him out of sincere eagerness and natural obedience. The distinction between a sovereign and *Sayyed* is, that a

⁶ 'All praise belongs to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.'—Al-Fātiḥah, 1:2 [Publisher]

sovereign subdues people by his might and the strictness of his laws, while the followers of a *Sayyed* obey him voluntarily out of their sincere love and eagerness and inclination and call him '*Sayyedunā*' (our chief) out of sincere affection. A sovereign can be obeyed in that spirit when he becomes a *Sayyed* in the estimation of his people. This word can also not be used for anyone beside God Almighty, inasmuch as true and eager obedience which has no personal purpose in view cannot possibly be accorded to any beside God Almighty. He is the only One before Whom the souls prostrate themselves, for He is the true source of their creation. That is why every soul naturally bows down to Him. The worshippers of idols and of men have also the same eagerness to obey Him as has a righteous person who believes in His Unity, but they fail, on account of their error and faulty desire, to recognize the true spring of life, and on account of their blindness they direct their inner eagerness towards a wrong object. That is why some of them deify stones, or Rāmchandra, or Krishna, or the Son of Mary, under the mistaken belief that the object of their worship is the True God. They ruin themselves by investing creatures with Godhead. In the same way, those who pursue their own desires have been misled in their spiritual search for the true beloved and *Sayyed*. Their hearts also sought a beloved and a true *Sayyed*, but having failed to recognize the true desire of their hearts, they imagined that the true beloved and *Sayyed*, whom the souls seek and whom they are eager to obey, are the worldly wealth, properties and delights. This was an error on their part. The true Cause of spiritual desires, and the source of pious sentiments, is the Being Who has said:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ⁷

Meaning that: I alone am the Purpose of the creation of Jinn and men and all their faculties, which have all been created so that I should be recognized and worshipped.

This verse indicates that man, by his very creation, has been invested with the search and recognition and obedience of God. Had man not been invested with these, there would have been no pursuit of passion, no idol worship, and no worship of men in the world, inasmuch as every error results from pursuit of the discovery of truth. Thus God alone is the **true Sayered**.

Another of these attributes is *Mudabbir*. This means the keeping in mind, with reference to every enterprise, the whole system of events in the past, and of consequences in the future, and the putting of everything in its proper place having regard to that system, and not to embark upon anything outside it. This attribute also cannot be applied to anyone beside God Almighty, inasmuch as perfect planning demands knowledge of the hidden, and that belongs to God Almighty alone.

The remaining four names—*Murabbī*, *Qayyim*, *Mun'im* and *Mutammim*—indicate those bounties of God Almighty which are bestowed upon men on account of His Perfect Mastership, Leadership, and Planning. *Murabbī* means he who nurtures, and perfect nurture means that all aspects of man, like his body, soul, faculties and capacities, should be nurtured and the system of nourishment should extend to the climax of man's physical and spiritual progress. The manifestation of the point at which the name of humanness or its elements begin, and its features

⁷ Al-Dhāriyāt, 51:57 [Publisher]

begin to move from nothingness towards existence, is also nurture. This shows that in Arabic idiom *Rubūbiyyat* has very wide connotations, and that it covers the whole expanse from the point of nothingness to the climax of perfection. The name ‘Creator’ (*Khāliq*) and the like are derivatives of *Rabb*.

Qayyim means one who safeguards the system. *Mun‘im* means one who bestows all bounties, which man or any other creature can receive, according to its capacity, and is desirous of obtaining, so that it might arrive at its climax, as Allāh, the Glorious says:

رَبُّنَا الَّذِي آتَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ⁸

Our Lord, Who invested all things with appropriate form and then guided them to the realization of their requisite goals.

Mutammim means that the system of beneficence should not be left deficient in any respect, and should be carried to its climax in all its aspects.

Thus the term *Rabb*, which has been used in the Holy Qur’ān comprises all the diverse connotations that we have set out briefly above.

We have to record with great sorrow that an ignorant European **Christian** writer has set out in one of his books that Christianity possesses this superiority over Islām, that it has named God Almighty ‘**Father**’, which is a very dear and lovely name, and that this name has not been applied to God in the **Qur’ān**. We are surprised that this critic has not considered what honour and greatness the lexicons have attributed to the expression ‘**Father**’, for

⁸ Ṭā Hā, 20:51 [Publisher]

every word acquires true honour and greatness from the position assigned to it by a lexicon, and no one is entitled to bestow such honour upon a word as the lexicon does not bestow. That is why even the Word of God does not disregard the lexicon, and according to all sensible people, in order to determine the honour and greatness of a word, recourse must first be had to the lexicon, in order to ascertain what robe of honour it has bestowed upon that word. Keeping this criterion in mind, we find that all that the lexicon discloses is that when a person is in fact born of the seed of another, and he who drops the seed has no further connection with his birth, it is said that that other is his *Abb* (father). If it should be desired to indicate that Almighty God is Himself the Conscious Creator of a person, and Himself leads him towards perfection, and out of His great mercy bestows appropriate bounties on him, and is Himself his **Guardian** and **Supporter**, the lexicon does not permit that these connotations may be expressed by the employment of the word 'Father'; the lexicon provides another term for the expression of this concept, and that word is *Rabb*, the true meaning of which we have just set out on the authority of the lexicon. We are not at all entitled to invent our own lexicon, and must follow the division of words established by God from the beginning.

The Word 'Father' is Derogatory to God

This would show that the application of the word **Father** to God is **disrespectful** and **derogatory** to Him. Those who have invented against **Jesus** the charge that he was in the habit of calling God Almighty 'Father', and in fact believed that God was his father, have been guilty of accusing him of a false and hateful offence. Can any

sensible person imagine that Jesus was guilty of such stupidity as to have applied to God, the Glorious, a name, the etymological meaning of which should be so low and humiliating and indicative of weakness, powerlessness and helplessness from every point of view?...

The word *Abb* (father) is so low and humiliating that it does not necessarily import any kind of design or nurture or love. For instance, a goat that covers a she-goat and drops its seed or a bull that satisfies its lust with a cow and then turns away from it without any thought of a calf being born of its action, or a pig which under the surge of its lust is constantly occupied in satisfying it and has no notion that through its repeated action whole litters of piglets might be born and spread in the earth, would no doubt, if its lustful activities produce its young, be called their father. According to all the lexicons the word *Abb* does not in the least imply that a father after dropping the seed should take any further action so that a child may be born, or that this should be his design at the time of cohabitation; indeed the word *Abb* does not necessarily imply desire for progeny, and all that it imports is that he should drop the seed, and it is only on that account that lexicographically he is called *Abb*. Then how can it be permissible that such a worthless word, which is so appraised in all languages, should be applied to the All-Powerful One, all of Whose works are manifested by virtue of His perfect designs, perfect knowledge and perfect power? How can it be right that the same word, which is used for a bull and for a pig, should be used for God Almighty also? What impertinence is this, which the ignorant **Christians** persist in committing? They have been left with neither shame nor modesty nor any understanding of human values. The doctrine of the atonement

has affected their human faculties like paralysis, so that they have been rendered utterly worthless and without feeling....

Here we consider it proper to dispel some of the doubts and misconceptions of Max Müller which he discusses in the first volume of his book on the science of languages.

His statement: One factor that has blocked the progress of knowledge is that some people, in order to expose other people to ridicule and contempt, employed contemptuous epithets to them, and thus failed to learn their languages. So long as the words wild and dumb (*'Ajamī*) as applied to those people were not excluded from human dictionaries, and did not give place to the expression 'brother', and so long as it was not acknowledged that all mankind are of one species, a beginning could not be made with the science of languages.

My statement: The above statement shows that the writer is critical of the Arabs and imagines that the expression '*Ajam*, applied by them to those whose language is other than Arabic, is used out of bigotry and contempt for those people. He fell into this error because his Christian bigotry stood in the way of his finding out whether the expressions '*Ajam* and '*Arab* were devised by man or by God Almighty. He has himself acknowledged in his book that man has not the capacity to formulate the elementary words of a language on his own. Arabic has two words in juxtaposition to each other. One is '*Arab*, which connotes those who are eloquent and possess mastery of expression; and the other is '*Ajam*, which means non-eloquent and tongue-tied. If Mr. Max Müller thinks that these two words are not ancient and Islām has invented them out of bigotry, he should specify the original terms which were used in these connotations, for it is not possible that a

people should not have had any appellation in ancient times. If it is found that these two expressions are ancient, this would mean that they were not coined by man, but that the Almighty, Knower of the unseen, Who has created man with diverse capacities, has Himself applied these two names to different peoples corresponding to their respective abilities.

Another consideration is that if these two expressions, *'Arab* and *'Ajam*, have been coined by some human being out of bigotry and contempt, then doubtless they would be contrary to fact and would be altogether false. But we have established in this book that the word *'Arab* expresses a reality, and that it is true in fact that the Arabic language, on account of its system of elementary words and its delicate structure and other wonders, occupies so high a position that one is compelled to affirm that in comparison with it other languages are like the dumb. Moreover, we observe that other languages are motionless like solids and are so bereft of any movement towards development as if they are lifeless, and we are compelled to acknowledge that they occupy a very low position. The Arabic language describes non-Arabs politely as *'Ajam* but in truth they did not deserve even this appellation. Had the low condition of their languages been correctly described the most appropriate expression to be applied to them would have been that they were dead languages.

[*Minan-ur-Rahmān, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 9, pp. 145-161]

Glory be to Arabic, how beautiful is its countenance, looking out of perfectly illumined mantles! The earth has been brightened with its exalted lights, and it has been proved to possess the climax of the yearnings of man. In it are found wonders of the All-Wise and Powerful

Maker, as they are found in everything which proceeds from the Great Creator. Allāh has perfected all its limbs and has not left out anything from its beauty and splendour, and no doubt you will find it perfect in expression, comprising all the objectives of man. There is no action that begins at any period of time, nor is there any attribute out of the attributes of Allāh, the Bestower, nor is there any doctrine out of the doctrines of mankind, but there is in Arabic an elementary word apposite to it. Should you have a doubt about it, let us know the contrary.

[*Minan-ur-Raḥmān, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 9, pp. 193-194]

2

REVELATION, INSPIRATION, VISION AND DREAM

I tell you truly that every door can be closed but the door of the descent of the Holy Spirit is never closed. Open the doors of your hearts so that it might enter into them.

There is no safeguarding law through following which we can secure ourselves absolutely against mistakes. That is the reason why the philosophers, who framed the rules of logic and invented the methods of discussion and built the arguments of philosophy, fell continuously into error. They left as the legacy of their ignorance hundreds of false notions and mistaken philosophies and vain discourses. This shows that it is impossible to arrive at the truth of every matter and to determine the correct doctrines as the result of one's own research without making a mistake. We have never known any individual, nor heard of one or read of one in any book of history, who was free from error in the whole field of his vision and reflection. It follows, therefore, that it is basically impossible to find people who, through the study of the laws of nature and squaring their conscience with the circumstances of the world, carried their research to the highest level of truth, without any possibility of mistake....

Obviously, if man cannot escape error through his own knowledge and if God (Who is Gracious and Merciful,

and is free from every mistake and knows the truth of every matter) does not help His servants through His true revelation, how could we humble creatures emerge out of the darkneses of ignorance and error, and how could we be delivered from the calamities of doubt and suspicion? I, therefore, affirm with full conviction that the wisdom and mercy and sustaining love of God Almighty demand that from time to time, when He deems it right, He should create men who should be recipients of revelation for the purpose of ascertaining true doctrines and establishing correct morals, and who should have bestowed upon them the capacity of impressing their teachings upon others so that mankind, who have been created for true guidance, should not be deprived of their needed good fortune.

[Purānī Tehrīrain, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 2, pp. 20-21]

The Hidden World of Revelation

God Almighty has divided His wonderful universe into three parts.

- (1) The world which is manifest and can be felt through the eyes and the ears and other physical senses and through ordinary instruments.
- (2) The world which is hidden and which can be understood through reason and conjecture.
- (3) The world which is hidden beyond hidden, which is so imperceptible that few are aware of it. That world is entirely unseen; reason has not been granted the ability to reach it, except through mere conjecture. This world is disclosed only through visions, revelation, inspiration, and not by any other means.

As is well established, it is the way of Allāh that for the discovery of the first two worlds that we have mentioned He has bestowed upon man different types of faculties and powers. In the same way, the Absolute Bounteous has appointed a means for man for the discovery of the third world; and that means is revelation, inspiration and visions. This means is not allowed to be wholly suspended at any time; indeed, those who comply with the conditions for achieving it have, throughout, been its recipients and will continue to be such.

As man has been created for unlimited progress and God Almighty is free from deficiencies, miserliness and holding-back, it would be an unworthy thought that He put into the heart of man the eagerness to learn the secrets of all the three worlds and yet has deprived him wholly of the knowledge of the means of acquiring knowledge of the third world. This impels wise people to believe in the permanent need of inspiration and visions and they do not confine revelation, like the Āryās, to the four *Rishīs* beside whom it is impossible for a fifth person to arrive at that excellence. Instead, wise people, believing in the absolute bounty of God Almighty, deem the door of inspiration ever open and do not confine it to any country or religion. It is true, however, that it is limited to the straight path. By treading along this path these blessings can be achieved, inasmuch as it is necessary for the achievement of everything to follow the rules and methods which are necessary for its achievement. Wise people do not deny the wonders of the world of visions. They have to admit that the Absolute Benefactor, Who has bestowed upon man faculties and powers for the discovery of every little matter in the first world, would not deprive man of the means of discovering the

grand affairs of the third world through which a true and perfect relationship with God Almighty can be established, and true and certain understanding having been achieved, the lights of heaven become manifest in this very world. This method is also open, like the methods of discovering the other two worlds, and the truthful people adopt it with great conviction and follow it and obtain its fruits.

The wonders of this third world are numberless. In comparison with the other two worlds, they are like the sun as compared to a grain of poppy seed. To insist that the mysteries of that world should be wholly revealed through reason would be like shutting one's eyes and insisting that visible things should become perceptible through the sense of smell.

The wonders of the third world totally frustrate reason. No one need be surprised at the creation of souls for in this very world such mysteries are revealed to those who have experience of visions, that reason wholly fails to penetrate their reality. At times, a person who has a capacity to see visions can see someone from a distance of hundreds of miles despite numberless intervening obstructions. In fact, on some occasions, in a state of complete wakefulness, he can hear his voice also, and it is even more wonderful that sometimes the other person can hear the voice of the first one. On occasions, in a vision resembling the state of wakefulness, he can meet the souls of those who have passed on. As a general rule, meeting with all dwellers of graves—blessed or benighted—is possible in this manner. I myself have had such experiences.

This refutes entirely the doctrine of the transmigration of

souls current among the Hindūs. The greatest wonder is that sometimes one possessing the capacity for vision, through concentration, appears to another person, with the permission of God Almighty, at a distance of hundreds of miles in a state of complete wakefulness without his body moving from its place. Reason holds that a person cannot be at two places at the same time, yet this impossibility becomes possible in the third world. In the same way, a person of understanding witnesses hundreds of wonders with his own eyes and is surprised at the denial of those who altogether reject the wonders of the third world. I have witnessed the wonders and rare visions of that world with my own eyes approximately five thousand times and have experience of them happening to myself.

It would take a large volume to record details of these experiences. One wonderful aspect of these experiences is that some matters which have no external existence come into being through Divine power. The author of *Futūhāt* and *Fuṣūṣ* and other great *Ṣūfīs* have recorded a number of their own experiences of this kind in their compilations. But as there is a great difference between hearing and seeing, I could not have obtained that certainty by merely reading these accounts which I have acquired through my own experience.

I recall that in a vision I saw that I had drawn up with my own hand certain Divine decrees which related to the future and then presented the paper to God Almighty, the Omnipotent, the Glorious, for His signature. (It should be borne in mind that it often happens in visions and true dreams that some Divine attributes of beauty or glory appear in human form to the person seeing the vision and he imagines the form to be God Almighty. This experi-

ence is well known to those who are favoured with visions and cannot be denied). In short, I presented that book to that personification of beauty, which appeared as God Almighty, the Omnipotent, the Incomparable and the Unfathomable, in the state of my vision. On my presenting that document, God Almighty, Who appeared in the form of a ruler, dipped His pen in red ink and sprinkled it in my direction and with the ink that remained at the point of the pen He signed the document. Thereupon the vision came to an end and when I opened my eyes I saw several drops of red ink fall on my clothes and two or three of them fell on the cap of one ‘Abdullāh of Sannaur who was sitting near me at the time. That red ink which was part of the vision became materialized and became visible externally.

I have seen several other visions of the type which it would take too long to set down, but whereby my own experience confirmed that sometimes a matter that is observed in a vision assumes external form by the command of Allāh. These matters cannot be appreciated through reason alone. Indeed a person who is afflicted with the pride of his reason hears these things and affirms arrogantly that they are impossible and false and that the person who claims to have had such experience is either a liar or is mad or is self-deceived and for lack of proper research, has not been able to penetrate to the reality. Such a one does not reflect that these matters are testified to by thousands of the righteous from their personal experiences, and of which they undertake a demonstration to those who might keep company with them. Can they be set aside with mere verbal denials?

The truth of the matter is that, apart from the wonders of the world of vision, reason has not been able to compre-

hend fully even that which pertains to the world of reason and there are millions of Divine mysteries which are still hidden and beyond the reach of the wise.

[Surmah Chashm Āryā, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 2, pp. 175-181, footnote]

Man's Ability to Receive Revelation

As God has invested man with the faculty of reason for the understanding, to some degree, of elementary matters, in the same way God has vested in him a hidden faculty of receiving revelation. When human reason arrives at the limit of its reach, then at that stage God Almighty, for the purpose of leading His true and faithful servants to the perfection of understanding and certainty, guides them through revelation and visions. Thus the stages which reason could not reach are traversed by means of revelation and visions, and seekers after truth thereby arrive at full certainty. This is the way of Allāh, to guide to which Prophets have appeared in the world. Without treading this path, no one has ever arrived at true and perfect understanding. But a poor dry philosopher is in such a hurry that he desires everything to be disclosed at the stage of reason. He does not know that reason cannot carry a burden beyond its strength, nor can it step further than its capacity. He does not reflect that, to carry a person to his desired excellence, God Almighty has bestowed upon him not only the faculty of reason but also the faculty of experiencing visions and revelations. It is the height of misfortune to make use of only the elementary means out of those that God has, out of His Perfect Wisdom, bestowed upon man for the purpose of recognizing God, and to remain ignorant of the rest. It is extremely unwise to let those faculties atrophy through lack of use and to derive no benefit from them. A person

who does not use the faculty of receiving revelation and denies its existence cannot be a true philosopher, whereas the existence of this faculty has been established by the testimony of thousands of the righteous and all men of true understanding have arrived at perfect understanding through this means.

[Surmah Chashm Āryā, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 2, pp. 87-90]

Non-Prophets Can also Receive Revelation

Some ignorant clerics go so far in their denial that they assert that the door of revelation is altogether closed and that it is not open to a Muslim to enable him to perfect his faith through this bounty and then to act righteously under the urge of his faith.

The answer to those who think like this is that if the Muslims are so unfortunate and blind and are the worst of people, why have they been named the best of people by God Almighty? The truth is that those who think like this are themselves foolish and stupid. As God Almighty has taught the Muslims the prayer that is set out in the *Sūrah Fātiḥah*, He has also designed to bestow upon them the bounty that was bestowed upon the Prophets; that is to say, the bounty of converse with the Divine which is the fountainhead of all bounties. Has God Almighty merely cheated us with this prayer? What good can there be in a useless and fallen people who are even worse than the women of Israel?

Obviously, the mother of Moses and the mother of Jesus were both women and, as our opponents also believe, they were not Prophets. Yet they were favoured with Divine revelation. Is it to be imagined that if a Muslim were to have such a pure soul as that of Abraham and were to be so obedient to God Almighty as to cast aside

his ego altogether, and were to be so absorbed in the love of God Almighty that he should entirely lose his own self, yet he cannot be the recipient of revelation like the mother of Moses? Can any reasonable person attribute such miserliness to God Almighty? My only response to such people is:

لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ⁹

The truth is that when these people became the insects of the earth, and the only insignia of Islām left in them were their turbans, beards, circumcision, a few verbal affirmations, and mere formalities of observing Prayer and fasting, God Almighty deadened their hearts. Thousands of dark veils covered their eyes and they lost all signs of spiritual life. They thus denied the possibility of converse with the Divine. This denial is, in truth, a denial of Islām; but since their hearts are dead, they do not realize their own true condition.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Part V, Rūḥānī Khazā'in vol. 21, pp. 310-311]

O ye Muslims! Beware that such thinking is sheer ignorance and stupidity. If Islām is such a dead religion, whom can you invite to it? Will you carry its corpse to Japan or will you present it to Europe? Who would be foolish enough to fall in love with a dead religion that is bereft of all blessing and spirituality such as appeared in the religions of the past? In those religions even women received revelation, as was the case with the mother of Moses and the mother of Jesus, but your men are not equal even to those women. O ye stupid and blind ones, our Holy Prophet, our lord and master (thousands of blessings be on him) was ahead of all Prophets in his

⁹ Curse of Allāh be upon the liars. [Publisher]

spiritual grace. The grace of previous Prophets came to an end at a certain stage and now those peoples and their religions are dead. There is no life in them. But the grace of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) continues till the Day of Judgement. That is why it is not needed that a Messiah should come from outside for his people. To be brought up under the shadow of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) can convert a humble person into a Messiah, as **God has done in my case.**

[Chashma-e-Masīhī, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 20, p. 389]

Revelation: the Highest Stage of Divine Understanding

Our claim is true and is clearly established that by treading along the straight path a true seeker can become the recipient of Divine revelation. My own experience testifies to it. Besides, every reasonable person can understand that there is no higher stage of the understanding of the Divine in this world than that a person should converse with his Gracious Lord—glory be to Him. This is the stage where souls are completely satisfied and all doubts and suspicions are removed. Having arrived at this stage of purification a person achieves the understanding for which he has been created. This stage is truly the key to salvation and to solving the problems of ephemeral existence. It proves how close the True Creator is to His weak creation. We have learnt of this stage by the light which is the Qur'ān. That light gives us the good news that the fountain of revelation never runs dry. Any dweller of the East or the West, when he searches for God Almighty and makes his peace with Him and removes the intervening veils in

between, will surely find Him; and when he finds Him truly and perfectly, then God will speak to him.

The Vedās have denied man this stage and have confined it to the four *Rishīs*, who, according to the Āryā Samā-jists, are the authors of the Vedās. This is an error of the Vedās like the other great errors contained therein. It is obvious that all human beings are alike in their nature and what is possible for one man is possible for all, and the closeness to the Divine and His understanding, which is permissible in the case of one human being, is permissible in the case of all, for they all have the same nature. It is true that there is diversity in respect of the degrees of excellence, but no one is shut out from the kind of excellence which is open to others. Should there be a person who should not have the slightest capacity to acquire human excellence then that person cannot be included within the category of human beings. In short, there can be a difference in capacities, but there cannot be a total absence of capacity.

[Surmah Chashm Āryā, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 2, pp. 239-240]

The Gracious and Merciful Lord, Who has invested human nature with the hunger and thirst of His own complete understanding has endowed human nature with two types of faculties for the purpose of arriving at that understanding. One type is the intellectual faculties, the source of which is the brain, and the other type is spiritual faculties the source of which is the heart. The purity of spiritual faculties depends upon the purity of the heart. That which cannot be discovered through the intellectual faculties is reached through the spiritual faculties. Spiritual faculties can develop such purity that the graces of the Source of Grace can be mirrored in them, but the condition is that they should be eager for the acquisition

of grace and all intervening veils and obstructions should be removed so that they might become the recipients of the grace of perfect understanding. Their recognition of the Divine should not be limited to the affirmation that there **should be a Creator** of this universe. Rather, by being perfectly graced with the honour of Divine converse, they should be able to behold His countenance directly through having observed His great signs and should thus be able to see with complete certainty that **that Creator truly exists**. But as the nature of most people is not free from obstruction, they are afflicted with the love and greed of the world, pride, arrogance, self-esteem, hypocrisy, self-worship, and other moral delinquencies, and are deliberately neglectful of the obligations due to Allāh and to His creatures, and purposely turn away from sincerity and fidelity and love of God and devotion to Him, and cut asunder deliberately from God Almighty. On account of all types of obstructions, veils, desires and passions, they are not qualified that the grace of converse with the Divine should descend upon them which should exhibit the lights of their being acceptable to God.

Yet the eternal bounty of God, which does not wish that human nature should go to waste, makes it possible for most human beings to see occasionally true dreams or to receive true revelation so that they should realize that the way for their stepping forward is open. But their dreams and revelations do not indicate their being acceptable to God and are not accompanied by signs of the love and grace of God, nor are such people purified of the impurities of their egos. They see these dreams so that they might be furnished with an argument for believing in God's Prophets, for if they were to be deprived alto-

gether of the understanding of true dreams and true revelations, and they should have no certain knowledge of them, they could plead before God Almighty that they were unable to understand the reality of Prophethood for they had no knowledge of it. They had no sample of it before their eyes. Therefore, from the beginning it has been the way of God that irrespective of a person being good or bad or righteous or disobedient, or being the follower of a true faith or of a false one, he is shown true dreams or is vouchsafed true revelation so that his conjecture which derives from hearing of such matters may be converted into certainty and he may have a sample in his hands which should help his spiritual progress. The Wise Creator has so fashioned the human brain and has so invested it with the spiritual faculties that it can see some true dreams and can receive some true revelations. But these dreams and revelations are not an indication of any spiritual rank or greatness, but are only a sample of the way through which progress could be made.

[Ḥaḳīqat-ul-Waḥī, Rūḥānī Khazā'in vol. 22, pp. 8-10]

The Necessity of Revelation

Arguments are of two types, inductive and deductive. An inductive argument enables us to recognize that which is indicated. For instance when we observe smoke we conclude that there is a fire. In the case of deduction, one moves from the conclusion to the cause. For instance, we find a person suffering from high fever and we believe that there is a cause for it.

We proceed to set forth first the inductive reason for the need of revelation. There is no doubt that the physical and spiritual systems of man are governed by the same

law of nature. We observe in the physical system that whatever needs the Gracious God has planted in the human body, He has also provided the means of their satisfaction. A human body feels hunger and needs food, so God has provided various types of food for the human body. In the same way, man needed water to slake his thirst and God Almighty has provided wells and springs and streams for that purpose. Man needed the light of the sun or light from some other source to be able to see with his eyes and God Almighty has provided light from heaven in the shape of the sun and has provided light from other sources on earth. Man needed air for breathing and hearing the voices of others, and God provided air. In the same way, man needed a consort for the propagation of the species; so God created woman as man's consort and man as woman's consort. In short, whatever desires God has planted in the human body, He has also provided means for their satisfaction. Now it is worth considering that when provision has been made for the fulfilment of the physical needs of the mortal body, how much more must have been provided for the fulfilment of the pure desires of the soul which has been created for the eternal love and recognition and worship of God. That provision is **Divine revelation** and Divine signs, which carry a person of defective knowledge to complete certainty. As God bestowed upon the body provision for the satisfaction of its needs, in the same way, He bestowed upon the soul provision for the satisfaction of its needs so that the physical and the spiritual systems should be in accord....

This inductive reasoning can be completed only through deductive reasoning, that is to say, by a sample of revelation itself. To feel the need for something is one

matter and to find its fulfilment is quite another.... You can see that both food and water are available for your body, not that they were present in some earlier age but not any more. But when mention is made of revelation you refer to a past age upon which centuries upon centuries have lapsed and you are not able to refer to anything in the present. Then how is there an accord between the physical and spiritual laws of nature? Stop and reflect. You cannot deny that the provision for your physical needs is available to you all the time, but you have nothing with you in the way of provision for your spiritual needs except stories of the past. You know that the physical **springs** from which you take the water to slake your thirst are still running; nor have your fields become barren and unproductive, the produce of which satisfies your hunger twice a day. But where are the spiritual springs, which used to slake your spiritual thirst by giving you the fresh water of Divine revelation? Nor have you available the spiritual food by eating which you could keep your soul alive. Thus you are in a desert where there is neither food nor water.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 63-66]

Urdū Couplets

What a pity! They say that revelation has come to an end;

Now this *Ummāh* will have to depend on old tales to the Day of Judgement.

Surely this belief is against the Word of God;
But who would shed the weight of this age-old yoke?

That God still appoints whomsoever He wishes to be a recipient of revelation (*Kalīm*);
He still speaks to whom He loves.

Why do you discard the gem of Divine revelation? Take heed!
 For this alone is the source of honour and distinction for the faith.

This is the flower which has no peer in the garden;
 This is the fragrance before which the musk of Tataristan pales into insignificance.

This is the key, which opens up the gates of heavens;
 This is the mirror, which shows us the countenance of the Beloved.

This is the only weapon which guarantees our victory;
 This alone is the fortress, the citadel of security.

In Islām, this alone is the instrument of attaining knowledge of the Divine;
 Mere tales cannot help a person out of the raging storm.

Divine revelation alone is the sign of knowing God;
 Whoever receives it, also finds the Eternal Friend.

How wonderful is the garden of love! the passage to which lies through the valley of death;
 Whose fruit is the communion with the Beloved even though it is surrounded by thorny bushes.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Part V, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 21, p. 137]

Revelation is a message from the hidden, which does not depend upon any reflection or deep thinking. It is clear and open feeling as a hearer has about a speaker, or one beaten has about the beater, or one touched has about him who touches him. The soul does not experience any spiritual pain on its account. The soul has an eternal accord with revelation, which it enjoys as a lover finds pleasure in beholding the beloved. It is a delicious communication from God which is called revelation.

[Purānī Teḥrīrain, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 2, p. 20]

What is Revelation?

By revelation is not meant something that arises in the mind as a result of thinking and reflection, like that which a poet experiences in writing his verses. He writes a verse and reflects about the next one and it suddenly arises in his mind. This is not revelation; it is a consequence of thought and reflection, which flows from the law of nature. Anyone who thinks about good things or evil things finds that something arises in his mind in consonance with his thinking and his search. For instance, a good and righteous person writes some verses in support of truth and another one, who is wicked, supports falsehood in his verses and abuses the righteous. Each of them will produce some verses and it should be no matter for surprise that the enemy of the righteous who writes in support of falsehood may, on account of greater practice, write better verses than the other one. Thus, if anything arising in the mind were to be called revelation, a wicked poet, who is the enemy of truth and of the righteous and always abuses the truth and indulges in imposture, would be deemed the recipient of Divine revelation. Works of fiction contain many affecting passages and the minds of authors are able to produce a series of writings on purely fictitious subjects, but they cannot be called revelation. If revelation were the name of any idea arising in the mind, a thief could be called a recipient of revelation for he can think of clever ways of robbery and ingenious plans of housebreaking and manslaughter cross his mind. We cannot call all this revelation. This is the thinking of people who have no clear notion of the True God, Who comforts the hearts with His converse and bestows the understanding of spiritual knowledge on those who are not familiar with it.

What is revelation? It is God's converse in living and powerful words with a chosen servant or with one whom He desires to choose. When this converse starts in an abundant and satisfactory manner and is free from the darkness of false thinking and is not confined to a few scattered and incomplete phrases, and is delicious and is full of wisdom and majesty, it is the Word of God by which He desires to comfort His servant and through which He manifests Himself to him. Sometimes a communication is made only for the purpose of a trial and is not accompanied by all the characteristic blessings of revelation. A servant of God Almighty is thereby tried whether by tasting a little of revelation he adjusts his circumstances to those of true recipients of revelation or fails to do so. Then if he does not adopt true righteousness, he is deprived of the perfection of this bounty and is left with only vain boasting.

Millions of good people receive revelation but they have not all the same rank in the estimation of Allāh. Even the Prophets who are the recipients of clear revelation are not all equal in rank, as God Almighty has said:

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ ¹⁰

This means that some Messengers are superior to others. It shows that revelation is pure grace and is not the insignia of rank. Rank depends upon the degree of sincerity and fidelity, which is known only to God. Revelation when accompanied by its blessed conditions is also a fruit of sincerity and fidelity. There is no doubt that if revelation takes the form of question and answer in a proper sequence and is characterised by Divine

¹⁰ Al-Baqarah, 2:254 [Publisher]

majesty and light and comprises hidden matters or true understanding, then it is Divine revelation. For Divine revelation, it is necessary that there should be converse between the servant and his Lord as there is converse between friends when they meet. When the servant asks a question and in reply hears a delicious and eloquent speech from God Almighty, in which there is nothing of his own thinking and reflection and such converse becomes a bounty, then it is Divine speech and such a servant is dear to God. But this degree of revelation, which is a bounty, and is living, pure, clear, and un sullied, is bestowed only upon those who march forward in their faith, sincerity, righteous action, and also in what is simply ineffable. True and holy revelation demonstrates great wonders of the Divine. On many occasions, a brilliant light appears and along with it a majestic and shining revelation is conveyed.

What could be greater than a recipient of revelation conversing with the Being Who is the Creator of heaven and earth? The beholding of God in this world is to converse with God. By this, we do not mean that condition in which some odd word, phrase or verse might flow from the tongue of a person without being accompanied by a direct address. A person who has such an experience is being tried. He casts about like a blind one and does not know the source of the communication whether it is from God or from Satan. Such a one should have recourse to *Istighfār*. But if a good and righteous person begins to receive, Divine communication without obstruction, a bright, delicious communication which is full of wisdom, in majestic terms and in complete wakefulness, and there has passed between him and God Almighty a series of at least ten questions and answers in

the course of which God accepted his prayers a number of times and conveyed to him fine understandings and informed him of coming events, then such a person should be most grateful to God and should be wholly devoted to Him, inasmuch as God has of His pure grace chosen him out of all His servants and has made him heir to the righteous ones who have passed on before him. Such a bounty occurs rarely and is a matter of good fortune. Everything beside it is of no value.

Islām has always produced people of this rank and station. It is Islām alone in which God comes close to a servant and talks to him. He speaks inside him and makes his heart His throne and draws him towards heaven and bestows upon him all the bounties that have been bestowed upon those who have gone before. It is a pity that the blind world does not appreciate how near a person can approach to God. They do not step forward themselves and when some one steps forward he is either dubbed a *Kāfir* or is deified and is put in the place of God.

[Islāmī Uṣūl kī Philosophy, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 10, pp. 437-441]

Revelation Provides Comfort in Distress

It is idle to assert that revelation has no reality and is a vain thing, the harm of which is greater than its benefit. Such an assertion is made only by a person who has never tasted this pure wine and does not desire to have true faith. Such a one is happy with his habits and customs and never seeks to find out to what degree he believes in the Almighty God and how far his understanding extends and what should he do so that his inner weaknesses are removed and a living change takes place in his morals, actions, and designs. He is not eager to

cultivate that love which should make his journey to the other world easy and whereby he should develop the inner quality of making spiritual progress.

Everyone can understand that this heedless life is ever pulling a person downward, with his relationship with wife and children and with the burden of honour and good repute, which are all like heavy stones pressing him downwards. He is in need of a high power, which, by bestowing true sight and true vision upon him, should make him eager to behold the perfect beauty of God Almighty. That high power is **Divine revelation** that provides comfort in distress. It enables a person to take his stand joyously and comfortably under mountains of misfortunes. That Imperceptible Being, Who confounds the reason and wisdom of all philosophers, manifests Himself only through revelation. He comforts the hearts of seekers and bestows contentment upon them and revives the half-dead ones by saying: **I am present**. It is true that the Holy Qur'ān contains all the guidance, but when the Qur'ān leads a person to the fountain of guidance the first indication of it is that he begins to experience converse with the Divine, whereby a revealing understanding of high degree and a visible blessing and light is created and that cognition begins to be acquired which cannot be achieved by blind following or through intellectual theories, for they are all limited, full of doubts, defective, and incomplete. We need to extend our cognition directly, for the greater our cognition the greater will be our eagerness. With a defective cognition, we cannot expect perfect eagerness. It is a matter of surprise how unintelligent those people are who do not consider themselves in need of that perfect means of approaching the truth upon which spiritual life depends.

It should be remembered that spiritual knowledge and spiritual understanding can be acquired only through revelation and visions, and until we achieve that standard of light our humanness cannot acquire any true understanding or true perfection....

Revelation is a Means of Salvation

We have been created for a great purpose, which is the true understanding of God; on that understanding depends our salvation. It delivers us from every impure and doubtful way and leads us to the edge of a pure and clear river. It can be **acquired only through Divine revelation**. When, being delivered entirely from our ego, we dive deep with an eager heart into an unattainable Being, our humanness, having appeared in the court of Godhead, returns with some signs and lights from that world. Thus that which the worldly ones look upon with contempt is the only thing which brings a long-separated one in an instant to his Beloved and bestows comfort upon the lovers of the Divine. It relieves a person suddenly of all types of egoistic limitations; until that true light descends upon the heart, it is not possible that the heart should be illumined. The imperfection of human reason and the limitations of current knowledge bear witness to the need of revelation.

[*Izāla-e-Auhām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 3, pp. 326-329]

OBJECTION. The belief that God sends down His word from heaven is utterly wrong for the law of nature does not confirm it, nor do we ever hear a voice coming down from above. Revelation is the name given to those thoughts which arise in the minds of wise people by the use of reflection and observation, and that is all.

ANSWER: A truth which is well established and has been

observed with their own eyes by numberless men of understanding, and the proof of which can be found in every age by a seeker after truth, suffers no harm by the denial of a person who is bereft of spiritual insight. If the thinking or defective knowledge of a person whose heart is wrapped up in coverings fails to confirm it, the truth cannot be considered as being outside the law of nature. For instance, if a person who is unaware of the power of attraction of a magnet, and has never seen a magnet, were to claim that a magnet is only a piece of stone and that he has never witnessed any such power of attraction in any stone, and therefore it is wrong to assert that a magnet has such a power for this is contrary to the law of nature, then would his assertion cast doubt on the well-established quality of a magnet? Certainly not. All that his assertion would prove would be that he is stupid and ignorant who considers his own lack of knowledge as proof of non-existence of a reality and does not accept the evidence of thousands of people who have experience of it.

It is not possible to hold that every law of nature should be capable of being tested by every individual. God Almighty has created the human species with great diversity in their overt and covert faculties. For instance, some people possess very good sight, others are weak sighted and some are altogether blind. Those who are weak sighted, when they find that those with good sight have perceived a thing from afar—for instance, they have sighted the crescent which they themselves are unable to see—they do not deny it and think that their denial would only expose their weakness. The blind, of course, have nothing to say in such a matter. In the same way, those who possess no sense of smell believe those serious and

truthful people who speak of good smell and ill smell. They do not doubt them for they know that so many people do not tell lies and must be speaking the truth, and that without doubt their own sense of smell is lacking and that is why they are unable to experience any smell.

Men also differ in respect of their covert capacities. The capacities of some are of a low degree and are covered up by veils. Some have from ancient times possessed high and clear souls and have been the recipients of Divine revelation. For the former to deny the personal characteristics of the latter would be the same as if a blind one, or one with weak sight, were to deny the observations of one with excellent sight, or as if a person lacking the sense of smell should deny the experiences of one with a sense of smell.

Then to convince a person who denies the existence of revelation, there are ways like the ways of convincing a person who denies the observations of the overt senses. For instance, if one who is congenitally bereft of the sense of smell should deny the existence of good and foul smell, and should assert that those who claim such a sense are liars or are mistaken, he can be persuaded to admit his mistake in the following manner. He should be asked to select a few pieces of clothing and should rub some with perfume and leave others untouched and thus test the sense of smell of a normal person, so that by repeated experiences he would be convinced of the existence of this sense of smell and that there are to be found people who can distinguish between that which is fragrant and that which has no smell. In the same way, the existence of revelation can be proved to the satisfaction of a seeker after truth through repeated experiments. When hidden matters and secret mysteries which cannot

be discovered through the experience of reason alone are disclosed to a recipient of revelation, and a revealed book is found to contain wonders which are not to be discovered in any other book, a seeker after truth realizes that Divine revelation is an established truth. If such a person possesses a pure soul, he himself, by treading on the right path can, to the extent of the illumination of his heart, have experience of Divine revelation like the *Auliya'*, whereby he acquires a certain knowledge of the revelation vouchsafed to the Messengers of God. For a seeker after truth who would sincerely express a desire to accept Islām, I am prepared to provide this means of satisfaction.

وان كان احدٌ في شكٍّ من قولي فليرجع الينا بصدق القدم
والله على ما نقول قدير وهو في كل امر نصير¹¹

Fine Thought is not to be Confused with Revelation

To imagine that the fine points that are disclosed to people through reflection and observation are revelation, and that revelation is nothing more than this, is an error due to ignorance. Were it true that human thinking constituted Divine revelation then man also could have discovered the unseen by the use of his reflection and observation. It is obvious, that however wise a person may be he cannot disclose anything hidden by merely reflecting on the matter. Nor can he exhibit any sign of Divine power. His speech indicates no sign of God's Power and, however much he might reflect, he cannot discover the unseen which is beyond his reason and

¹¹ If any one should doubt my word, let him come to me with sincerity. Allāh has the power to do what I say and He is the Helper in every matter. [Publisher]

observation and his other senses. Nor is his speech or composition of such a high degree that no one can compete with him. Thus, there are enough reasons for a wise person to conclude that whatever a man might think in consequence of his own reflection, or observation, cannot be the Word of God. Had it been the Word of God, a person would have had access to all that is unseen and would have been able to expound those matters the exposition of which depends upon Divine power, inasmuch as it is necessary that the Work of God and the Word of God should disclose Divine manifestations.

The Distinction between Creation and Command

It may be asked from whom and wherefrom proceed the good and bad designs that arise in one's mind as the result of reflection and observation? The answer is that such thoughts are the creation of Allāh and not His command. There is a difference between creation and command. By creation is meant that God Almighty produces something through physical means and attributes it to Himself because He is the Cause of causes. Command is that which proceeds directly from God Almighty without the intervention of any means. Revelation, which descends from God, proceeds from the world of command and not from the world of creation.

Thoughts that arise in peoples' minds in consequence of observation and reflection all proceed from the world of creation in which the Divine power operates behind the veil of means. God has created men in the world of means equipped with diverse types of powers and faculties and has invested them with the characteristic that when they employ their reflection in a good or bad matter their minds alight upon appropriate plans. As it is

part of the law of nature that when a person opens his eyes he can see something and when he directs his ear towards sound he can hear something; in the same way when he reflects on the way of success in a good or bad design, some plan arises in his mind. A good man by reflecting upon good designs, thinks of good things, and a thief, by reflecting upon the various ways of robbery, invents a plan to commit robbery. Just as a man can think of deep and devious evil designs, in the same way when he uses his faculty in a good way, he can think of good designs. As his bad thoughts, however deep and effective they may be, cannot be held to be revelation, in the same way his thoughts which he deems to be good are not revelation. In short, whatever good thoughts occur to good people and whatever bad thoughts or designs arise in the minds of thieves and robbers and murderers and adulterers and forgers as the result of reflection and observation are all the result of the exercise of natural qualities, and because God is the Cause of causes, they are called the creation of God and not His command. They are the natural qualities of man as in the case of some vegetables the quality of purgation or the quality of constipation and other qualities are natural to them. As God has invested other things with different types of qualities, He has invested man's power of reflection with the quality that it helps man whenever he requires its help in a good or bad design. A poet who seeks to lampoon anyone finds his mind working in that direction and he is able to produce such poetry. Another poet seeks to praise the same person and commendatory verses come to his mind. This kind of good or bad thought is not the mirror of the Divine will and cannot be called His word. God's holy word is the word which is far above

human faculties and is full of perfection and power and holiness. The very first condition of its manifestation is that human faculties should be entirely suspended and rendered useless. There should be neither reflection nor observation and the person concerned should be dead like a corpse. All means should be cut off and God Almighty, Whose being alone is actual and real, should cause His word to descend upon the heart of someone by His special design.

It should be understood that as the light of the sun comes only from heaven and cannot be produced inside the eye, in the same way the light of revelation descends from God and by His design and does not arise from inside a person. As God truly exists and sees, hears, knows and speaks, His word should descend from Him and should not be the product of man's mind. From our minds arise the same thoughts, good or bad, which dwell within us according to our nature, but God's limitless knowledge and boundless wisdom cannot dwell in our hearts. What greater denial of God could there be than for a man to think that all the Divine treasures of knowledge and wisdom and hidden mysteries are present in our hearts and surge up in them. This would mean that we ourselves are God and that there is no Being outside of us Who is Self-Existing and possesses Divine attributes, Who should be called God. For if God truly exists and His unlimited knowledge is special to Him, of which our hearts cannot be the measure, then utterly wrong and senseless would be the observation that God's limitless knowledge fills our hearts and all the treasures of His wisdom dwell therein as if God's knowledge is limited to that which is contained in our hearts. This would amount to a claim of Godhead itself, but is it possible that the

heart of man should comprehend all the excellencies of the Divine? Is it permissible that a particle should become the sun? Certainly not.

We have already stated that the characteristics of the Divine, like His knowledge of the unseen and His comprehension of wisdom and other natural signs, cannot be manifested by man. God's word should be characterised by God's Greatness, God's Power, God's Blessing, God's Wisdom and God's Peerlessness. All these characteristics are found in the Holy Qur'ān, the proof of which we shall set forth at its proper place.

If those of Brahmū Samāj still persist in denying the existence of revelation, which comprehends the unseen and other proofs of power, they should study the Holy Qur'ān with full attention, so that they should come to know that in this Holy Word surges a whole ocean of matters that are unseen and manifestations of power which are beyond the strength of man. If they should be unable, through lack of insight, to discover these Qur'ānic excellencies themselves, they should read this book of ours with attention so that they might discover as a sample some of the treasures of hidden matters and powerful mysteries of which the Holy Qur'ān is full.

They should also know that as proof of the existence of Divine revelation that descends from God and comprehends hidden matters, there is another way that is open and that is that God Almighty always creates from among the Muslims, who base themselves upon the true faith, such people who receive revelation from God and disclose such hidden matters the disclosure of which is not within the power of any one except of God, the One, without associate. God Almighty bestows this holy revelation only on those of the faithful who truly believe

in the Holy Qur'ān as the Word of God and act upon it with full sincerity and who believe in Muḥammad, the chosen one (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) as the true and perfect Prophet, who is better and higher and more exalted than all the Prophets and is *Khātam-ul-Rusul*, and accept him as their guide. Such revelation is not vouchsafed to the Jews and Christians and Āryās and Brahmūs, but has always been vouchsafed to the perfect followers of the Holy Qur'ān and is now vouchsafed to them and will continue to be vouchsafed to them. Though the prophetic revelation has been cut off as no longer needed, the revelation that is vouchsafed to the sincere servants of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) will never be cut off. This revelation is a grand proof of the revelation which is special to Messengership and humiliates every opponent of Islām. As this blessed revelation with all its blessing and honour and greatness and glory is vouchsafed only to those honourable servants who are included among the Muslims and are the servants of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), the followers of all other sects are deprived of this perfect light which carries the good news of nearness to God and of acceptance by Him and of His pleasure. Thus this holy revelation not only proves its own existence, but also proves that the Muslims alone are the people who are acceptable to God and who base themselves on the true faith, that all other people worship falsehood and are misguided and are under the wrath of God. Ignorant people will say all sorts of things on hearing this and will shake their heads in denial or will ridicule me like foolish and wicked persons. They should know, however, that denial and ridicule are not the way of those who possess nobility and are seekers after truth, but

are the way of those wicked people who have nothing to do with God and truth.

There are thousands of things in the world which possess qualities that cannot be understood by reason and are known only by experience. It is, therefore, the way of the wise that when some quality of a thing is manifested repeatedly by experience they no longer doubt its existence. He who persists in denial after repeated experience is an absolute fool. For instance, rhubarb is a cathartic and a magnet has the power of attraction and though there is no reason why they should possess these qualities, yet when repeated experience manifests that they have these qualities every reasonable person has to admit that rhubarb is a cathartic and a magnet has the power to attract. If anyone should deny this on the ground that there is no reason for it, such a one would be condemned as mad or insane. So we submit to the Brahmūs and other opponents that whatever we have stated concerning revelation, namely, that it is even now the experience of perfect individuals among the Muslims and is confined to them and is not to be found in any others, is not without proof, but can be demonstrated to every seeker through test and experience like thousands of other truths which are being discovered by these means. If anyone should be truly a seeker after truth, we undertake to demonstrate this to him provided he should make a sincere promise in writing that, in case of proof, he would accept Islām and should then turn to us with sincerity and in good faith.

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَمَا لَكُمْ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ¹²

¹² 'But if they turn away, then remember that Allāh knows the mischief-makers well.'—Āl-e-‘Imrān, 3:64 [Publisher]

Revelation and Psychic Phenomena

Some people put forward the objection that there are many groups like astrologers, soothsayers, physicians, and palmists, who claim to reveal the unseen. Sometimes they foretell things, some of which come to pass, and that more recently some people have been able to reveal hidden matters through mesmerism. Then how could the revealing of the unseen be conclusive proof of the Divine origin of revelation?

The answer is that all these groups speak from conjecture, guesswork, and indeed from superstition; they possess no certain knowledge nor do they claim to have certain knowledge. Their so-called prophecies are based upon signs and doubtful indications which have no relationship with certainty and which are not above suspicion and error. Very often, their predictions are proved baseless and false, on account of which those predictions lack all honour and acceptance and helpfulness and success. Those who indulge in those predictions are generally poverty-stricken and unfortunate, are held in no honour, and are coward, mean, unsuccessful and without any merit. They cannot convert the unseen to come into accord with their predictions and in their own circumstances they exhibit the signs of Divine wrath and they possess no blessing or honour or help from the Divine. But the Prophets and *Auliyā'* do not merely disclose the unseen like the astrologers, but with the grace and mercy of God, which always accompany them, they make such prophecies in which the lights of acceptance and honour shine like the sun and which consist of the good news of honour and Divine help, and not that of misfortune and adversity.

Consider the prophecies of the Holy Qur'ān and you will find that they are not like the predictions of the astrologers or others but are full of majesty and glory. All those prophecies are characterised by declaring the honour of the recipients and the disgrace of their enemies, their glory and the humiliation of their enemies, their success and the failure of their enemies, their victory and the defeat of their enemies, and their prosperity and the ruin of their enemies. Can any astrologer or soothsayer or mesmerizer put forth such prophecies? Certainly not. Always to proclaim one's own good, and the decline of the opponent and to refute whatever the opponent says and to promise the fulfilment of that which is in one's favour, can only be from God and cannot be the doing of man.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 232-242, footnote 11]

Man's Knowledge of the Universe is Defective

Though man has been trying strenuously for thousands of years to discover God's powers through natural sciences and mathematics, yet his knowledge is so defective that he can only be described as hopeless and unsuccessful in his search. Hundreds of hidden mysteries are disclosed to those to whom visions and revelation are vouchsafed and they are borne witness to by thousands of the righteous; but the philosophers continue to deny them. The philosophers base all thinking and reflection on the brain, but those who have experience of visions have discovered through their spiritual experiences that the fountainhead of reason and understanding is the heart. For thirty five years, I have observed that revelation which is the source of spiritual understanding and of the knowledge of the unseen descends upon the heart. Very often a voice strikes the heart with force, as a bucket is thrown with

force into a well full of water, and that water of the heart surges up like a closed blossom and arriving near the brain blooms like a flower and gives birth to words which are words of the Divine. These spiritual experiences establish that the brain is not concerned with knowledge and true understanding. It is true that if the brain is healthy and suffers from no defect it is benefited by the secret knowledge possessed by the heart, and as the brain is the centre of the nervous system it is like a machine which can pump up water from the well. The heart is the well which is the fountainhead of hidden knowledge. This is a secret that has been discovered by men of truth through true visions and I myself have experience of it.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 282-283]

I have been honoured with Divine converse for nearly eleven years and I know well that revelation descends from heaven. If one were to illustrate revelation by reference to some worldly object one could perhaps compare it with the telegraph which itself discloses every change that occurs in it. **My experience is that at the time of descent of revelation, which is vouchsafed to me as the revelation of the *Auliya'*, I feel that I am under the control of an external force that is very effective. Sometimes this control is so strong and envelops me so forcefully in its light that I find myself drawn to it compulsively and no faculty of mine can stand up to it. In this condition, I hear clear and bright words. I sometimes see angels and observe the power and awe of truth. The words that are conveyed to me often comprehend matters that are unseen and there is such extraordinary control and seizure which is proof of the existence of God Almighty. To deny this would amount to murdering a self-evident truth.**

[Barakāt-ud-Du'ā, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 6, p. 26]

I call God to witness that it is the truth that revelation falls upon the heart from heaven as rays of the sun fall upon a wall. It is my daily experience that when the word of God is about to descend on me then in the first stage I feel a sort of helplessness and experience a change and, though my senses are in a manner working, I find that a powerful force has taken my whole being in its grip and I feel that all the arteries of my being are in the control of that force and all that is mine is no longer mine but belongs to it. When I am in that condition first of all God Almighty presents those of my thoughts to me on which He intends to cast a ray of His words. Those thoughts come before me one after the other in a strange guise, and it so happens that when a thought passes through my mind—for instance, whether a certain person will recover from his illness or not—then suddenly a Divine phrase falls like a ray and often with its falling the whole of my body is shaken. Then this is succeeded by another thought and as soon as it appears a piece of revelation falls upon it like an archer shooting an arrow on every quarry that appears before him. Just at that time, it is felt that this chain of thoughts is generated by our natural capacity and that the words that fall upon it descend from above.

Although poets and thinkers, etc., also receive suggestions on reflection, there is no relationship between revelation and such suggestion, for that suggestion is a consequence of thinking and reflection and is received within the limits of humanness in the full possession of one's senses. But revelation is received when the recipient comes under the full control of God Almighty with all his being, and his own senses and reflection do not intervene in any way. It appears as if one's tongue is not

one's own and is being used by some other strong power. This should make clear the distinction between natural capacity and that which descends from heaven.

[Barakāt-ud-Du'ā, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 6, pp. 22-23, footnote]

How Revelation is Received

The slight slumber that overtakes one at the time when the word of God descends upon the heart is completely outside material causes and all physical causes are suspended at the time. When a righteous person, who has true relationship of love and fidelity with God Almighty, submits a supplication to God in the upsurge of that relationship, he is suddenly overtaken by a slight slumber while he is still occupied with his supplication and he seems to wake up and finds the answer to his supplication, couched in eloquent words, being conveyed to him behind the veil of that slumber. Those words possess a majesty and a quality of delight, and Divine power is felt shining through them. They penetrate the heart like an iron nail and often contain knowledge of the hidden matters. It often happens that when that righteous person seeks to submit something more with regard to his first supplication, or submits a fresh supplication, he is again overtaken by a slumber which disappears within less than a second and from it emerge holy words, as the kernel emerges from the shell, which are delicious and full of majesty. In this manner God, Who is Gracious and Merciful and full of kindness, responds to every question and does not manifest any contempt or disgust. If a supplication is made sixty or seventy or a hundred times a response is received in the same manner. That is to say, that at the time of each supplication a slight slumber overtakes the recipient of revelation. On occasion, this

faintness or slumber is heavy as if the person had fallen into a swoon. Such revelation is vouchsafed on very important matters and is the highest type of revelation.

The slumber that overtakes a recipient of revelation at the time of his supplication and prayer behind the veil of which Divine revelation is received, is above any physical causes. Whatever the physicists regard as the law of nature concerning dreams breaks down in this instance. There are hundreds of spiritual matters which refute the thinking of philosophers. Very often a person sees in a vision objects that are thousands of miles away and appear as if they were close to the eye, and often a person can meet and converse in complete wakefulness with the souls of those who have passed away.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 111-112]

Various Forms of Revelation

First Form: Out of several forms of revelation which God has disclosed to me, one is that when God Almighty desires to disclose some hidden matter to His servant He causes to flow from his tongue some phrases in a slight slumber, sometimes gently and sometimes harshly. Those phrases that flow harshly from the tongue fall upon the tongue as hardly as hail falls suddenly upon a hard piece of ground, or as the hooves of a fast running steed strike the earth. Such a revelation arrives with speed and is so awe-inspiring that the whole body is affected thereby and the tongue runs with it so fast and in such a majestic voice as if it is not one's own tongue. The slight slumber disappears altogether when the revelation is completed and during the time that it is received one lies motionless like a corpse. Such revelation is received when God Almighty out of His wisdom

decides not to accept a supplication or decides to postpone its acceptance or wishes to convey something which would lie heavy on the recipient. For instance, when a person seeks to acquire something quickly and such acquisition is not in accord with the Divine will or has to be postponed. I have been the recipient of such revelations on occasion, which it would take too long to describe in detail, but I will set down one instance.

About three years ago, I prayed that people might be disposed to help in the publication of this book whereupon I received this type of revelation in hard words:

‘Not yet.’

When I received this revelation I informed a number of Hindūs and Muslims of it, who are still alive and they also witnessed thereafter the lack of attention of people to this book.

As regards the other type of revelation, in which phrases flow from the tongue with gentleness, it would be enough to state that when some time had passed after the revelation just mentioned, and I was beset with difficulties, then one day I received a revelation from the Gracious Lord:

هُرِّ إِلَيْكَ بِجِدْعِ النَّخْلَةِ تَسَاقِطُ عَلَيْكَ رُطَبًا جَنِينًا¹³

From this I understood that this was an indication that I should invite people’s help and that there was a promise that through such effort I would be able to collect enough money to defray the expenses of the publication of that part of the book. I informed several Hindūs and Muslims

¹³ ‘Take hold of the branch of the palm-tree and shake it; it will shed fresh ripe dates upon thee. [Publisher]

of this revelation also and I also informed Ḥāfiẓ Hidāyat ‘Alī Khān, Extra Assistant Commissioner, who had arrived in Qādiān the same day or the following day. I also informed Maulavī Muḥammad Ḥusain of Batāla. In short, after the receipt of this revelation, according to the Divine command, I made some effort towards inviting assistance and thereafter I received from Lahore, Peshāwar, Rāwalpindī, Malīrkotla and a few other places enough assistance to meet the expenses of the publication of that part. *All praise is due to Allāh for this.*

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā’in, vol. 1, pp. 248-251 sub-footnote 1]

The second form of revelation, which on account of its many wonders I call perfect revelation, is that when God Almighty desires to inform a servant of a hidden matter after his supplication or on His own, He imposes a faintness upon him, whereby he becomes completely free from his self and sinks in that faintness like a person who dives in deep water and disappears in it; then when he emerges from this diving he feels a sort of echo inside himself, and when that echo ceases he feels from inside himself words that are appropriate and fine and delicious. This diving in the faintness is a wonderful experience, which cannot be adequately described in words. In this condition, a whole ocean of understanding is opened for a person. When repeatedly he has this experience of diving that is imposed upon him by God Almighty and he receives a response to every supplication in fine and delicious words, and in each instance God discloses to him verities which it is beyond human power to disclose, he thereby achieves the fullness of understanding and cognition. Man’s supplication and God’s response to it through the manifestation of His Godhead is an experience as if the supplicant beholds God in this very world

and immediately both worlds appear equal to him. When at the time of need a servant makes repeated supplication to his Lord and receives a response, as one human being receives from another, and that response is couched in fine eloquent words, sometimes in a language of which he is completely ignorant, and comprises hidden matters which are beyond the power of creatures, and sometimes conveys the good news of great bounties or of high ranks or of nearness to God, and sometimes comprehends prophecies with regard to worldly blessings, then by the hearing of these fine and eloquent phrases which are far above human power, he acquires a degree of understanding which is appreciated only by him upon whom this bounty is bestowed. In truth, such a one recognizes God as one recognizes a firm and old friend. Such revelation often relates to grand affairs. It sometimes contains words the meanings of which have to be sought for in a dictionary. Sometimes I have received such a revelation in an alien language like English or some other with which I am totally unacquainted.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 260-264 sub-footnote 1]

The third form of revelation is communicated to one's heart in a gentle manner. A phrase passes through the heart which does not comprehend all the wonders in perfection that are a characteristic of the revelation that we have just described. It is not necessarily preceded by any faintness or slumber. It can be received in complete wakefulness. It is felt as if someone has breathed those words into the heart or has thrown them at the heart. One might be partially awake or might be completely awake and one suddenly feels that new words have entered one's breast. Sometimes, immediately on entering the heart, the words manifest their forceful light and one

becomes aware that these words are being conveyed by God. The revelation conveys comfort, satisfaction and contentment to the heart as the air that one breathes conveys comfort to the heart and limbs. A disturbed mind feels its joy and coolness. This is a mystery of which the common people are unaware but men of understanding who have been bestowed experience of Divine mysteries by the Bountiful Lord understand it well. I have experienced such revelation on many occasions.

The **fourth form** of revelation is that some matter is disclosed by God Almighty in a true dream, or an angel assuming human shape discloses a hidden matter, or a writing appears on a piece of paper or on a stone, etc., which discloses hidden mysteries, or other similar experiences.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 273-274 sub-footnote I]

The **fifth form** of revelation is that which has nothing to do with man's heart. One hears a voice from outside as if someone were speaking from behind a curtain, but the voice is very delicious and cheerful and is conveyed with some speed and the heart derives pleasure from it. One's mind is deep in thought and suddenly this voice is heard and one is surprised where it has proceeded from and who is addressing one. One looks for someone from whom the voice could have proceeded and then one realizes that it has come from an angel. It generally conveys some good news when one is anxious and sorrowful or is gripped by fear on hearing some bad news which turns out to have been false. Unlike the second form, such revelation is not the consequence of repeated supplications. An angel speaks suddenly when God Almighty so desires, contrary to the second type of

revelation when a response is received from God Almighty to repeated supplications; a hundred supplications receive a hundred replies from the Absolute Benefactor as has been my own experience.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 287-288 sub-footnote I]

I have several times seen Jesus (peace be on him) in a vision and have also met some of the Prophets in complete wakefulness. I have also seen and conversed many times with our lord and master Muḥammad, the chosen one (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) in complete wakefulness, which was entirely free from slumber or absent-mindedness. I have also met other deceased people at their graves or on other occasions and have talked to them in complete wakefulness. I therefore know well that such a meeting with deceased people in complete wakefulness, and talking to them and shaking hands with them, is quite possible. There is no difference whatsoever between this wakefulness and normal wakefulness. One feels that one is in this world with the same ears and eyes and tongue and yet one feels as if one were in another world. People of the world are not aware of such wakefulness for they are heedless and this wakefulness is bestowed from heaven. It is bestowed upon those who are granted new senses. This is true and is a fact.

[Masīḥ Hindustān Mein, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 15, pp. 36-37]

The Ability to Receive Revelation

Capacity and ability are needed for the receipt of revelation. Not everyone can become God's Prophet and be the recipient of Divine revelation. Allāh the Exalted has given an indication of this in the Holy Qur'ān, as follows:

وَرَادَاجَاءَهُمْ آيَةٌ قَالُوا كُنْ نُؤْمِنُ بِحَتَّى نُؤْتَى فِي مِثْلِ مَا آتَى
 دُؤْمِلُ اللّٰهُ آتَىٰ آتَىٰ حَتَّىٰ يَجْعَلَ رِسَالَتَهُ¹⁴

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This means that when a sign is shown in order to demonstrate the truth of the Holy Qur'ān, they say: We will never believe until we ourselves receive the Divine Book. God knows best where and when to confer Prophethood, that is, He knows who is able and who is not able to receive revelation. He bestows the grace of revelation only upon him who possesses the requisite ability and capacity.

The Wise Creator has created men of different types for various reasons and the whole body of mankind resembles a line one end of which is situated at a great height and the other end is very low. At the high end are the pure souls whose capacities are perfect and at the low end are those who are close to animals and in the middle are those of various degrees. This diversity of capacities is confirmed by observation for no reasonable person can deny that human beings are at different stages of understanding, of righteousness, of fear of God and of Divine love. As one is born handsome and another is born plain, one is born with good sight and another is born blind or with weak sight, one is born normal and another is born defective, in the same way the diversity of intellectual and spiritual faculties is also patent and visible. It is true that every individual, provided he is not insane, can make progress in his reason, his righteousness and his love of the Divine, but it should be borne in mind that no one can grow beyond the limit of his capacity.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 181-182 footnote 11]

¹⁴ Al-An'ām, 6:125 [Publisher]

Man Possesses a Diversity of Intelligence

Human nature is like minerals of diverse types; some are **bright and clear like silver**, some are evil-smelling and inflammable like sulphur, some are restless like mercury and some are hard like iron. This diversity is obvious and is in accord with the Divine dispensation. It is not opposed to the law of nature and contributes towards social peace and adjustment. It is obvious that if all natures had been at the same level of capacity, different types of work which call for different grades of capacities and which are essential for the adjustment of social conditions would have been left incomplete and in suspense. For hard work hard natures are appropriate, and for delicate work those natures are suited which are delicate. The Greek philosophers have expressed the view that, as some men are close to animals, reason demands that the nature of some should be fine and clear so that as we observe that some natures descend so low as to approximate to animals, equally some should be capable of rising so high that they should establish a relationship with the higher world.

Now that it is established that individual human beings possess diversity of intelligence, moral qualities and the light of the heart, that is proof that Divine revelation is confined to certain individuals **who are perfect** in every respect. Every reasonable person comprehends that each soul receives Divine light according to its capacity and its ability and no more. The **sun** is a good illustration of this principle. Its rays are shed in every direction but not all places receive its light equally. A room the doors of which are closed receives no light, and that which has a small ventilator in the direction of the sun receives some light, but not enough to dispel the darkness completely.

But a room of which all doors are open and whose walls are built of clear and **transparent glass** will not only receive the full light of the sun but will also spread it in all directions and convey it to others. The same is the case with the pure souls of the Prophets. The holy souls that God Almighty chooses for His Messengership are like a crystal palace which has no opaqueness and no screen to obstruct the light. It is, therefore, clear that those individuals who do not possess perfection cannot achieve the rank of Divine Messengers. This rank is bestowed upon those whose holy souls are entirely free of darkening veils and of physical coverings and whose transcendent holiness is beyond imagination. **Such perfect souls** are the means of guidance for mankind. As the bounty of life is conveyed to all the limbs by the heart, the All-Wise has appointed the bounty of guidance through such souls for they are bestowed the perfect relationship that ought to subsist between the Source of grace and the recipient of grace. It is not possible that God Almighty, Who is absolutely Unique and Transcendent, should bestow the grace of His holy revelation upon people the greater part of whose nature is dark and opaque, and is narrow and constricted, and whose mean natures are involved in low impurities. If we do not deceive ourselves we would have to confess that to establish a perfect relationship with the Eternal Source and to enjoy converse with His Great Holiness, a special ability and brightness is needed which is appropriate to this great rank and dignity. Not every person can attain to it who is in a state of loss and lacks merit and is covered up in dark coverings and possesses a low nature and lacks high courage.

No one should be deceived by the fact that according to

the **Christians**, holiness and transcendence and innocence and perfect love for the Divine are not essential for **the Prophets who are the recipients of Divine revelation**. They have lost the true principles and have sacrificed all verities to the notion that somehow Jesus might be deified and the atonement might be accepted. As the innocence and holiness of the Prophets demolishes this structure of theirs, they have been compelled to have recourse to one falsehood in order to support another falsehood. Having lost one eye they have had to gouge out the other. They loved falsehood and abandoned the truth. They insulted the Prophets and represented the pure ones as impure and they proclaimed as opaque and impure **the hearts on which Divine revelation descended** so that the greatness of their fictitious god should not be diminished and the doctrine of atonement should not be doubted. In this selfish attitude they forgot that their doctrine not only defames the Prophets but also puts in doubt the holiness of God, for how can He be holy who **established relationship and held converse with the impure**.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 188-190 footnote 11]

A Recipient of Grace Must have a Close Relationship with the Almighty

The philosophy of the descent of the light of revelation is that it descends upon light and does not descend upon darkness, for grace demands a relationship and there is no relationship between darkness and light. Light has relationship with light and the All-Wise operates only in circumstances of appropriateness. In bestowing the grace of light the law is that greater light is bestowed upon one who possesses some light and nothing is bestowed upon one who has nothing. He who possesses the light of eyes

perceives the light of the sun, but he who has not the light of eyes is deprived of the light of the sun also. He who has a small share of natural light receives a little other light and he who has much natural light receives more other light.

The Prophets are those high personages who, despite the vast diversity in human nature, are so blessed with inner light that they become light personified. That is why the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has been named light and a light-giving sun, as is said:

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ¹⁵

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وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا¹⁶

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This is the reason that the light of revelation, for which the perfection and grandeur of natural light is a condition, was bestowed only upon the Prophets and has been confined to them. This refutes those people who, though they admit the diversity of ranks, nevertheless imagine out of their ignorance that the light that is bestowed upon those who possess perfect natures can also be bestowed upon defective individuals. They should reflect honestly and should realize their mistake. They see clearly that God's law of nature does not support their false notion and yet out of bigotry and enmity they adhere to their false notion. In the same way, the Christians do not consider it a condition for the grace of light to descend

¹⁵ 'There has come to you indeed from Allāh a Light and a clear Book.'—Al-Mā'idah, 5:16 [Publisher]

¹⁶ '...and as a Summoner unto Allāh by His command, and as a Lamp that gives bright light.'—Al-Aḥzāb, 33:47 [Publisher]

upon anyone that he should possess a natural light, and they allege that it is not necessary that a heart upon which the light of revelation descends should possess inner light. According to them, if a person instead of possessing sane reason is utterly stupid and ignorant, and instead of being brave is an utter coward, and instead of being generous is a total miser, and instead of possessing a sense of honour is utterly shameless, and instead of loving God is in deep love with the world, and instead of being pious and trustworthy is a thief and a robber, and instead of being modest and innocent is a debauch, and instead of being contented is utterly greedy, even such a one can be a Prophet and elect of God. Indeed, with the single exception of Jesus, all the other Prophets whom they accept as true and whose Books they describe as holy were, according to them, full of such defects and were bereft of holy perfection which is a condition of innocence and purity of heart. What a philosophy have the Christians adopted with regard to the descent of the light of Divine revelation! But such a philosophy is approved and followed only by people who are caught in deep darkness and inner blindness. Otherwise, even a feeble-minded person would not deny the obvious truth that to receive the grace of light it is necessary that the recipient should possess inner light.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 195-197 footnote 11]

It is a pity that most people regard as God's word everything that flows from their tongues in a state of slumber, and thus contravene the verse:

لَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ¹⁷

¹⁷ '... Follow not that of which thou hast no knowledge.'—Bani Isrā'il, 17:37 [Publisher]

It should be borne in mind that anything that flows from the tongue, even if it is not opposed to the Word of God and the word of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), is not the word of God unless the action of God Almighty bears witness to it. Satan, who is man's enemy and who seeks diverse ways of ruining a person, also adopts the method that he puts his words into the heart of a man and assures him that they are words of God and such a person is destroyed in the end.

Three Hallmarks of Divine Revelation

If someone claims to receive revelation, to call it divine would amount to committing spiritual death, unless and until it fulfills three conditions:

First, it should not be opposed to the Holy Qur'ān; but this alone is not enough. Unless the third condition which will be mentioned below is present, nothing can be established.

Secondly, those words should descend upon a person whose soul has been completely purified. He should be one of those who have withdrawn entirely from their passions and who have submitted to a death through which they have approached close to God and have withdrawn far away from Satan. A person hears him to whom he is close. He who is close to Satan hears Satan's voice and he who is close to God hears God's voice. One's utmost effort should be for the **purification of one's soul**. All search ends with that. In other words, it is a death that burns up all inner impurities. When a person completes his search then a stage arrives when he passes under the control of the Divine. Thus through **understanding** and love **God revives His servant** who, by discarding his passions, has arrived at the stage of death. Then

through His extraordinary signs God **reveals to him spiritual wonders** and fills his heart with the attraction of personal love which the world cannot understand. In this condition, it can be said of him that he has been bestowed new life after which there is no death.

This new life is won through complete understanding and complete love. Complete understanding is acquired through God's eternal signs. When a person arrives at this stage, he enjoys true converse with God. This condition is also not enough without the third condition, for perfect purity is a hidden matter and any idle talker could claim to have achieved it.

The third condition of a true recipient of revelation is that God's action should testify to the words that he attributes to God, that is to say, so many signs should appear in its support that sane reason should reject the suggestion that despite so many signs it is not the word of God. This condition is above all other conditions....

It is such a **perfect condition** that no one can reject it. This is the condition through which true Prophets of God have always overcome false people. When a person claims that God's word descends on him and hundreds of signs appear along with it, and a thousand types of support and Divine help are displayed and God attacks his enemies openly, then who can call such a person false?.... Those who enjoy the honour of converse with God and are appointed to call men to Divine guidance are supported by Divine signs which fall like rain and the world cannot oppose them. Divine action bears repeated witness that the words that they put forward are Divine words. If those who claim to be recipients of revelation were to keep this condition in mind, they would escape falling

into error.

[Ḥaḳīqat-ul-Wahī, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 22, pp. 534-538]

Satanic Revelation is a Reality

Satanic revelation is a reality which is experienced by some imperfect seekers. There is also self-suggestion, which may be described as confused dreams. He who denies this opposes the Holy Qur'ān which affirms that satanic revelation is a fact. God Almighty says that so long as a person's purification of soul is not complete and perfected he can be the recipient of satanic revelation and can fall within the purview of the verse:

عَلَىٰ كُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ¹⁸

But the pure ones are immediately warned of a satanic approach. It is a pity that some Christian ministers have gone so far in their writings as to suggest that when Satan took Jesus to a hillock, this was not an external event which could have been witnessed by others and by the Jews and that three times Jesus received satanic revelation which he did not accept. We tremble at hearing this biblical commentary that Jesus should have been subject to satanic revelation.... No satanic thought can take possession of a pure heart. If such a stray thought should ever come across their mind, it is quickly rejected and their heart is not stained thereby. In the Holy Qur'ān such a stray thought is named *tā'if*. It has very little relation with the heart and is like the shadow of a far away tree. It is possible that Satan the accursed desired to create in the heart of Jesus some slight doubt of this type and he

¹⁸ '(They descend) on every great liar and sinner.'—Al-Shu'arā', 26:223 [Publisher]

rejected it immediately through his prophetic power.... We can affirm that through his prophetic power, and through the light of truth that he possessed, Jesus did not permit the satanic revelation to approach him and immediately occupied himself with its rejection, and as darkness cannot withstand light, Satan was not able to withstand him and ran away. This is the true meaning of:

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ¹⁹

Satan has authority only on those who accept satanic suggestions and satanic revelation. But those who shoot the arrow of light at Satan and wound him from afar and refute him and do not follow him in whatever he might say, are exempt from his authority. But as God Almighty desires to show them the kingdom of the heaven and earth and Satan is a part of the kingdom of earth, it is necessary that in order to complete their observation of the creation they should see the face of this curious creature and should hear his word. The garment of their transcendence and innocence is not stained thereby in the least. Satan had, mischievously, according to his ancient way, made a request to Jesus which his pure nature immediately rejected and did not accept. This was not at all derogatory of Jesus. Do not the wicked sometimes speak in the presence of kings? In the same way, Satan spiritually injected his word into the heart of Jesus, but Jesus did not accept it and rejected it immediately. This was a commendable act and to criticize it would amount to foolishness and ignorance of the spiritual philosophy. It is not for every pious person and Sūfī to reject a satanic suggestion and to demonstrate its impurity as did

¹⁹ 'Surely thou shalt have no power over My servants.'—Al-Hijr, 15:43 [Publisher]

Jesus with the whip of his light. Sayyed ‘Abd-ul-Qādir Jīlānī (May Allāh be pleased with him) has stated that on one occasion he received a satanic revelation. Satan said to him: "‘Abd-ul-Qādir, thy worship has been accepted and now all that is forbidden to others is permitted to thee and thou art relieved of the obligation of performing *Ṣalāt*." ‘Abd-ul-Qādir said to him: "Avaunt Satan; how can that be permitted to me which was not permitted to the Holy Prophet, peace be on him?" Then Satan disappeared with his golden throne. If a man of God and unique individual like ‘Abd-ul-Qādir received satanic revelation, how can the common people, who have not yet completed their search, escape it? They have not the eyes of light wherewith they can recognize satanic revelation, as did Sayyed ‘Abd-ul-Qādir and Jesus (peace be on him). Those soothsayers who abounded in Arabia before the advent of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) received plenty of satanic revelation, and sometimes on the basis of it they made prophecies and the wonder is that some of their prophecies were fulfilled. Islāmic literature is full of these stories. He who denies the possibility of satanic revelation rejects the teachings of the Prophets (peace be on them), and denies the whole system of Prophethood. The Bible has recorded that on one occasion four hundred prophets received a satanic revelation which was the work of a white *jinn* and on the basis of that revelation they prophesied the victory of a king, but that king was killed in great humiliation in battle and suffered a great defeat. A Prophet who had received his revelation from Gabriel had prophesied that the king would be killed and dogs would eat his body and he would suffer a great defeat. This was fulfilled and the falsehood of the

prophecy of four hundred prophets was demonstrated.

Naturally a question arises that if satanic revelation is so common then all revelation becomes doubtful, especially as an exalted Prophet like Jesus also had such experience. Revelation thus becomes a great trial. The answer is that there is no reason to be disheartened. It is part of Divine law that everything valuable has attached to it some things that are false. Genuine pearls come out of the ocean, but there are also false pearls which people manufacture themselves. Commerce in genuine pearls cannot be stopped because false pearls are also available. A jeweller upon whom God Almighty bestows insight recognizes at once which pearl is real and which is false. The Imām of the age is the jeweller of the jewels of revelation. He who keeps company with him can easily distinguish between the real and the false. O ye Şūfis! And O ye victims of alchemy! step warily in here and remember that true revelation which comes from God Almighty possesses the following characteristics:

Characteristics Of True Revelation

1. It is received at a time when the heart of the recipient, being melted through its ache for truth, flows towards God Almighty like clear water. This is indicated in the *Hadīth* that the Holy Qur'ān was revealed in sorrow and should be studied with a sorrowful heart.
2. True revelation is accompanied by delight and conveys certainty in an unknown manner and penetrates into the heart like an iron nail. Its words are eloquent and free from error.
3. True revelation possesses a certain majesty and strikes the heart with power and descends upon it with force and an awesome voice. False revelation is conveyed in

a low voice like the voice of thieves and eunuchs and women inasmuch as Satan is a thief and a eunuch and a woman.

4. True revelation is charged with the power of God Almighty and contains prophecies which are fulfilled.
5. True revelation fosters the recipient's goodness and purifies him of inner impurities and improves his moral condition.
6. True revelation is borne witness to by all the inner powers of the recipient and it sheds a new and pure light on all his faculties and he perceives a change in himself. His previous life comes to an end and a new life begins for him and he becomes a source of sympathy for mankind.
7. True revelation does not finish with only one phrase for God's voice has a continuation. He is very Gentle and He talks to him towards whom He is inclined and answers his questions. A recipient of true revelation can receive a response to his supplications at one place and time; though sometimes an interval occurs between two series of revelations.
8. The recipient of true revelation is never a coward and is not afraid to stand up to false claimants of revelation. He knows that God is with him and would humiliate a false claimant.
9. True revelation is the means of acquiring knowledge and understanding for God does not desire to leave its recipient ignorant and without knowledge.
10. True revelation is accompanied by many other blessings. A recipient of true revelation is bestowed honour from the unseen and is given prestige.

[*Darurat-ul-Imām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 13, pp. 483-490]

I was young and now I am old, but from the beginning I

have been a witness of the fact that God Who has ever been hidden manifests Himself through Islām. If a person truly follows the Holy Qur'ān and occupies himself with self-improvement according to its teaching, and lives not like the worldly but like a servant of the faith, and devotes himself to the cause of God and loves His Prophet Muḥammad, the chosen one (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) and is free from self-exhibition and arrogance and pride and seeks not his own glory but the glory and greatness of God, and humbles himself to the dust in His cause, the result is that Divine converse starts with him in eloquent Arabic. Divine words are delicious and majestic. They are not the product of one's own mind; such a product is delivered in a low voice like that of a eunuch or a sick person. But God's word is full of majesty and is mostly in Arabic and very often in the form of verses of the Qur'ān. My experience is that first it strikes the heart forcefully and an echo is thereby produced which then blossoms like a flower, and therefrom issues a holy and delicious series of phrases comprising hidden matters and possessing a majesty and a power and effectiveness whereby it penetrates into the heart like an iron nail and is fragrant with the perfume of God. These characteristics are attached to it because some ill-natured persons also receive satanic revelation or are deceived by the product of their own minds. God Almighty causes shining light to accompany His word so as to distinguish it from other types.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 314-315]

Differences between Satanic and Divine Revelation

Most ignorant people consider satanic suggestion as the word of God and are unable to distinguish between

satanic and Divine revelation. It should be remembered that the first condition for Divine revelation is that its recipient should become wholly God's and that Satan should have no part in him. Wherever there is carrion, there also dogs collect. That is why God Almighty says:

هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ عَلَىٰ مَن تَنَزَّلُ الشَّيَاطِينُ ۖ تَنَزَّلُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ ۝²⁰

But Satan cannot attack one in whom he has no part and who has departed from the low life as if he had died and has become a righteous and faithful servant of God and has turned wholly to Him, as God Almighty has said:

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَنٌ²¹

Those who belong to Satan and follow satanic ways, Satan runs towards them for they are his prey.

It should be remembered that God's words possess a blessing and a majesty and a delight. As God is All-Hearing and All-Knowing and Compassionate, He replies to the supplications of His righteous and faithful servants. This supplication and response can extend over several hours. When a servant humbly submits his supplication, he is within a few minutes overcome by a faintness and he receives the response in the veil of this faintness. Then if he submits another supplication, he again experiences the same condition and finds His response. God is so Generous and Compassionate and All-Knowing that if a servant supplicates to Him a thousand times, each time he receives a response, but as

²⁰ 'Shall I inform you on whom the evil ones descend? They descend on every great liar and sinner.'—Al-Shu'arā', 26:222-223 [Publisher]

²¹ 'Surely thou shalt not have power over My servants.'—Al-Ĥijr, 15:43 [Publisher]

God Almighty is Self-Sufficient and has regard for wisdom and appropriateness some supplications are not responded to.

Again, Satan is dumb and is not eloquent and so articulate in his speech. Like the dumb, he has no power over an eloquent and prolific speech. He injects a sentence or two into the heart in a smelly way. Since eternity, he has not been given the power to express himself in delicious and majestic words. Nor can he carry on a series of questions and answers for a number of hours. He is also deaf and is not able to respond to every question. He is also helpless and cannot exhibit any power or disclose any hidden matter of high import. Also his throat is hoarse and he cannot speak in a loud and majestic voice. His voice is low like that of eunuchs. You can recognize satanic revelation by these signs. But God is not like a dumb or deaf or helpless person. He hears and responds. His word is conveyed in a majestic, and loud and awe-striking voice. His words are effective and delicious while Satan's words are delivered in a low, effeminate and doubtful manner; there is no majesty, grandeur, or loftiness in them. Nor can he continue for long as he tires quickly and his words are weak and betray cowardice. God's word does not get tired and comprises every kind of power and hidden matters of great import and majestic promises and gives off the fragrance of Divine Glory and Greatness and Power and Holiness. Satan's words do not possess these qualities. Divine revelation possesses an effectiveness; it penetrates into the heart like an iron nail. It creates a holy effect upon the heart and draws the heart to itself and converts its recipient into a person of high courage so much so that if he is cut into pieces with a sharp sword, or is strung up on the gallows, or is afflicted

with every possible kind of torment, and is disgraced and defamed, or is put into the fire and is consumed, he would never deny that the word that descends upon him is God's word. God bestows full certainty upon him and makes him the lover of His own countenance. He values life, honour and property no more than a straw. He never lets go of the garment of God even if the whole world treads him under its feet and he is matchless in his trust, bravery and steadfastness. Those who receive satanic revelation have no such power. They are cowardly because Satan is a coward.

[Ḥaḳīqat-ul-Waḥī, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 22, pp. 142-144]

If it is asked that as there is no complete security against satanic intervention then how can we trust our dreams that they are from God? Is it not possible that we should deem a dream to be from God and it might be from Satan, or we might deem it to be from Satan and it might be from God? The answer is that a dream which is from God declares itself by its majesty, blessing, greatness and light. That which proceeds from a holy fountain possesses purity and fragrance and that which proceeds from unclean and dirty water immediately announces its origin through its evil smell. True dreams, which come from God Almighty, are like a holy message which is not accompanied by confused thoughts and possesses an effective power, and the heart is drawn towards it and the soul testifies that it is from God inasmuch as its greatness and majesty penetrate into the heart like an iron nail. Very often it happens that a person sees a true dream and God Almighty shows the same dream, or one like it, as confirmation to some companion of his and thus one dream supports another.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, p. 354]

Some short-sighted people raise the objection that revelation suffers from the defect that it prevents and obstructs its recipient from arriving at complete understanding, which is indispensable for eternal life and everlasting happiness. They explain their objection by asserting that revelation obstructs thinking and cuts short research, inasmuch as those who follow revelation respond to every question by asserting that the matter is either permissible or forbidden in their revealed book, and they do not use their reasoning powers as if they had not been bestowed on them by God and in the end by lack of use those powers decline and almost disappear. Thus human nature is completely changed and begins to resemble animals, and the excellence of the human soul, which means progress in reason, is destroyed and man is deprived of obtaining perfect understanding. In this way, revealed books constitute an obstruction in the way of achieving eternal life and everlasting happiness of which man stands in need.

The answer to the foregoing objection is that it is the lack of intelligence, obtuseness and persistence in error of the Brahmūs that prompts them to think that by acting upon the revealed Book of God the reasoning faculty is rendered useless as if revelation and reason were contradictory of each other and cannot subsist together. This suspicion on their part is compounded partly of falsehood, partly of bigotry and partly of ignorance. The falsehood is that despite their knowledge that Divine verities have been fostered only through people who have followed revelation and that Divine Unity has been propagated in the world only through the elect who believe in the word of God, they make a statement contrary to this known fact. Their bigotry is declared by

the fact that in order to support their assertion they have held back the verity that in Divine matters unaided reason cannot carry a person to the stage of perfect certainty. Their ignorance is betrayed by their regarding revelation and reason as inconsistent with each other, which cannot subsist together, and their thinking that revelation is opposed to reason and is destructive of it, whereas this fear is entirely unfounded.

It is obvious that a follower of true revelation does not abstain from reasonable research and is indeed helped by revelation in his effort to view the realities of things in a reasonable manner. By the help of revelation and by the blessing of its light he does not encounter any confusion in assessing arguments based on reason. He is not reduced to the necessity of inventing invalid arguments, but is able to perceive the way of true reason and is able to arrive at the truth. There is no conflict between reason and revelation and they are not inconsistent with and opposed to each other. Reason lends support to revelation and revelation helps to safeguard reason against going astray. True revelation, that is to say the Holy Qur'ān, does not obstruct the progress of reason. It illumines reason and is its great helper and supporter. As the full value of the sun is appreciated by the eye and the benefits of the bright day are disclosed to those who possess sight, in the same way divine revelation is fully appreciated only by those who possess reason, as God Almighty has said Himself:

وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ ۖ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا الْعَالِمُونَ²²

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²² Al-‘Ankabūt, 29:44 [Publisher]

These are illustrations that we set forth for people, but only those who possess knowledge comprehend them.

As the benefits of the light of the eye are disclosed only by the sun, in the absence of which sight and sightlessness would be equal, in the same way, the excellencies of the insight of reason are disclosed by the help of revelation. It secures reason against thousands of useless efforts and points out the nearest way to proper reflection by following which the purpose in view is quickly achieved. Every wise person realizes that if in thinking over a problem help becomes available through which knowledge is gained of the right way of resolving the problem, such knowledge is of great assistance to reason which is delivered from much confused thinking and useless effort. The followers of revelation not only appreciate reason but revelation itself urges them to perfect their reason and thus they are doubly drawn towards progress in reason. First is the natural eagerness which a person experiences to discover through reason the reality and truth of everything and, secondly, the urge of revelation which intensifies their eagerness. Those who study the Holy Qur'an even cursorily will not deny the obvious fact that this Holy Word lays great emphasis on reflection and observation; so much so, that it describes it as a characteristic of believers that they constantly reflect upon the wonders of heaven and earth and deliberate on the law of Divine wisdom as is said in one place in the Holy Qur'an:

رَاتٍ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْخِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَعَلَّ يُتَذَكَّرُوا
 الْمَلْأَيْنِ ۝ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَى جُنُوبِهِمْ

وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا²³

That is to say, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day, there are a number of Signs to prove the existence of the Creator of the Universe and His might, for people of understanding. Wise people are only those who remember Allāh standing, sitting and lying on their sides and keep meditating and pondering over the creation of the heavens and the earth, which impels them to supplicate: Lord Thou hast not created all this without purpose; indeed, everything in Thy creation is full of the manifestations of Thy Power and Wisdom, which points to Thy Blessed Being.

Other revealed books, which have been perverted, urge adherence to unreasonable and impossible matters. As, for instance, does the Bible; but this is not the fault of revelation. It is the fault of defective reasoning. Had those who believe in them possessed sane reason, they would not have followed these perverted books and they would not have permitted such thinking about the unchangeable Perfect and Eternal God that He took on the condition of an helpless embryo and was nourished on impure sustenance and took on an impure body and was born through an impure passage and came into the mortal world, and after enduring all sorts of torments gave up the ghost in extreme misery calling out ‘*Eli Eli*’. It is revelation which has stamped out this error. Holy is Allāh! How exalted and what an ocean of mercy is the Word which pulled the worshippers of creatures back to the Unity of God. How dear and attractive is that light

²³ Āl-e-‘Imrān, 3:191-192 [Publisher]

which brought a whole world out of darkness. Outside of it thousands who were called wise and philosophers remained involved in this error and numberless similar errors, and till the Holy Qur'ān came no philosopher refuted forcefully this false doctrine, nor reformed these ruined people. The philosophers themselves were caught in many unholy doctrines. As the Rev. Mr. Yut has recorded, the Christians adopted the doctrine of the Trinity following Plato and built a false structure on the false foundation furnished by this foolish Greek.

In short, true and perfect Divine revelation is not the enemy of reason, but defective reason is the enemy of the semi-wise. It is obvious, for instance, that an antidote is not in itself harmful for the human body, but if a short-sighted person mistakes poison for an antidote, it is the fault of his reason and not of the antidote. To think that it is dangerous to have recourse to a revealed book for the investigation of every matter is crass folly. As we have written, revelation is a mirror reflecting the truth for the benefit of reason and the great argument in support of its truth is that it is wholly free from matters the impossibility of which is established after pondering on God's Power and Perfection and Holiness. Indeed, in matters Divine, which are deep and hidden, it is the only guide for weak human reason. To have recourse to it does not render reason useless, but leads it to deep secrets which it was difficult for reason to penetrate into on its own. Reason derives great benefit from true revelation, that is to say, from the Holy Qur'ān, and suffers no harm or loss therefrom. Through revelation reason is safeguarded against dangers and does not fall into them. Every wise person admits and it is obvious in itself that error is possible in research, which is based on reason alone, but

there is no possibility of error in the Word of the Knower of the unseen.

Be fair and just, is it good or bad for that which is sometimes confronted with the possibility of severe stumbling, that it should be furnished with a companion which should safeguard it against stumbling and support it at the time of its slipping. Would such a companion be of help to lead it to its purpose or would it be a hindrance? It is an indication of inner blindness to regard a helper as an opponent and obstructor and to consider that which completes and perfects as harmful. When you will reflect truly it will become clear to you that God has not harmed reason by appointing revelation as its companion. On the contrary, finding reason perplexed, He has furnished it with a sure instrument for recognizing the truth through the use of which reason is saved from straying into hundreds of erratic ways and is not led astray. Indeed, it discovers the proper way to its true purpose. It is like the case of a person who directs the search for a lost one to the spot where the latter is hidden. No sane person objects to the help of such a one who supplies the needed particulars and points out the easiest way of reaching the lost one on the ground that the helper has meddled needlessly in the search. On the contrary, everyone concerned is deeply grateful to him that he informed them of their ignorance and pointed out the particular spot and opened the door of certainty while they were involved in conjecture. In the same way, those on whom God has bestowed sane reason are grateful to and praise true revelation and realize fully that revelation does not obstruct the progress of their thinking, but saves their thinking from confusion. It indicates one right path out of a variety of involved and doubtful ways treading

along which creates every kind of facility for reason and delivers a person from a host of difficulties which confront him on account of the shortness of age, insufficient knowledge and lack of insight.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 292-309, footnote 11]

The Function of Reason

It is true that reason is also a lamp which God has furnished to man, the light of which draws man towards truth and saves him from a variety of doubts and suspicions and sets aside different types of baseless ideas and improper conjectures. It is very useful, very necessary and is a great bounty. Yet, despite all this it suffers from the shortcoming that it alone cannot lead to full certainty in the matter of the understanding of the reality of things. The stage of perfect certainty is that man should believe that the reality of things exists as it in fact does exist. Reason alone cannot lead to this high degree of certainty. At the outside, it proves the need of the existence of something, but does not prove that in fact it exists. This degree of certainty that a person's knowledge should proceed from the stage of 'should be' to the stage of 'is', is acquired only when reason is joined by a companion which, confirming its conjecture, converts it into fact, that is to say, regarding a matter concerning which reason says it 'should be' that companion informs that in fact it 'is'. Reason only establishes the need of a thing; it cannot establish its existence, and these are two distinct and separate matters. Thus, reason needs a companion which should supplement the defective 'should be' of reason with the affirmative 'is' and which should give information of facts as they truly exist. So, God Who is most Compassionate and Generous and desires to lead

man to the stage of utmost certainty has fulfilled this need and has appointed several companions for reason and has thereby opened the way of perfect certainty to it, so that the soul of man, whose total good fortune and salvation depends upon perfect certainty, should not be deprived of its desired good fortune and so that it should quickly cross the delicate and dangerous bridge of 'should be' which reason has constructed over the river of doubts and suspicions, and should enter the grand palace of 'is' which is the house of peace and satisfaction.

Those companions of reason, which are its helpers, which come into operation on different occasions, are not more than three. If the operation of reason relates to that which can be felt or observed—for instance, which can be seen or heard or smelt or touched—its companion, which can lead it to certainty, is true observation which is called experience. If the operation of reason relates to those occurrences which take place at different times and places, the companion of reason in such a case is history, or newspapers, or letters, or communications. These also, like experience, so clear up the smoky light of reason that to doubt it thereafter is folly or insanity. If the operation of reason relates to matters which are metaphysical, which cannot be seen by the eye, or heard by the ear, or touched by the hand, nor can they be inquired about through history, then the companion that helps reason is revelation.

The law of nature also demands that, as relating to the first two matters imperfect reason is furnished by two companions, a companion should also be furnished to it in respect of the third category of matters. There can be no discrimination in the law of nature. When God has not

desired to leave man in a defective condition with regard to worldly knowledge and arts, an error in respect of which is not of any great consequence, it would be an ill thought that He desired to leave man in a defective condition regarding the full understanding of matters, complete certainty concerning which is a condition of salvation and any doubt concerning which would push man into eternal ruin. In such a case man's knowledge concerning the hereafter would be reduced to pure conjecture. He would not have available any means which should bear witness to that which is and should bestow contentment and satisfaction upon the heart that in fact and in truth that which reason conjectures as existing does indeed exist. The need that reason establishes is not fictitious, but is real. When it is known that in matters Divine perfect certainty can be obtained only through revelation, and that man is in need of perfect certainty for his salvation and that without perfect certainty faith cannot be safeguarded, then it becomes obvious that man is in need of revelation.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 78-80, footnote 4]

The ideas of reason do not suffer only from the defect that they lack certainty and cannot comprehend the finer points of matters Divine, but they also suffer from the defect that discourses based upon reason alone are largely ineffective in persuading the heart. The reason is that for any discourse to affect the heart it is necessary that its truth should be so well established in the mind of the hearer that no room should be left for doubt and the heart should believe that what it is being told is not subject to the possibility of error. We have just shown that reason alone cannot lead to perfect certainty. It is thus obvious that the effect that is produced on the heart

by perfect certainty cannot be expected from reason alone and this is confirmed by daily experience. For instance, when a person returns home from having sojourned in a distant country then everyone inquires from him about that country and they are all deeply affected by what he relates out of his personal knowledge provided he is not suspected of telling lies; rather he is a respected and truthful person. Why are his words so effective? They are effective because he is known to be a righteous person and it is believed that whatever he relates of the circumstances of that country he has observed with his own eyes. Therefore, his discourse affects the hearts and his statements appeal to the hearers as if they had seen those events that he describes with their own eyes. Sometimes it happens that when he relates a pitiable tale it so affects the hearers that their eyes are filled with tears as if they had witnessed the event themselves.

But if a person who has not moved beyond the four walls of his house and has never been abroad, nor has heard anyone describe the circumstances and conditions of another country, were to begin to discourse upon the circumstances and conditions of another country out of his imagination, it would produce no effect upon the hearers. In fact, they would charge him with madness and insanity in that he relates that which is beyond his observation and experience and is above his imperfect knowledge. It is like the story of a foolish person who was praising wheaten bread and when he was asked whether he had ever eaten it, he replied that he had not eaten it but that his grandfather used to say that on one occasion he had seen someone eating it.

Unless someone in the estimation of his hearers compre-

hends any event fully, his discourse would produce no effect upon their hearts and he would make himself a laughing stock. That is the reason why the discourses of worldly-wise people have never attracted the attention of anyone to the hereafter. Their hearers continue to think that, as the speaker was talking from conjecture, they could oppose him with their own conjectures, as neither side had witnessed the reality. This is the reason that when some wise people expressed themselves in support of the existence of God, other wise people opposed them and wrote books in support of atheism. The truth is that the thinking of even those who express themselves to some degree in support of the existence of God was not altogether free from atheistic ideas, nor is it free now. Consider the Brahmūs. Do they ever regard God as possessing perfect attributes? Do they believe that He possesses the attribute of speech as a living being should? Do they regard Him as Controller and Sustainer? Do they believe that God is Ever-Living and All Sustaining and that He can speak to righteous hearts? On the contrary, they consider Him as fictitious and like the dead who has been invented by human reason through its own imagination. No voice is ever heard from him. In fact, he is not God, but an idol lying in a corner. I wonder how these people are pleased with such childish ideas and what fruit do they expect from their fictitious thinking? Why do they not search like true seekers for the God Who is Powerful and Ever-Living and is capable of affirming His own existence and can revive the dead in an instant by the call: *I am Allāh*? When they know that the light of reason is smoky then why do they not seek Perfect Light? They admit that they are ill, but they do not seek a remedy. It is a pity that they do not open their

eyes so that they might see the truth. Why is not the covering lifted from their ears so that they can hear the Divine voice? Why are their hearts so twisted and why is their understanding so warped that the objection to which they have laid themselves open they advance against the followers of true revelation?

The Brahmū Samājists entertain another illusion that revelation is a restriction and that they are free from every restriction and thus they are better off as a free person is better than a prisoner. We admit this criticism and confess that revelation is a restriction without which true freedom cannot be achieved. True freedom is that a person should be delivered from every type of error, doubt and suspicion and should arrive at the stage of perfect certainty and should behold his Lord in this very world. This true freedom is achieved in this world by perfect and God-loving Muslims through the Holy Qur'ān and is not available to anyone besides them whether Brahmūs or others....

Another objection of the Brahmū Samājists is that to follow revelation is contrary to the law of nature for the clear and straight way of finding out the reality of anything is to approach it on the basis of reason. For instance, the true reason for theft being a vile act which satisfies the soul is that it is a wrong and trespass, which reason condemns as improper and not permissible. The real reason is not that any revealed book condemns it as a sin. Again arsenic should not be swallowed because it is a fatal poison and not because its eating is forbidden in Divine revelation. Thus, they argue that it is reason that indicates the true reality and not revelation. They are unconscious of the fact that their argument is refuted when it is proved by strong and cogent arguments that

reason is imperfect and unreliable. What a pity! Is it proper to continue to harp with such cheek on the same dead thought which has already been demolished by an array of powerful arguments?... It is true that the reality of things is disclosed to some degree by arguments based on reason, but reason does not complete all stages of certainty. The instance cited by them refutes their proposition. The fatal quality of arsenic is not established by reason acting by itself, but this quality was determined as a certainty when reason through proper experimentation discovered the hidden quality of arsenic. This is what we desire to make clear, namely that to determine as a certainty the lethal quality of arsenic reason had to have recourse to a companion, namely proper experimentation. In the same way, in order to determine as a certainty Divine matters and the reality of the life after death, reason needs the help of Divine revelation and without its help reason cannot arrive at firm conclusions in matters of faith, as in other matters. Without the help of an appropriate companion, reason is helpless, imperfect and incomplete. Within its own limits, reason cannot determine anything as a certainty unless it has the help of a companion. Without such help it cannot escape error, especially in matters of Divinity in which the reality is hidden behind veils and no sample of it is available in this world. In these matters, imperfect reason cannot lead one to perfect understanding, let alone escape all possible error....

The difficulties that we encounter in matters relating to that unseen world, and the surprises with which we are met in imagining the conditions of that unseen and hidden world, compel us to confess that in order to discover correctly the circumstances of that world, and to

believe in them with certainty, we are in need of many times more historians and record-makers and experienced people than we need in matters of this world. The historian and record-maker of that world cannot be anyone except the Word of God and the vessel of certainty is likely to founder without the help of that record-maker, and the cold wind continues to consign the arc of dubious faith to the whirlpool of death. In such a case, no wise person would turn away from revelation relying entirely upon the guidance of defective reason. His safety in such case depends upon revelation, the contents of which do not comprise conjecture, but in addition to arguments based on reason, they inform us of the facts of the second world like a true historian and give an eyewitness account of them.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 327-335 footnote 11]

Consider well that without revelation it is not possible to arrive at complete certainty, or to escape error, or to base oneself on the true Unity of God, or to overcome one's passions. It is revelation through which we are able to affirm that God 'is' and the whole world calls on Him because He 'is'. It is revelation which from the beginning has inspired the hearts with the assurance that God 'is'. It is through revelation that worshippers find delight in worship and the faithful are satisfied with regard to the existence of God and life after death. It is revelation which has enabled millions of the righteous to leave this transient world with great steadfastness and with the eagerness of the love of the Divine. It is revelation the truth of which has been attested by the blood of thousands of martyrs. It is revelation through whose power of attraction kings put on the garment of beggars and many wealthy people preferred poverty to riches, and by its

blessings millions of unlearned old women departed this world with eager faith. It is the one vessel which has so often carried numberless people through the whirlpool of creature-worship and doubt to the safety of the Unity of God and perfect certainty. It is revelation that is the friend of last moments and is the helper in serious conditions.

The harm that has been done to the world by pure reason is not a hidden matter. What made Plato and his followers deny that God is the Creator? What made Galen doubt the immortality of souls and the reality of Judgment? What made philosophers deny that God has knowledge of all particulars? What made great philosophers worship idols? What led to the sacrifice of roosters and other animals before idols? Was it not reason unaccompanied by revelation?

It is not correct to state that many people became pagans even when following revelation and fashioned for themselves new gods. This was not the fault of true revelation, but was the fault of those who mixed falsehood with truth and preferred the worship of their passions to the worship of God. Yet, Divine revelation did not neglect their reform and did not forget them. Fresh revelation reformed the matters which had led them astray.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 163-164 footnote 11]

Of course it is true that reason is not without its use and its benefit, nor have we so alleged, but we cannot escape the obvious verity that through reason and conjecture alone we cannot arrive at that perfect certainty which can be achieved through the combination of reason and revelation, nor can we escape mistakes and errors and

self-approval and self-righteousness. Our self-conceived ideas cannot overcome our passions like the forceful and majestic and prestigious commandments of God. Our self-conceived concepts, idle thoughts and baseless superstitions cannot furnish us with that joy, delight, satisfaction and contentment which are conveyed to us by the delicious words of the True Beloved. Then shall we, by relying on reason alone, subject ourselves to all the losses and disadvantages and misfortunes, and subject ourselves to thousands of calamities? No wise person can accept that He Who has created in us the thirst for perfect understanding has refused to furnish us with the full cup of such understanding, and that He Who has drawn the hearts to Himself has shut upon us the door of true understanding and has confined all stages of the recognition of God to the contemplation of our fictitious need. Has God created man so unfortunate that he is to be wholly disappointed in obtaining in this world the full satisfaction that his soul desires and his heart longs for in the matter of the recognition of God, and eagerness fills his soul and heart? Is there no one soul out of thousands of you which can realize that the doors of understanding which can be opened only by God cannot be opened by human power and that human imagination cannot equal the assurance of God: I am present? God's affirmation of His Own Being in a manner manifests God to us, but man's conjecture has no such effect. As our conjectures based on reason alone cannot equal God's word that confirms His Existence, then why is not His word needed for the perfection of certainty? Are your hearts not awakened by observing this clear disparity? Is there nothing in that which we have set forth which can affect your hearts?

There is no difficulty in understanding that human reason cannot be the instrument for ascertaining that which is hidden. Which of you can deny that whatever we are to encounter after death is all hidden? For instance, reflect whether anyone knows how the soul departs at the time of death and where it goes and with whom and where is it detained and through what experiences it passes. How can human reason pronounce conclusively on these matters? A conclusive pronouncement would be possible if a person had died once or twice and had become familiar with the paths along which he reached God, and he had a recollection of the places where he had dwelt for some time. But as it is, we have only conjecture to fall back upon. No one has seen these things and to be satisfied with baseless conjecture is not true satisfaction. If you were to assess the matter with the eye of research, you would testify that human reason and conscience cannot discover these matters as a certainty and that no page of the book of nature points to them with sureness.

Leaving aside other matters, reason is perplexed at the very first stage and is unable to determine what the soul is, how it enters the body and how it departs. No one has observed anything entering or departing. If you were to enclose an animate at the time of its death inside a glass chamber you would not observe anything departing from it, and if in the glass chamber any germs were produced it cannot be determined how they obtained entry into the chamber. The hatching of an egg furnishes an even greater wonder. How does the soul fly in, and in case of the young dying inside, by what way does the soul escape? Can any wise person resolve this puzzle through the use of his reason alone? There can be various conjectures but through reason alone nothing certain can be

established. That being the case at the very first step then what can this defective reason discover about the other matters of the life after death?

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 336-338, footnote 11]

The Law of Nature Demands Revelation

The All-Wise did not desire to leave weak man to his own imagination and conjecture, but has supplied him with every type of preacher and lecturer who could satisfy him and could set at rest his spiritual restlessness and has provided him with the words which could heal him of his illness. God's law of nature establishes this need of revelation. Is it not true that millions of people, when they are caught in misery or sin or neglect, are affected by the words of a preacher or an adviser and their own knowledge and their own thinking do not prove adequate? The degree of satisfaction to be drawn from such sources depends upon the respect and the honour that the person concerned feels for the one who talks to him. It is only the promise of a person who is truthful in his promises and has the power to perform them that brings satisfaction and content to the hearer. In such circumstances who can doubt the obvious proposition that, concerning matters of life after death and matters of metaphysics, the best means of satisfaction and of the removal of spiritual pain is the Word of God. When a person believes fully in the Word of God, it delivers him from many whirlpools and contends against severe passions and bestows steadfastness in frightful accidents. When a wise person at the time of any difficulty, or in the grip of passion, finds God's promise or warning in the Word of God, or someone else explains to him what God has commanded, he is so deeply affected that he

forthwith repents. Man is often in need of being comforted by God. Very often he is overtaken by such misfortunes that had not the Word of God provided him with glad tidings he would have been so discouraged as perhaps to deny the existence of God, or in his disappointment would have broken off from God altogether, or would have died of sorrow:

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ النَّفْسَ الدَّيْمِيَّةَ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ مُوتُوا فَاسْتَعْصَمُوا وَرَآهُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ ۗ لَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ كِتَابٌ فِيهِ آيَاتٌ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُذَكَّرُونَ ۗ
 وَكَذَلِكُمْ تَكْفُرُ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصِ مِنِّ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَ
 الثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ۗ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ
 وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاغِبُونَ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَ
 رَحْمَةٌ ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ۗ²⁴

In the same way, for overcoming one's passions God's word is needed as at every step man encounters matters which can be remedied only by the word of God. When a person desires to turn to God he encounters many obstructions. Sometimes he recalls the delights of the world, or he is attracted by the company of his cronies or he is awed by the difficulties of the way. Sometimes habits and customs block his way and sometimes considerations of honour, fame or power try to obstruct him. Sometimes all these combine together like an army and pull him in their direction and tempt him with their immediate benefits. Their combination develops such force that his own ideas are not able to withstand it. In such a contest, the effective armament of God's word is

²⁴ 'And We will try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives and fruits; but give glad tidings to the patient; Who, when a misfortune overtakes them, say: Surely, to Allāh we belong and to Him shall we return.

It is these on whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy and it is these who are rightly guided.'—Al-Baqarah 2:156-158 [Publisher]

needed so that the opposing forces may be vanquished at the first assault. Can anything happen one-sidedly? How then is it possible that God should keep silent like a stone and His servant should make progress on his own in his loyalty, sincerity and steadfastness, and that he should be pulled forward in the field of love and strengthened by the idea that there must be a Creator of heaven and earth? Conjecture can never take the place of fact. For instance, suppose that a poor debtor has been promised by a truthful, wealthy person that at the due time he would pay off all his debts, and there is another poor debtor who has been given no promise by anyone but gives rein to his imagination that perhaps he too would be helped by someone to pay off his debts at due time. Can both these persons be equally satisfied? Certainly not. All this is comprehended in the law of nature and no verity lies outside of it. Alas! Those who claim to follow the law of nature break it themselves and run over to the other side and act contrary to what they had affirmed.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 340-342 footnote 11]

I do not know who has misled you to imagine that there is some contradiction between reason and revelation on account of which they cannot subsist together. May God bestow sight upon you and remove the veils from your heart. Can you not appreciate this simple thing that when through revelation reason arrives at its perfection, and is warned of its errors, discovers the true direction of its path, is delivered from confusion, is relieved of useless effort and travail, converts its doubtful knowledge into a certainty, and advancing from conjecture is informed of true facts and is comforted and finds satisfaction, then is revelation its benefactor and helper and supporter, or is it its enemy and opponent and causes it harm? What

bigotry and blindness is it to imagine that a supporter who serves as a clear guide is a highwayman and obstructer and that one who pulls out of a pit is he who pushes into the pit. The whole world knows and all those who have eyes can see and those who can reflect and observe find that there were millions of such in the past, and are also present today, who put their faith in the excellence and greatness of reason and were known as wise and guided by reason and yet they denied the existence of God and died in that condition. On the other hand, show us but one person who believed in revelation and yet denied God. As revelation is indispensable for firm faith in God then it is obvious that where this condition is lacking there can be no firm faith. It is clear that those who deny the possibility of revelation deliberately prefer the way of faithlessness and support the spread of atheism. They do not reflect that if the faculty of hearing is also to be deprived of hearing His word then how can one believe in the existence of a Being Who is hidden and cannot be seen or smelt or touched? Even if by observing the creation an idea of the existence of the Creator comes to mind, when a seeker after truth despite his lifelong effort never beholds the Creator nor hears His voice, nor finds any sign of a Living Being, then will he not imagine that perhaps he was wrong in imagining the existence of a Creator, and perhaps the atheists and the physicists are in the right who regard some elements in the universe as the creators of others and do not admit the need of any other creator? I know well that if a follower of reason will pursue his thinking his mind will be assailed by this doubt, for it is not possible for him to escape such doubts when he fails in his search for some personal sign of God. It is in the nature of man that if he

considers something necessary and indispensable through his conjecture, but fails to discover its existence despite every search and inquiry, he begins to doubt the correctness of his conjecture and in the end denies it and hundreds of doubts opposed to his conjecture assail his mind. We often indulge in conjecture with regard to a hidden matter that it will be thus and thus, but when the fact is known it turns out to be something quite different. These daily experiences teach one the lesson that it is the height of foolishness to be satisfied with pure conjecture. Till conjecture is supported by fact all exhibition of reason is a mirage and no more, the end of which is atheism. If you desire to be an atheist, you can do as you please; otherwise, you can be delivered from the fierce flood of doubts, which has swept thousands of wiser people than yourself by one stroke into the depths, by taking a firm hold of the strong handle of revelation. It will never happen that pursuing only your ideas based on reason you will advance to a point where you behold God sitting somewhere. With your perverse thinking, you will end up finding God signless and devoid of the signs of the living, and, after being frustrated in your quest for Him, you will join hands with your atheist brethren.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 344-346, footnote 11]

OBJECTION. Complete understanding can only be obtained through something which can be observed at all times and in all ages. This characteristic is found in the book of nature, which is always open and is never closed, and it should therefore be taken as one's guide, for something which is closed most of the time and opens only on certain occasions cannot be a guide.

ANSWER. To regard the book of nature as open in comparison with Divine revelation is a sign of blindness.

Those who possess healthy insight know well that only that book can be described as open the writing of which can be deciphered clearly and in the reading of which no doubt is left. Who can prove that any one's doubt was removed by merely looking at the book of nature? Who knows whether anyone has been led to the goal by the book of nature? Who can claim that he has completely understood all the arguments of the book of nature? Had it been an open book why should those who rely on it have been involved in thousands of errors? Reading this one book why should they have differed so much among themselves that some might have admitted to some degree the existence of God and others might have repudiated it altogether? Even if it were to be assumed, for the sake of argument, that one who after reading this book does not deem it necessary that God should exist, would be granted a long enough life to discover his mistake, at one time or the other, the question still remains that if this book is open why did its reading lead to such errors? Do you consider a book an open, if its readers differ with regard to the existence of God and go astray at the very first step? Is it not true that having read this book of nature thousands of philosophers became atheists or remained idol worshippers and only he from among them followed the straight path who believed in Divine revelation? Is it not true that those who confined themselves to the reading of this book and were considered great philosophers continued to deny God's control of the universe and His knowledge of particulars and died in that condition of denial? Have you not enough intelligence to know that if a letter is construed in one way by X and in another way by Y and in an altogether different way by Z, the text of the letter cannot be

regarded as plain and open, but is considered doubtful and confused? This is not a matter the understanding of which needs great intelligence, but is an obvious verity. However, what can we say of those who persist in describing darkness as light, and light as darkness, and day as night, and night as day?

Even a child can understand that to expound one's meaning the proper way appointed by God Almighty is through clear speech. The only instrument for expressing the thoughts of the mind is the faculty of speech. It is only through the use of this instrument that one person can be informed of that which is in the mind of another person. Every matter that is not expounded through this instrument falls short of being completely understood. There are thousands of matters concerning which it becomes impossible for us to arrive at a true understanding merely on the basis of natural arguments, and our reflection upon them is subject to error. For instance, God has made the eye for seeing and the ear for hearing and the tongue for speaking. That much we can understand by reflecting on the nature of these limbs, but if we rely only on these natural indications and pay no attention to the explanations of Divine revelation, then our natural inclination would be that without discriminating between proper and improper occasions for their use we should look at whatever we wish and hear whatever we desire and should express whatever passes through our minds. The law of nature indicates only that the eye is for seeing, the ear for hearing and the tongue has been created for speech, and we are misled into thinking that in the use of the faculties of sight and hearing and speech we are completely free and uncontrolled.

Now, if the Divine word were not to define the law of

nature and were not to clear up its confusion by its open statements, there would be great risk of one's incurring numberless dangers by merely following the law of nature. It is the Word of God alone which by its clear statements lays down the limits of our speech, action, motion and abstention and teaches us good manners and furnishes us with pure light. It is the Word of God which, for the guarding of our sight and hearing and speech, has laid down:

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ بَعْضُوا مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ رِبِّهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا أَرْوَاحَهُمْ ذَلِكُمْ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ

(Part Number 18)

This means that the believers should guard their eyes and ears and private parts and should avoid every undesirable activity of sight, hearing and private parts. Thus would they be able to foster inner purity. That is to say, their minds will be safeguarded against passions for these are the limbs which incite passions and involve the animal faculties in trial.

Observe, therefore, how the Holy Qur'ān has emphasised control over eyes and ears and private parts and forbidden indulgence in any impurity. In the same way the tongue has been directed to adhere to the truth, as is said:

قُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا

(Part Number 22)

That is to say, one is to utter only that which is true and proper and should be free from everything vain and false. To direct all faculties along the straight path, a comprehensive warning has been issued which is enough to pull

²⁵ Al-Nūr, 24:31 [Publisher]

²⁶ Al-Aḥzāb, 33:71 [Publisher]

up the heedless and that is:

إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَندهٗ مَشْعُورًا²⁷

(Part Number 15)

That is to say, the ears, the eyes, the heart, and all limbs and faculties possessed by man will be called to account for their improper use. Thus have all limbs and faculties been directed towards good and proper use expressly and emphatically in the Word of God and every limb is, in clear language which admits of no doubt or confusion, directed to adhere to the straight path. Can these explanations and details be ascertained by reading any page of the book of nature? Certainly not. Then which is the open book? This one or that one? Which of them has prescribed the limits and the proper use of natural faculties? Had gestures alone been sufficient why should man have been invested with a tongue? He has bestowed the tongue upon you. Has He not Himself the power of speech? Is it proper to say of Him Who created the whole universe without the aid of any matter and without the need of builders and labourers and carpenters, but only through His will, that He does not possess the power of speech, or that He has the power but that out of miserliness He has deprived man of the grace of His word?

Is it right that one should think of the All-Powerful as being weaker than the animals? The lowest animal can inform another animal of certainty about its own existence through its voice. A fly can inform other flies of its advent by its humming. According to you, however, the All-Powerful does not possess even the faculty of a fly. As you say clearly that He has never opened His mouth

²⁷ Banī Isrāʿīl, 17:37 [Publisher]

and has never possessed the faculty of speech, you want to affirm that He is imperfect and defective, whose other attributes are known, but whose attribute of speech has never been discovered. How can you say with regard to Him that He has bestowed upon you an open book in which He has clearly declared His mind? Indeed your view of Him can be summed up by saying that God Almighty has furnished no guidance and that you have discovered everything by your own ability.

Divine revelation can be described as open in the sense that it casts its influence on the hearts of all. Every type of temperament is benefited by it and every type of seeker derives help from it. That is the reason why many people have been guided through Divine revelation and very few, indeed almost none, through reason alone. Even reason affirms that that should be so. It is obvious that when a person, who becomes known to people as a righteous informer, describes his experience and observation of matters relating to the life after death and calls in aid arguments of reason to expound his meaning, he has a double force at his disposal. First is that it is believed concerning him that he has observed the matter that he speaks of and has seen it with his own eyes; and secondly, he illustrates the truth in the light of clear arguments. The combination of these two types of proof invests his preaching and advice with a strong force which pulls at even the hardest of hearts and influences every type of soul. His exposition comprises different types of illustration which can be understood by every type of person who is not wholly bereft of reason and for the understanding of which no particular standard of ability is needed. He can satisfy every type of person according to the temperament of each and at the level of

his capacity. His speech has great power to pull men's thinking towards God and to make them discard the love of the world and to impress upon their hearts a concept of the hereafter. It is not confined to the narrow and dark concept to which the discourses of the followers of reason are confined. Its effect is widespread and its benefit is complete. Every vessel is filled with it according to its capacity. This is indicated by God Almighty in His Holy Word:

أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌ بِقَدَرِهَا²⁸

(Part Number 13)

This means that God sends down His Word from heaven and every valley begins to flow with the water of the Divine Word according to its capacity.

That is to say, every one benefits from it according to his temperament and ideas and ability. Exalted natures are benefited by the wise mysteries and those who are even higher find a wonderful light the description of which is beyond words. Those who are lower, observing the greatness and personal perfection of the righteous informer, believe sincerely in what he says and they also arrive at the coast of salvation by boarding the ark of certainty. Only those are left outside who have no business with God and are the insects of the earth.

The Book of Revelation is the Only Open Book

Observing its effectiveness, the way of following revelation is open and wide. It is well known that a speech is charged with blessings, eagerness, power, greatness and attraction according to the degree to which the step of the

²⁸ Al-Ra' d, 13:18 [Publisher]

speaker is planted high in the stages of certainty, sincerity and fidelity. This perfection can be discovered only in the speech of a person who doubly possesses Divine understanding. Every wise person realizes that a forceful speech, to be effective, issues from the mouth of a person when his heart is full of the eagerness of certainty and only those words take possession of the hearts which surge forth from the hearts of those who believe with perfect certainty. This also shows that from the point of view of effectiveness, Divine guidance alone is the opener of doors. In short, from the point of view of the vastness and vigorousness of effect, it is only the book of revelation that is proved to be open. It is obvious that only such a person proves himself the greatest benefactor of God's creatures who combines in himself revelation and reason. He has the ability to benefit every type of temperament and nature. A person who seeks to draw people to the right path through logical arguments only can produce an effect, if at all, only on those who are highly educated and able and can follow his learned discourses. The average person has not the intelligence to follow philosophical discourses. Thus, the grace of his knowledge is confined to the few who can understand his logic and only those can benefit from it who, like him, are familiar with methods of reasoning. This can be proved by a comparison of the achievements of reason and Divine revelation. Those who are aware of the circumstances of past philosophers know very well how they failed to propagate their teachings widely and how their constricted and incomplete exposition failed to affect the hearts of common people. Compare this with the high effectiveness of the Holy Qur'an. How powerfully it has filled the hearts of its true followers with the

Unity of God and in what a wonderful manner its splendid teachings routed out the habits and customs of hundreds of years standing, which had become like second nature, from the hearts of people. Wiping out their lower passions from their hearts, it gave them the opportunity to drink deep of the Unity of God. This happened in the case of millions. It is the Holy Qur'ān which, by displaying its effectiveness and producing good and lasting results by the evidence of its matchless power, compelled its enemies to confess its peerless excellencies. Even those who were confirmed in their disbelief were so deeply affected that they involuntarily confessed:

إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ²⁹

(Part Number 23)

It is the Holy Qur'ān whose attraction overcame confirmed habits and so pulled the hearts to God that millions of God's creatures set the seal of their blood on the Unity of God. In this manner from the beginning it is revelation that has proved the guide and which has fostered human reason. Otherwise, great philosophers and wise men have found it difficult, even impossible, to discover the details of metaphysics. Those who are not equipped with normal reason, and have not had available to them the means of making efforts in that direction, have remained without any knowledge of these matters. The facilities which God's true and perfect revelation—that is to say, the Holy Qur'ān—has furnished to reason, and the confusion from which it has delivered reflection and observation are facts for which every wise person

²⁹ ' . . . This is nothing but clear magic.'—Al-Saba', 34:44 [Publisher]

must be grateful. Considering that the recognition of God began through revelation, and that the revival of the understanding of the Divine has always taken place through revelation, and that relief from the difficulties of the way can only be procured with the help of revelation, every wise person is compelled to confess that the way which is clear and straight and is always open and has always led to the goal is Divine revelation. To hold that is not an open book is clear folly.

We have explained in detail that the recognition of God by the Brahmū Samājists, which is based upon reason, is limited to ‘should be’ and that they fall short of the perfect stage of ‘is’. This also shows that the clear and open way of the recognition of the Divine is discovered only through the Word of God and cannot be reached by any other means. If a newly born child is deprived of education and left only to the book of nature, which according to the Brahmū Samājists is an open book, he would achieve little understanding and would possess no recognition of God. Experience has shown that if a person is not guided through his sense of hearing by revelation to the existence of God, he is not able to determine whether there is any Creator of this universe and, if he does pay any attention to searching for the Creator, he ends up by deifying some part of creation like water, fire, the moon or the sun as is witnessed among the wild tribes. It is only the grace of revelation through the blessings of which man has recognized the Peerless and Matchless God as befitted His Perfect and Faultless Being. Those who were uninformed of revelation and had no revealed book to turn to, and had available no means of knowing about revelation, achieved no understanding of the Divine, despite the fact that they pos-

sessed eyes and hearts. They gradually forsook humanness and approximated to senseless animals and derived no advantage from the book of nature. It is obvious that if that book had been an open one, the wild tribes would have taken advantage of it and would have achieved equality with those who had recognized God through Divine revelation. Then what greater proof is needed of the fact that the book of nature is a closed one than that whoever relied solely upon it, and never heard of Divine revelation, was altogether deprived of the recognition of God and even remained ignorant of human manners?

If by the book of nature being open is meant that it is physically visible, this is irrelevant to the point under consideration. When it is seen that no one by contemplating the book of nature can derive any spiritual benefit from it and cannot find God unless he is guided by revelation, it matters not that nature is visible all the time.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 207-216 footnote 11]

All historians know well that in past ages whenever anyone acquired full knowledge of God and His perfect attributes, he did so through revelation and that the Unity of God was never propagated through reason. That is why those people who had no acquaintance with revelation remained unaware of the name of God and remained uncultured and uncivilised like animals. Who can present to us a book written in the past about knowledge of the Divine and comprised of real verities, the author of which might have claimed that he did not discover the straight path of the recognition of God through revelation, nor was he informed through his sense of hearing of the existence of the One God, and that in discovering God and learning about Divine attributes he derived help

only from his reason and reflection and diligence and that, without having recourse to any other resource, he discovered the Unity of God and that his mind of itself arrived at the true recognition and understanding of God Almighty? Who can prove to us that there was an age when Divine revelation was unknown and there was no Holy Book and the people of that age believed in the Unity of God and recognized Him merely through contemplation of the book of nature? Who can inform us of the country whose people, being unaware of revelation, were guided to God by their reason alone and believed in the Unity of the Divine by the exercise of their reflection and observation?

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 219-220, footnote 11]

True Unity of God Cannot be Realized Without Divine Revelation

Why the pure Unity of God cannot be learnt without Divine revelation, and why one who denies revelation is not cleansed of paganism? This matter becomes apparent when one reflects upon the reality of Divine Unity. Unity means that one should believe that the Being and attributes of God are free of any association and that we should believe that the tasks which can be accomplished by God's Power cannot be accomplished by the power of anyone else. It is because of letting go of this Unity that fire-worshippers, sun-worshippers and idol-worshippers, etc., are called pagans inasmuch as they supplicate their idols and divinities concerning matters the bestowal of which is in the hands of God alone. It is obvious that those who deny revelation also believe, like the idol worshippers, that creatures are invested with the attributes of the Divine. They believe that the powers of the

All-Powerful are possessed by human beings. They imagine that they discovered God through their reason and that in the beginning it was human beings who thought of appointing a God and that it was by their efforts that God emerged from the state of being unknown and was recognized and was worshipped; that He was unknown before and no one was aware of His existence and it was through wise people that He came to be known. Is this anything different from the belief of the idol worshippers? Indeed not. The only difference is that the idol worshippers appoint other things as their benefactors and these people consider their smoky reason as their guide and benefactor. In one way, these latter go beyond the idol worshippers. Though the idol worshippers believe that God has bestowed great powers on their deities and that on accepting a variety of offerings they bestow upon their worshippers that which they ask for, yet they have never alleged that God was discovered by these deities and that the existence of God was known only through them. It was left to those who deny revelation to claim God as one of their inventions and to announce that God has never affirmed: I am present; and that it was their great achievement that, without being told and informed, they found Him on their own. He was silent like one asleep or dead and they discovered His track by the exercise of their own reflection. Thus in effect they repudiate any obligation to God, but in a way put Him under an obligation to themselves, in that, without having been informed that God exists and without full certainty that disobedience of Him would subject them to such and such torment and obedience to Him would attract such and such bounty, they have submitted to this fictitious god. According to them God

was so weak and infirm that He could not announce His Own existence and could not furnish any reassurance concerning His promises. He was hidden and these people disclosed Him; He was unknown and they made Him known; He was silent and they worked on His behalf. His Godhead has become known only since a short time and that also through their efforts.

Every wise person would appreciate that such an affirmation goes beyond that which the idol worshippers allege. The idol worshippers believe in their deities as their benefactors, but those who deny revelation allege that reason, which is their deity, is the benefactor not only of people but also of God inasmuch as God became known only through the exercise of reason. It is thus clear that by denying revelation they not only believe in God in a doubtful way and are involved in diverse errors, but they are also deprived of belief in the perfect Unity of God and are stained with paganism. What is the association of partners with God? Only to attribute to others the favours and bounties bestowed by God.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 165-167 Footnote 11]

The Type of People who Experience Heavenly Signs

There are three types of people who experience heavenly signs. First, those who possess no merit and have no relationship with God Almighty, but who on account of their intellectual appropriateness see some true dreams and are granted some true visions which contain no indication that they are accepted of God and are loved by Him, nor do they derive any benefit from their dreams and visions. Thousands of the wicked and evil ones share with them such smelly dreams and visions....

Secondly, there are those who have some relationship

with God Almighty, but that relationship is not perfect. Their dreams and revelations resemble the experience of a person who on a dark and very cold night espies the glow of a fire from afar and thereby is able to avoid walking along a path which is full of pits and thorns and rocks and along which serpents and wild beasts abound. But the glow of the fire cannot safeguard him against the cold and death. If he cannot reach the warm circle of the fire, he is destroyed like the one who walks in the dark.

Thirdly, there are people whose experience of dreams and revelations resembles that of a person who on a dark and very cold night not only finds the bright glow of the fire and walks in its light, but entering its warm circle is safeguarded fully against the cold. This stage is reached by those who burn up their passions in the fire of Divine love and adopt a life of bitterness for the sake of God. They perceive death ahead of them and run towards it and choose it for themselves. They accept every torment in the cause of God and for the sake of God they become the enemies of their ego and treading contrary to it, exhibit such power of faith that even the angels are surprised at the strength of their faith. They are spiritual champions and all attacks of Satan come to naught in opposition to their spiritual power....

The perfect revelation, which is of the third type and descends upon perfect individuals, resembles the ray of the sun that falls on a clean mirror which is adjusted towards it.... Then that ray is magnified ten times and its light becomes unbearable for the eye.

When revelation descends in the same way on a purified soul its extraordinary light shines forth and the reflection of Divine attributes is exhibited in that soul and the

countenance of the Divine One is fully disclosed....

The lights of Divine revelation are accepted in their perfect condition by a soul which is perfectly purified. Mere dreams or revelation do not indicate any excellence in the recipient unless, his soul being perfectly purified, he exhibits this reflection and the countenance of the True Beloved is displayed in his soul.

[Ḥaḳīqat-ul-Waḥī , Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 22, pp. 22-26]

Three Kinds of Dreams

Dreams are of three kinds—egoistic, satanic and divine. Egoistic dreams are a reflection of one's own thoughts like a cat dreaming of flecks of meat. A satanic dream is wild and frightening. A divine dream is a message from God; their proof is a matter of experience. These are Divine matters which are far distant from this world. If we judge them by reason another person cannot understand them and we cannot make him understand. These are signs of the existence of God Almighty which He casts upon the heart from the unseen. When we find that what we were told has come to pass, we begin to believe in it. An instrument of this world cannot recognize these things. These are spiritual matters and are recognizable only spiritually. A true dream bears witness to its own truth.

[Malfūzāt, vol. IV, pp. 368-369]

Dreams and visions of all are not alike. The perfect vision, which in the Holy Qur'ān is described as the disclosing of the unseen, is like a perfect circle and is not bestowed upon everyone, but only upon the elect. The vision or revelation that comes to a defective person is itself defective and puts him to shame. Disclosing the

unseen is an experience like that of a person who mounts to the top of a high building and observes the surroundings and can easily distinguish everything. A person who desires to see the same things from a low level misses many of them. It is the way of God with His elect that He elevates their sight to a height whence they can observe everything easily and are able to give information of the end. One standing at a low level cannot predict the end. That is how Bal'am was deceived concerning Moses (peace be on him) and he failed to discern his high status which would have induced him to be respectful.

[Ḥaḳīqat-ul-Mahdī, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 14, pp. 442-443]

Revelation of Trial and Revelation of Exaltation

It should be borne in mind that revelation is of two kinds, the revelation of trial and the revelation of exaltation. The revelation of trial sometimes brings about the ruin of the recipient as happened with Bal'am, but the recipient of the revelation of exaltation is never ruined. Even the revelation of trial is not bestowed upon everyone. Some human temperaments are deformed as some people are born deaf and dumb and blind. In the same way, the spiritual faculties of some are extinct and they carry along as a blind person carries along with the guidance of others.

[Ḥaḳīqat-ul-Waḥī, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 22, p. 11]

3

Ḥ ADĪTH AND THE SUNNAH OF THE HOLY PROPHET^{SA}

To hold fast to Islamic injunctions, the Muslims have three things.

Sources of Islāmic Guidance

First, the **Holy Qur'ān** which is the Book of God than which we have no more conclusive and certain statement. It is the Word of God and is free from all doubt and speculation.

Secondly, the practice of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), which is called the *Sunnah*. Here we are not speaking in terms of the terminology used by the *Ahl-e-Ḥadīth*. We do not regard *Ḥadīth* and *Sunnah* as one and the same thing, as is done by traditional scholars of *Ḥadīth*. They are distinct, *Ḥadīth* is one thing and *Sunnah* is another. By *Sunnah* we mean the practice of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, to which he adhered and which appeared along with the Holy Qur'ān and will accompany it. In other words, the Holy Qur'ān is the Word of God Almighty and the *Sunnah* is the practice of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). It has ever been the way of God that the Prophets bring the Word of God for the guidance of people and illustrate it in practice with their conduct so that no doubt should remain in the minds of people with regard to the Divine Word. They act upon it and urge others to do the

same.

The third source of guidance is *Ḥadīth*, by which we mean those traditions which were compiled from the statements of diverse narrators a century and a half after the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him).

The distinction between *Sunnah* and *Ḥadīth* is that *Sunnah* is a continuous practice which was started by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). It is only next to the Holy Qur'ān in its certainty. As the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) was commissioned for the propagation of the Qur'ān, he was also commissioned for establishing the *Sunnah*. As the Holy Qur'ān is certain so is the continuous *Sunnah* which he practised. Both these tasks were performed by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) as his duty. For instance, when the Prayer services were made obligatory, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) illustrated by his action how many *rak'as* were to be performed in each Prayer service. In the same way, he illustrated the performance of the pilgrimage. He thus established thousands of his companions on his practice. The practical illustration which has been continuous among the Muslims is the *Sunnah*. On the other hand, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) did not have the *Ḥadīth* recorded in his presence nor did he make any arrangement for its compilation. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr (May Allāh be pleased with him) had collected some *Aḥādīth* and then had them burnt out of greater caution as he himself had not heard them from the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) and did not know their reality. When the time of the companions of the Holy

Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) had passed some of their successors thought of compiling the *Aḥādīth* and they were compiled. There is no doubt that most of the compilers of *Ḥadīth* were very pious and righteous. They tested the accuracy of *Aḥādīth* as far as it was possible and tried to steer clear of those which, in their opinion, were manufactured. They rejected every *Ḥadīth* any narrator of which was of doubtful veracity. As all this activity was *ex post factum*, it was no more than conjecture. Yet, it would be most unfair to say that all *Aḥādīth* are vain and useless and false. So much care was taken in compiling the *Aḥādīth*, and such research and criticism were employed in the task, that they cannot be matched in any other religion.

The Jews also had compilations of *Ḥadīth* and Jesus was opposed by that sect of the Jews who followed the *Aḥādīth*, but it is not proved that the Jewish compilers of *Ḥadīth* had exercised that care in compiling their collections as the Muslim compilers of *Ḥadīth* did. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to imagine that until the *Aḥādīth* were compiled, the Muslims were unaware of the details of Prayer services or did not know the proper way of performing the pilgrimage. The practical illustrations of the *Sunnah* had taught them all the limits and obligations laid down by Islām. It is true, therefore, that even if the *Aḥādīth*, which were collected after a long time, had not been compiled this would not have affected the real teaching of Islām for the Holy Qur'ān and *Sunnah* had fulfilled this need. The *Aḥādīth* only added to that light and Islām became light upon light and the *Aḥādīth* became testimonies for the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*. Of the many sects that subsequently appeared in Islām, the true one derived great benefit from the true *Aḥādīth*.

The correct way, therefore, is neither to treat the *Aḥādīth* as having greater authority than the Qur'ān, as do the *Ahl-e-Ḥadīth* of this age, and not to prefer the statements in the *Aḥādīth* which are contradictory of the Qur'ān to the Qur'ān itself; nor to regard the *Aḥādīth* as vain and false as is the belief of Maulavī 'Abdullāh Chakrālwi. The Qur'ān and *Sunnah* should judge the *Aḥādīth* and those that are not opposed to them should by all means be accepted. This is the straight path and blessed are those who follow it. Most unfortunate and foolish is the person who rejects the *Aḥādīth* altogether without regard to the test that we have proposed.

It should be the duty of the **members of our Community** that a *Ḥadīth* which is not opposed to the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*, should be accepted and followed, however weak might be its authority, and it should be preferred to the rules framed by jurists.

[Review bar Mubāḥatha Batālwi wa Chakrālwi,
Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 19, pp. 209-212]

Authoritative Books

The books that we accept and believe in and consider trustworthy are the following.

First is the Holy Qur'ān. It should, however, be remembered that only that interpretation of a verse of the Qur'ān is correct and trustworthy which is testified to by other verses of the Qur'ān, inasmuch as some verses of the Qur'ān interpret other verses. If certainty of meaning should not be guaranteed by other verses of the Qur'ān, then the meaning should be confirmed by some true and reliable *Ḥadīth*. According to us, the interpretation based merely on one's opinion is not permissible. Everyone who raises an objection against the Holy Qur'ān should

keep this rule in mind.

Of the other books that are accepted by us the *Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī* ranks as the first. All its *Aḥādīth* which are not opposed to the Holy Qur'ān are in our view authoritative. Next comes *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. We accept its authority subject to the condition that it should not be opposed to the Holy Qur'ān and *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*. Next to them are the compilations of *Tirmidhī*, *Ibn-e-Mājah*, *Muattaḥ of Imām Mālik*, *Nassa'ī*, *Abū Dā'ūd* and *Dār Quṭnī*, which we regard as authoritative so long as they are not opposed to the Holy Qur'ān and *Bukhārī* and *Muslim*. These are our religious books and these are the conditions under which we accept them.... Every critic must confine himself to these books and these conditions.

[Āryā Dharam, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 10, pp. 86-87]

Book of Allāh to be Preferred to All

Regarding the Book and *Sunnah* as authorities, I believe that the **Book of Allah is to be preferred above all others**. If the purport of a *Ḥadīth* is not opposed to the Book of Allāh, it would be accepted as authoritative, but we will not accept an interpretation of a *Ḥadīth* which is opposed to the clear text of the Holy Qur'ān. So far as possible, we shall try to interpret a *Ḥadīth* so that it should be in accord with the clear text of the Book of Allāh, but if we come across a *Ḥadīth* which is opposed to the text of the Holy Qur'ān, and it cannot be interpreted in any other way, we would reject it as **spurious**, inasmuch as God, the Glorious, has said:

قِيَامِي حَدِيثًا بَعْدَ الْكَلِمَةِ الَّتِي فِيهَا يُؤْمَنُونَ³⁰

In what discourse apart from Allāh and His command-

³⁰ Al-Jāthiyah, 45:7 [Publisher]

ments will they believe?

This means that if the Holy Qur'ān is conclusive and positive about a matter and its meaning is clear, a believer should not accept a *Ḥadīth* which is clearly opposed to it. To the same effect is the verse:

فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ³¹

According to these verses a **believer must accept the Book of Allāh without condition and should accept a *Ḥadīth* conditionally. This is my stand.**

[Al-Ḥaq, Mubāḥatha Ludhiāna, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 4, pp. 11-12]

A person who is bestowed the understanding of the Qur'ān by Divine grace, and who finds that a *Ḥadīth* is opposed to a verse of the Qur'ān, should, out of respect, so far as it is possible, so interpret the *Ḥadīth* as to bring it into accord with the Holy Qur'ān, but if this is not possible and cannot by any means be achieved, he should regard the *Ḥadīth* as spurious. This is better for us. We should seek an interpretation of a *Ḥadīth* which is not opposed to the Holy Qur'ān, but if this should not be possible it would be heresy and disbelief that we should give up the Qur'ān for the sake of *Aḥādīth*, which have been conveyed to us by human hands and with regard to which it is not only a possibility, but a certainty, that they have got mixed up with human statements.

[Al-Ḥaq, Mubāḥatha Ludhiāna, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 4, p. 21]

Authenticity of Aḥādīth

The *Aḥādīth* are divided into two parts. One part is that which is completely **protected by practice**, that is to say

³¹ 'In what thing will they believe thereafter?'—Al-A'rāf, 7:186
[Publisher]

such *Aḥādīth* as are strengthened and are carrying the degree of certainty by the firm and strong and certain method of practice, and **which are comprehensive of all religious needs and worship and covenants and dealings and the commandments of the law.** Such *Aḥādīth* are doubtless certain and are fully proved. The strength of these *Aḥādīth* is not derived from the art of compilation of *Ḥadīth*, nor from their inherent force, nor from the reliability of and confidence in their narrators, but is bestowed by the blessings of practice. I accept these *Aḥādīth* so far as they are supported by practice up to a certain degree of certainty. But the other portions of *Aḥādīth* which are not related to practice and are accepted on the basis of the truthfulness of their narrators are not held by me as being beyond the status of conjecture. At the most they can be employed as useful conjecture inasmuch as the manner in which they have been compiled is not certain and conclusive, but leaves room for perversion.

[Al-Ḥaq, *Mubāḥatha Ludhiāna, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 4, p. 35]

An objector hears from someone that the *Aḥādīth* are not reliable and he immediately concludes therefrom that with the exception of the Holy Qur'ān all other authorities in Islām are baseless and doubtful and fall far short of certainty and conclusiveness. This is a great mistake, the first result of which is to destroy faith and religion; for if it were true that with the exception of the Holy Qur'ān all other sources are false, imposture, conjectures and imagination, then little would be left of Islām for all the details of our faith have come down to us through *Aḥādīth*. Our Prayer services have been made obligatory by the Holy Qur'ān, but it is nowhere laid down in the Qur'ān that the Dawn Prayer (*Fajr*) comprises two *rak'as*

of *Fard* and two *rak'as* of *Sunnah*, and the Noon Prayer (*Zuhr*) comprises four *rak'as* of *Fard* and four and then two *rak'as* of *Sunnah*, and the Sunset Prayer (*Maghrib*) comprises three *rak'as* of *Fard* and the Evening Prayer (*Ishā*) comprises four *rak'as* of *Fard*. In the same way, we have to depend upon *Aḥādīth* to discover the details of *Zakāt*. There are thousands of details relating to worship and dealings and covenants which are derived from the same source. Besides, the principal source of Islāmic history is *Aḥādīth*. If *Aḥādīth* are not to be relied upon you cannot take it as certain that **Abū Bakr** and **‘Umar** and **‘Uthmān** and **‘Alī** (May Allāh be pleased with them) were the companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, who became his successors in that order and died in that order. If *Aḥādīth* are not to be relied upon, we cannot be certain about the existence of these great personalities and it might be possible that all these names are fictitious and that there was no Abū Bakr, no ‘Umar, no ‘Uthmān and no ‘Alī.... In the same way, shall we deny that the name of the father of the Holy Prophet^{sa} (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) was ‘Abdullāh, and the name of his mother was Āminah, and the name of his grandfather was ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib, and one of his wives was named **Khadīja** and another **‘Āysha**, and another **Ḥafṣa** (May Allāh be pleased with them) and that the name of his foster-mother was **Ḥalīma**, and that he used to withdraw to **cave Ḥirā** for worship and that some of his companions migrated to Abyssinia, and that for ten years after his advent, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) resided in Mecca and that thereafter there were all those battles that are not even mentioned in the Qur’ān, simply because these facts are established by *Aḥādīth* and the *Aḥādīth* amount to nothing?

Were that so, it would not be possible for the Muslims to relate any portion of the biography of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). It should be observed that the events of the life of our lord and master, what kind of life he led in Mecca before his advent, and in what year he called people to his Prophethood, and in what order people embraced Islām, and how were they persecuted by the disbelievers in the ten Meccan years, and how the wars began, and in which of them the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) took part himself, and to what regions the rule of Islām had extended in his lifetime, and whether he addressed letters to the rulers of the time, inviting them to Islām, and if he did so, what was their response, and after his death what were the victories achieved during the time of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{RA}, and what difficulties he had to contend with, and what countries were conquered in the time of Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{RA}, all these matters are known through *Aḥādīth* and the statements of the companions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). If the *Aḥādīth* amount to nothing, it would not only be difficult but would be impossible to discover the events of those times and in such a case the opponents of Islām would be free to invent whatever they like concerning the events of the life of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) and of the lives of his companions, (May Allāh be pleased with them). We would thus afford to the enemies of Islām a great opportunity of making baseless attacks against Islām and we would have to confess that all the events related in the *Aḥādīth* are baseless and imaginary, so much so, that even the names of the companions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) are not known

for certain. To suppose that we cannot derive any certain and conclusive truth from the *Aḥādīth* would amount to destroying a great portion of Islām with our own hands.

The true and correct position is that we must accept whatever is stated in the *Aḥādīth* unless it should be opposed to the Qur'ān in clear terms. It is admitted that it is natural for man to tell the truth and that recourse is had to falsehood under some compulsion, for falsehood is unnatural. To doubt the conclusiveness and correctness of the *Aḥādīth*, which through practice had become a characteristic of the different groups of Muslims, would amount to insanity. For instance, if anyone were to contend that the number of *rak'as* performed by the Muslims in the five daily services is a doubtful matter, inasmuch as there is no verse in the Qur'ān prescribing two *rak'as* for the dawn prayer (*Fajr*) and two for the Friday prayer (*Jumu'ah*) and two each for the two *'Eid* services and that most of the *Aḥādīth* are unreliable, would such a one be in the right? If such an opinion were accepted about the *Aḥādīth*, we would first have to forego the Prayer services, for the Qur'ān has not prescribed anywhere the method of performance of Prayer services and they are performed only on the basis of the accuracy of *Aḥādīth*....

This is a serious mistake which has drawn the followers of nature in this age far away from Islām. They imagine that all Islāmic practices and ceremonial and worship and biographies and history in connection with which reference is made to *Aḥādīth*, are established only on the basis of a few *Aḥādīth*. This is a clear error. The practice which the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) had established with his own hands, had become so common among millions of people that even if there had

been no trace of the compilers of *Aḥādīth*, no harm would have been done. Everyone has to admit that the Holy Teacher and Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) had not so confined his teaching as to train only a few people in it and to leave all others unaware of it. Had that been so, Islām would have been so corrupted that it could not have been reformed through the efforts of any compiler of *Ḥadīth*. The Imāms of *Aḥādīth* have compiled thousands of *Aḥādīth* relating to religious instruction, yet there is no *Ḥadīth* which was not being acted upon before its being recorded and which was not known to the world. If there is any teaching, or event, or doctrine the foundation of which has only been laid by the Imāms of *Ḥadīth* on the basis of some report and no sign of it is discoverable in practice, nor is it mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān, then without doubt such a report which became known a century and a half later, would absolutely lack certainty and would deserve whatever condemnation might be directed at it. Such *Aḥādīth* have no great relationship with faith in the history of Islām. If you look with care you will find that the Imāms of *Aḥādīth* have very seldom mentioned *Aḥādīth* no trace of which is found in practice. It is, therefore, not true, as some ignorant ones imagine, that the world has learnt of the hundreds of matters relating to the faith, even fasting and Prayer services, only from the *Aḥādīth* compiled by Bukhārī and Muslim and others. Were the Muslims without faith for a century and a half? Did they not perform the Prayer services? Did they not pay Zakāt? Did they not perform the Pilgrimage? Were they unaware of the Islāmic doctrines that are mentioned in the *Aḥādīth*? Certainly not.

4

ANGELS

Those people are to be pitied who, by being affected by the darkness of false philosophy, **deny the existence of angels and satans** and reject the clear texts and proofs comprised in the Holy Qur'ān, and foolishly fall into the pit of heresy. **This problem is one of those for proof of which, from the verities comprised in the Holy Qur'ān, God Almighty has chosen me alone.** *All praise is due to Allāh for this.*

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, p. 89]

God Almighty, Who in His Transcendence and Holiness is above everything, employs appropriate agencies for His signs and manifestations. Bodies and material things confined as they are to their personal characteristics, and conscious of their existence and characterised by their designs and natural actions, and having a permanent existence, which comprises self and excludes non-self, they have drawn far away from the Cause of causes and the Absolute Benevolent. They are shut off by a thick veil of their own existence and ego and their having been created. They are not worthy that those graces of the Almighty should descend upon them directly which can only descend if the veils that have been mentioned did not intervene and their existence wholly resembled non-existence. As their existence does not resemble non-existence, everything of this kind of creation loudly proclaims its existence. The sun proclaims that it is a body that is the source of heat and cold that affects the

world in three hundred and sixty-five forms and creates heat by its rays and causes cold by their diversion and rules over bodies and their matter and their shapes. The earth proclaims that it is a body divided into a thousand countries, that it produces vegetation of diverse types, that it prepares various types of minerals inside it and that it accepts heavenly effects like a woman. The fire proclaims that it is something that burns and possesses the quality of combustion and is a substitute for the sun in the dark. Thus everything in the earth praises itself....

All these things proclaim their praise and are veiled in the screen of their characteristics and have drawn away from the Source of Grace and, without the intervention of such things as are free from these veils, no design of the Fountainhead of Grace can establish a relationship with them inasmuch as the veil steps in between. The Wisdom of God Almighty, therefore, demanded that to be the primary manifestation of His designs, there should be a form of creation which should not be veiled by self, but should possess a form which, contrary to other things, should by its nature be free from intervening self and should serve God Almighty as His limbs, and its numbers should correspond to the designs of God Almighty which are related to the whole of creation. That unusual creation should possess a nature like a transparent mirror and should be ever present before God Almighty. It should have two directions. One direction should be that of uniqueness and transcendence and, being imperceptible and free from veils, it should be different from the other forms of creation and should resemble closely by way of reflection the Being of God Almighty and should not be veiled by self. The other direction should be that of being created, on account of which they should have a

relationship with the rest of creation and should be able to approach them. Thus, through this design of God Almighty, this wonderful form of creation came into being which is called angels. They are so lost in obedience to God that they have no will or fashion or design of their own, and no personal faculties whereby they could be kind to anyone on their own, or could be angry with anyone on their own, or could desire something on their own, or could dislike something on their own. They are wholly like the limbs of the Divine. All the designs of God Almighty are first reflected in their transparent mirrors and through their mediation are spread in the whole of creation. God Almighty, on account of His Perfect Holiness, is in extreme uniqueness and transcendence, therefore, those that are not free from ego and from the opaqueness of veiled existence and are conscious of their existence have no relationship with the Fountainhead of Grace. Thus, the need arose for a form of creation which on the one side should be related to God Almighty and on the other to His creation so that they should obtain grace from one side and communicate it to the other.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, pp. 161-170, footnote]

Angels are External Means of the Fulfilment of Our Spiritual Needs

In order to accept the existence of angels, the easiest way is that we should direct our reason to the following. It is admitted that for the training and perfection of our bodies, and in order that the desired actions of our senses should be carried into effect, God Almighty has promulgated the law of nature that the elements and the sun and the moon and all the stars have been pressed into service

that they should help our bodies and faculties to perform all their functions in the best manner possible. We cannot escape from the verity that our eyes cannot perform their function by their own light unless they are aided by the light of the sun, and our ears cannot hear anything by their faculty of hearing unless they are aided by the air. Does this not prove that Divine law has ordained that the perfection of our faculties should be achieved through external means and that our nature cannot dispense with the help of external means? If we will observe carefully we will find that not in one or two matters, but for the perfection of all our senses and faculties and powers, we are dependent upon external help.

As this law and system of God Almighty, Whose works display unity and appropriateness, operates firmly and compulsorily with reference to our external faculties and senses and our material needs, then does it not follow necessarily that there should be some system for our spiritual perfection and spiritual performance so that the identity of the two systems should prove the Unity of the Creator? It is obvious that the All-Wise One Who has instituted this external system and has chosen that through the effect of the external means like the heavenly bodies and elements, etc., our bodies and faculties and senses should be perfected, the same All-Wise and All-Powerful One would have chosen that system for our spiritual perfection, for He is One without associate and there is unity in all His wisdom and works. Thus the external means which affect our spirituality and fulfil our spiritual needs, as the sun and the moon and the elements help us with regard to our physical needs, are known by the name of angels. This proves the existence of angels and, observing the law of nature as a whole, we are

compelled to acknowledge their existence though we may not be able to penetrate to their reality, nor is this necessary. When we have accepted the external law, there is no reason why in the same way we should not accept the internal law. We shall have to accept it in the same way as we have accepted the external law. That is the reason why God Almighty in His Holy Book has set forth these two laws in the same words, as He says:

وَالذَّرِّيَّتِ ذُرَّاءَ ۗ قَالَ اجْمَلِي ۗ إِنَّهُ قَالَ اجْمَلِي ۗ فَمَا لِيُبْدِيَ وَيُخْتَلِئُ أَعْيُنَ عِبَادِهِ حَبَإً ثَائِبًا مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ ۗ وَمَا يَذُرُّهَا إِلَّا أَنْفَاسُ الرِّجَالِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْأَنْثَىٰ ۗ وَقَدْ خَلَّيْنَا مَا يُكْفِّرُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ الْمَوْتِ ۗ وَهُمْ كَارِبُونَ إِلَى الْمُنْتَهَىٰ ۗ وَإِنَّهَا لَشَرَّاءَ ۗ قَالَ لَمْ يَسْمِعُوا أَمْرًا ۗ³²

that is to say, God puts forward the testimony of the winds that separate the vapours from the oceans and other waters and carry them inside like pregnant women and waft them in the shape of clouds to their goal and the testimony of the angels that put into effect all these matters. This indicates that the winds have no power in themselves to lift the vapours from the oceans and to convert them into clouds and to cause them to send down rain where it is needed and thus administer matters. All this is the function of angels.

In these verses God Almighty first indicated, like philosophers, the cause of rain descending from the clouds and set out how water becomes vapour and then becomes clouds, then in the last verse:

فَالْمُقَسَّمَاتِ أَمْرًا³³

disclosed the reality that no one should imagine that the system of material causes and effects is adequate for the Divine dispensation, but that a system of spiritual causes is behind this physical system which supports this visible

³² Al-Dhāriyāt, 51:2-5 [Publisher]

³³ Al-Dhāriyāt, 51:5 [Publisher]

system. At another place it is said:

وَالْمُرْسَلَاتُ عُرْفًا ۚ فَالْحَصْفُ عَصْفًا ۚ وَالتُّشْرَاتُ نَشْرًا ۚ
فَالْفُرْقَاتُ فُرْقًا ۚ فَالْمُقَدِّمَاتُ أَمْرًا ۚ³⁴

This means that God Almighty puts forth the testimony of the winds and angels which proceed slowly and then proceed fast, and the winds that raise the clouds, and the angels which are appointed over them, and the winds that carry the message to the ears, and the angels who carry the Divine Word to the hearts.

In this way, God Almighty has combined the angels and stars in the verse:

فَالْمَكْرُورَاتُ أَمْرًا³⁵

The seven planets have been referred to as arranging the affairs of the earth externally and the angels are referred to as arranging them internally. The commentary *Fath-ul-Bayān* sets forth both these views on the authority of Mu‘ādh bin Jabal and Qushairī. Ibn-e-Kathīr has reported on the authority of Ḥasan that all arrangements that are carried out between heaven and earth are carried out through angels, and Ibn-e-Kathīr writes that this is an agreed interpretation.

Ibn-e-Jarīr has interpreted the verse:

فَالْمَكْرُورَاتُ أَمْرًا³⁶

as meaning that the angels carry out the arrangements of the universe, that is to say, that though on the surface,

³⁴ Al-Mursalāt, 77:2-6 [Publisher]

³⁵ ‘And by those who plan and execute their task well.’—Al-Nāzi‘āt 79:6 [Publisher]

³⁶ Al-Nāzi‘āt, 79:6 [Publisher]

stars and the sun and the moon and the elements carry out their functions, yet in reality it is carried out by angels.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, pp. 133-137 Footnote]

Independent Existence of Angels

Our observation and our reflection and intelligence and thinking clearly show that for every grace there are **intervening causes** between God Almighty and ourselves, through whose intervention every faculty receives grace according to its need. **This establishes the existence of angels and jinns.** We have only to prove that for the performance of good or ill our faculties alone are not enough and that we are in need of external help and assistance which has supernatural effect. These helpers and assistants do not operate directly without any mediation. There are some mediatory means. The observation of the **law of nature** has established conclusively and certainly that those helpers and assistants exist outside of us. We may not be aware of their true reality, but we know for certain that they are neither the Almighty Himself operating directly, nor are they our own faculties and capacities. They are a species of creation which have independent existence. **When we name any of them as calling to good, we would describe him as the Holy Spirit or Gabriel, and when we name him as calling to evil we will describe him as Satan or Iblīs.** It is not necessary that we should exhibit the Holy Spirit or Satan to every dark heart, though those who have insight can see them and they become visible in visions.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, pp. 86-88]

Angels Carry Out Appropriate Duties

May Allāh guide you, the Holy Qur'ān nowhere says that God is changeable, but it does say that man is changeable. Therefore, God carries out changes appropriate to man. When a child is in the womb, it is nourished on blood, and when it is born, for a time it is nourished on milk and thereafter takes other food. God Almighty makes appropriate provision for it from time to time. When a child is in the womb God Almighty commands the angel, i.e., internal particles of the womb, to manufacture blood for it. When it is born that command is cancelled. The angels of the mother's breasts, which are their particles, are commanded to produce milk. When a child finishes its nurture through milk, that command is also cancelled and the angels of the earth, who are its particles, are commanded to produce food and water for it till the end. Hence we believe that such changes are part of Divine Will....

God has taught us in the Holy Qur'ān that this natural system does not run by itself and that all the particles of these things hear the voice of God and are His angels, who are appointed by Him to carry out certain functions and they do so according to His will. The particles of gold manufacture gold, and the particles of silver manufacture silver, and the particles of pearls manufacture pearls, and the particles of the human body prepare the human child in the womb. These particles do not function on their own, but hear God's voice and act in accordance with it. That is why they are called His angels.

Angels are of many types. These are angels of the earth. The angels of heaven exercise their influence from heaven, as the heat of the sun is an angel of God which

ripens the fruits and performs other functions. The winds are God's angels which assemble the clouds and influence the fields in different ways, and then above them there are other angels which exercise their influence. Natural sciences bear witness that angels are essential beings; we observe them with our own eyes.

[Nasīm-e-Da'wat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 19, pp. 461-463]

Three Types of Angels

The Holy Qur'ān mentions three types of angels:

- (1) The particles of earthly bodies and the faculties of souls.
- (2) Heaven, the sun, the moon and the clouds of the earth that are in operation.
- (3) The higher powers above all these like Gabriel and Michael, 'Izrā'il and others which are called *Jum* in the Vedās....

The Holy Qur'ān uses the word angel very frequently. Everything that hears God's voice is His angel. Thus every particle of the world is an angel of God for it hears His voice and obeys Him.

[Nasīm-e-Da'wat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 19, pp. 456-457]

Angels do not Move from their Appointed Places

Islāmic scholars do not affirm that angels descend upon the earth in person walking on their feet. This notion is obviously false for had it been necessary for the angels to descend upon the earth in their proper person for the performance of their functions it would have been impossible for them to carry out anything to its end. For instance, the angel of death takes possession in one second of the souls of thousands of people who dwell in

different countries and towns at long distances from each other. Were it necessary for him to travel on his feet to each country or town or home to take possession of the soul of each person, it would require not only one second to accomplish his task, but a period of many months would not be sufficient. Is it possible that someone moving like human beings should go around the world in the twinkling of an eye? Angels do not move an inch from the places appointed for them by God Almighty. God Almighty says on their behalf in the Holy Qur'ān:

۞ وَمَا مَنَّا بِرَأْيِهِ لَكُمْ مَقَآمٌ مَّعْلُومٌ ۝ وَإِنَّا لَنَخْنِ الصَّٰقُوتِ ۝

(Sūrah Şāffāt, Part number 23)

As the sun occupies its station and its heat and light spreading upon the earth benefit everything, in the same way, the heavenly spirits whether they are called heavenly bodies according to the concept of the Greeks, or they are called the spirits of the planets in the terms of the Vedās, or we should call them in a straightforward way the angels of God, this wonderful creation occupies its appointed place and by the perfect Wisdom of God Almighty is occupied in carrying everything that is eager, to its desired goal. This creation performs external services as well as internal services. As our bodies and our overt faculties are influenced by the sun and the moon and other planets, in the same way, our hearts and minds and all our spiritual faculties are influenced by these angels according to our diverse capacities. Whatever possesses the capacity to become something excel-

³⁷ ‘(The angles say:) And there is not one of us but has an appointed station. And, verily, we are those who stand ranged in ranks.’—Al-Şāffāt, 37:165-166 [Publisher]

lent—even if it is a speck of dust, or is a drop of water which enters a pearl-oyster, or is a drop of water which enters the womb—by the spiritual training of the angels of God becomes a pearl, or a ruby, or an emerald, or a sapphire, or a man of superior heart and mind....

Angels are the Life of the Planets

The manner in which the Holy Qur'ān has expounded the subject of angels is straightforward and reasonable and there is no escape from accepting it. Deep reflection over the Holy Qur'ān discloses that for the development of man, and indeed for the external and internal development of the whole universe, some intermediaries are needed. It appears clearly from certain indications in the Qur'ān that some of the pure beings that are called angels have distinct relationship with heavenly bodies. Some of them drive the wind and some cause the rain to descend and some others cause other influences to descend upon the earth. There is no doubt that those pure creations would be related to the bright and illumined stars that are in heaven, but this relationship should not be deemed to be the relationship that exists between every animate and its soul. Those pure spirits have, on account of the brightness and light that they possess, an indeterminate spiritual relationship with the bright stars which is so strong that, if it were to be supposed that those pure spirits had departed from those stars, the faculties of the latter would be upset. It is through the hidden power of those spirits that the stars carry out their functions. It might be said that as God Almighty is, as it were, the life of the universe, those illumined spirits are, as it were, the life of the planets and stars and by their departure the condition of the planets and the stars is bound to be

disrupted. No one has ever differed that all the stars and planets in heaven are occupied all the time in the development and perfection of the earthly universe. It is a proved verity that all vegetables, minerals and animals are influenced day and night by heavenly planets. Even an ignorant peasant believes that the light of the moon fosters the size of fruits and that sunshine helps to ripen and sweeten them and certain winds increase their quantity. As the visible universe is developed through the influence of heavenly bodies, there can be no doubt that the invisible universe is, by the command of God Almighty, influenced by the bright spirits which have such a strong relationship with the bright heavenly bodies as the soul has with the body.

Angels Sometimes Appear in Human Form

Apparently it may seem disrespectful that there should be a mediator between God Almighty and His holy Prophets for the conveyance of the lights of revelation, but reflection would show that there is here no disrespect. It is in accord with the general law of God Almighty which is in operation with regard to everything and which can be clearly perceived. We observe that the Prophets also depend upon mediators in the matter of the operation of their bodies and their faculties. However illumined and blessed is the eye of a Prophet, yet, like the eyes of the common people, he cannot see anything without the help of the light of the sun or some substitute for it, and his ear cannot hear without the mediation of the air. Thus one is compelled to admit that the spirituality of a Prophet must be affected by the bright spirits of the stars even more than the spirituality of the common man for the clearer and more perfect is the capacity the clearer

and more perfect is the influence. The Holy Qurʾān shows that the stars and the planets each possess a spirit and as each of them has characteristics which influence everything in the earth according to their capacity, in the same way, their illumined spirits also possess diverse qualities which by the command of the All-Wise One influence the spirit of the earthly universe. These bright spirits appear in human form to perfect servants of God. These words are not rhetoric but the truth which must be accepted by everyone who seeks truth and wisdom.

[Tauḍīḥ-e-Marām, Rūḥānī Khazāʾin, vol. 3, pp. 66-72]

We do not deny the descent of angels and if anyone were to offer proof that the **angels** descend in such manner that they depart from heaven, we would be prepared to examine this proof and to accept it if it were established. The existence of angels is **part of faith**. The **descent of God towards the heaven of the world** and the descent of angels are both realities which we cannot comprehend. So much is established by the Book of God that angels appear on the earth as a **new creation**. The appearance of Gabriel in the form of **Deḥya Kalbī** was a new creation, or what else was it? It is not necessary that to admit the possibility of a new creation, we should destroy the first creation. The first creation is established and settled in heaven and the second creation is a result of God Almighty's wide power. Is it beyond the power of **God Almighty** that He should exhibit **one being** at two places in **two bodies**? Certainly not.

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ³⁸

[Sirr-ul-Khilāfah, Rūḥānī Khazāʾin, vol. 8, pp. 414-415]

³⁸ ‘Dost thou not know that Allāh has power to do all that He wills?’—Al-Baqarah, 2:107 [Publisher]

Ascent and Descent of Angels

I believe that to Allāh belong angels and that they are close to Him. For everyone of them there is an appointed place. None of them descends from that place or ascends from it. Their coming down that is mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān is not like the descending of a man from a higher to a lower level, nor is their ascending like the ascending of a man from a lower level to a higher level, inasmuch as the descending of a man involves a change in his position and is achieved by effort and involves fatigue; whereas angels do not suffer any fatigue nor have they to make any effort, nor are they subject to any change. Therefore, do not imagine that their descent and ascent resembles the descent and ascent of other bodies; their descent and ascent resembles the descent and ascent of Allāh from and to His Throne to and from the heaven of the earth. Allāh has made their existence a part of faith, and has said:

مَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ³⁹

‘None knows the hosts of thy Lord but He.’ Then believe in their descent and their ascent and do not seek to penetrate into their reality, that is best and closest to righteousness. Allāh has described them as standing, in prostration, arranged in rows, glorifying God and occupying their appointed places. He has bestowed these attributes upon them eternally and permanently and has made them characteristic of them. It is not, therefore, permissible that the angels should give up their prostration and their standing and should disrupt their rows, or should interrupt their glorification of God and their

³⁹ Al-Muddaththir, 74:32 [Publisher]

proclaiming His Holiness and should descend from their appointed places to the earth and should depart from the high heaven. Indeed they move in accord with their nature while still keeping to their appointed places like the King Who has settled Himself on the Throne. You know that Allāh descends to the heaven of the earth in the latter part of the night, but it cannot be said that He departs from His Throne and then ascends back to it later. The same is the case with the angels who reflect the attributes of their Lord as the shadow reflects the original. We do not realize the reality of it but we believe in it. We cannot describe their condition in the terms of the conditions of man, the reality of whose attributes and the limits of whose qualities and whose movements and whose stillness we recognize and understand. Allāh has forbidden us that and has said:

مَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ⁴⁰

“None knows the hosts of thy Lord but He.” Then mind your duty to Allāh, O men of wisdom.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, pp. 384-387]

Angels are the Cause of Every Change

Now that it is clearly established that by the Divine law of nature for the spiritual system there are, like the physical system, external influences which are called angels, it remains to show that whatever is happening in the physical system also does not take place without the mediation of angels. God Almighty has called angels regulators and distributors and they are the cause of every change and development. They bear aloft the

⁴⁰ Al-Muddaththir, 74:32 [Publisher]

Throne of God Almighty. The verse:

إِنَّ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ⁴¹

proves the appointment of angels over everything. The following verse of the Holy Qur'ān also indicates this:

وَأَنشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَهِيَ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاهِيَةٌ وَالْمَلَكُ عَلَىٰ أَرْجَائِهَا
وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَنِيَةٌ⁴²

This means that on the Day of Judgement heaven will be rent asunder, and appear loose and listless, and will lose its faculties, because the angels who were like the soul of the heavens and heavenly bodies will give up all the connections and will retire to the edges and on that day eight angels will bear aloft the Throne of God Almighty.

In his commentary on this verse Shāh ‘Abd-ul-‘Azīz writes that the continuation of heaven is through the spirits, that is to say, the angels who are like spirits of the heaven and heavenly bodies, and as the soul safeguards the body and controls it, in the same way some angels control heaven and heavenly bodies and all heavenly bodies exist through them and the action of the planets takes place through their means. When the angels will depart from that body as the soul departs from the physical body the whole system of heaven will be upset as the physical system is upset by the departure of the soul. Another verse of the Holy Qur'ān also indicates this:

وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيْطَانِ

(Sūrah Al-Mulk, Part Number 29)

⁴¹ ‘There is no soul but has a guardian over it.’—Al-Ṭāriq, 86:5 [Publisher]

⁴² Al-Ḥāqqah, 69:17-18 [Publisher]

⁴³ Al-Mulk, 67:6 [Publisher]

We have adorned the lowest heaven with lamps and we have made them the means of driving away satans.

It has been established by the Qur'ānic text that the regulators and distributors of all matters from the heaven to the earth are angels, and in this verse it is said that the shooting stars are the stars which are in the lower heaven. This might appear to contradict the verses relating to the angels, but if we consider carefully there is no contradiction. The Holy Qur'ān teaches that **the angels are like the souls of heaven and heavenly bodies and it is obvious that the soul of anything is not apart from it.** That is why God Almighty has in some places in the Holy Qur'ān mentioned the angels as the cause of shooting stars and at other places has mentioned the stars as their cause, inasmuch as angels influence the stars as the soul influences the body. That influence proceeds from the stars and affects the earthly vapours that have the capacity to become shooting stars and they are set aflame by the power of Almighty God. In another way, the angels establish a connection with the shooting stars and direct them to the right and left with their light. No philosopher will deny that whatever happens on the earth or in the atmosphere its originative cause are the stars and heavenly influences. Not everyone can penetrate the mystery that the faculties of the stars derive grace from the angels. This mystery was disclosed by the Holy Qur'ān and those possessing insight paid attention to it.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, pp. 137-143, footnote]

Everything that has a spirit is safeguarded by angels. Thus, according to this verse, we have to believe with regard to the spirit of the planets that **all stars, the sun, the moon, mercury and mars, etc.,** are under the protection of angels, that is to say, everyone of them has an angel

appointed who safeguards it and enables it to perform its functions properly.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, p. 77 footnote]

Two Systems for the Proper Functioning of the Universe

Angels safeguard against physical calamities also, but this safeguarding is in a spiritual manner. For instance, if a person is standing at a place where a wall is about to fall down, no angel will lift him up with his hands and take him away from the place. If that person is destined to be saved, an angel would convey to him the warning that he should move away. But the protection of stars and elements, etc., is physical.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, p. 99, footnote]

The All-Powerful One has not confined the events of the world to a visible system, but there is also an invisible system which is in operation all the time. The sun and the moon and the earth, and the vapours that become rain, and the winds that blow fiercely, and the hail that descends upon the earth and the shooting stars have physical causes for all their actions and changes and revolutions and occurrences which are set out in books on astronomy and physics, yet those who possess insight know that behind these causes there are other causes which regulate them and which are called **angels**. Whatever they are connected with, they carry it to its goal and in their functions they keep in mind the spiritual objects that God Almighty has committed to them. Their action is not vain but in all that they do they have in mind great objectives.

It is an established verity which we have set out in some

detail in our booklet *Tauḏīḩ-e-Marām* that the All-Wise One has instituted two systems for the proper functioning of the universe. The invisible system is related to the angels and there is no branch of the visible system which does not have the invisible system behind it. It can be easily understood, therefore, that the causes of the visible system of shooting stars do not stand in the way of the causes of the spiritual system. The spiritual system is that an **angel is appointed** on every shooting star, who moves it in whatever direction it desires. The movement of shooting stars bears witness to this. It is obvious that the function of the angel cannot be without purpose. Behind it must be some object which is of benefit for the faith and the world, but it is not possible to apprehend the purpose of the function of angels without the mediation of angels. Thus through the mediation of Gabriel (peace be on him) it was disclosed to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) that the object of the angels in the shooting of the stars is **to drive away satans**.

Shooting Stars and Satan

The mystery of how satans are driven away by the shooting of stars appears to be that there is enmity between satans and angels. At the time of the release of these shooting stars, whom they influence by the heat of the stars, the angels spread their bright power in the atmosphere and every shooting star that moves has an angelic life as it comes with the blessing of angels and it possesses a quality which consumes satans. It cannot, therefore, be objected that as jinns are created from fire, they cannot be harmed by fire. For the harm that is inflicted upon the jinns by the shooting stars is not caused by fire but by the light which accompanies the

shooting star which is lit by the angel and which by its nature **consumes the satans**.

So long as a person believes in the existence of God and is not an atheist, he would have to acknowledge that all this system is not in vain and that everything that happens issues from the wisdom and appropriate design of God Almighty, and that design is manifested in accordance with the system through physical means. As God Almighty has not invested bodies with knowledge and intelligence, therefore, for the achievement of that which needs knowledge and intelligence, the mediation of such things was needed which are invested with knowledge and intelligence and they are angels.

As angels do not operate in a vain and purposeless way, but have a purpose in all that they do, it would have to be acknowledged that they have a purpose in the release of shooting stars and, as reason is unable to perceive that purpose, it is useless to ask reason to solve this mystery....

Reason is dependent for this perception on some other means which is beyond the limit of reason. That means is revelation which is bestowed upon man so that it should carry him to those insights and verities to which reason alone has no access and so that it might disclose to him those fine mysteries which cannot be solved through reason. Here by revelation we mean the revelation of the Qur'ān which has disclosed to us that the purpose of the angels in releasing shooting stars is to drive away satans. This is the type of spreading of the light by the angels which affects the darkness of the jinns and reduces their activity, and if the spreading of this light is in a high degree, then on account of its magnetic attraction perfect

manifestations of light are created from among men, otherwise, this spreading of the light on account of its angelic quality pulls the hearts towards light and righteousness and this is a quality the proof of which has always been displayed in the world....

The Divine system is that what is happening in the bodies and the atmosphere, or becomes manifest on occasion, is not the result of the purposeless action of the bodies. The Wise and Powerful One has committed the direction of all these into the hands of the angels, who are occupied with various types of action every moment under the command of the All-Powerful One. They do not act in vain, but cause various types of movement in heaven and earth in an altogether wise way for the achievement of grand purposes. No action of theirs is useless or meaningless.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, pp. 124-133, footnote]

Man Ranks Higher than Angels

It should be remembered that in Islāmic law special angels do not rank higher than special persons. Indeed, the latter rank higher than the former. Their being mediators in the physical or the spiritual system does not indicate their superiority. According to the Holy Qur'ān, they are assigned this function as servants; as Allāh the Glorious has said:

وَسَخَّرَكُمُ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ⁴⁴

The God Who has placed the Sun and the Moon at your service.

A postman conveys the letters of a Ruler to a Governor,

⁴⁴ Ibrāhīm,14:34 [Publisher]

or a Governor-General, but that does not mean that the postman who acts as an agent between the Ruler and the Governor-General ranks higher than the Governor-General. The same is the case with the mediators, who convey the designs of the All-Powerful in the physical and spiritual systems to the earth and occupy themselves in carrying them out. God, the Glorious, has made it clear at several places in the Holy Qur'ān that whatever has been created in earth and heaven is for the benefit of man and man ranks higher and above all of them and is served by them, as it is said:

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ دَائِبِينَ⁴⁵

.... At another place it is said:

إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّن طِينٍ ۝ فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ ۝ فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ ۝ إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ

Call to mind when thy Lord (of Whom you are the ultimate manifestation) said to the angels: I am about to bring into being a man from clay, so when I have perfected him and have breathed into him My spirit, do ye all fall down in prostration before him, that is, occupy yourselves in serving him with great humility and be so subservient as if you were lying in prostration before him. So the angels all fell down in prostration before the perfect man, except Satan, who deprived himself of this good fortune.

⁴⁵ ‘And He has pressed into your service the sun and the moon moving constantly.’—Ibrāhīm, 14:34 [Publisher]

⁴⁶ Ṣād, 38:72-75 [Publisher]

The True Meaning of Prostration to Man

This command to the angels to fall into prostration did not relate to the time when Adam was brought into being; it was a separate command that when a man attains his full stature as a human being and achieves a balance, and the spirit of God Almighty takes up its dwelling in him, they should fall into prostration before such a perfect man, that is to say, they should descend upon him with heavenly lights and should call down blessings upon him. This is an indication of the eternal law which God Almighty puts into force with regard to His elect, that when any person achieves spiritual balance in any age and the spirit of God Almighty takes up its dwelling in him, that is to say, he loses his ego and achieves the rank of immortality in God, angels begin to descend upon him in a special manner. Though in the early stages of his search angels also occupy themselves with his help and service, yet this special descent of angels is so perfect and complete that it can be described as prostration. Prostration indicates that angels are not superior to perfect man, but like royal servants, they pay reverence to perfect man by prostrating themselves before him.

[Taudīh-e-Marām, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 3 pp. 74-77]

Every Angel Performs a Specific Duty

Angels do not all have the same status and rank and do not all perform the same kind of function. Every angel is assigned a different task. Whatever changes take place in the world, and whatever emerges as action out of latent power, and whatever success is achieved by souls and bodies in their goals are all affected by heavenly influences. Sometimes the same angel influences different

types of capacities in different ways. For instance, Gabriel, who is an archangel and is related to a very bright heavenly body, is assigned many forms of service in accordance with the services performed by that heavenly body. Though he descends upon every person who is honoured with Divine revelation (it should be remembered that the true nature of descent is by way of influence, and not in any real sense).

The circle of the effect of his descent assumes small or great proportions according to different capacities. The largest circle of his spiritual effects is that which is related to the revelation that was sent down to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). For this reason the insights and verities and the excellencies of wisdom and composition which are found in their perfection and completeness in the Holy Qur'ān are not found to the same degree in any other book.

It should be borne in mind that the effect of an angel on a human spirit is of two types. First, the effect which by the command of Allāh influences different types of seed in diverse manners in the womb. Secondly, the effect that comes into operation after his coming into being for the purpose of carrying to their perfection the hidden capacities of that being. This second effect, when it is related to a Prophet or perfect saint, is called revelation. It appears that when an eager spirit through the excellence of its light of faith and light of love establishes a friendly relationship with the Fountainhead of grace, and the life-giving love of God Almighty casts its reflection on his love, then whatever ability is conferred upon him to move forward is the manifestation of the hidden effect which God's angel produces in him while he is in the womb. When the person concerned attains to this rank by

the attraction of the first effect, then the same angel casts his influence afresh on him which is filled with light.

The angel does not do this on his own but in his capacity of a mediatory servant; like a pipe which draws water from one side and conveys it to the other, this pipe draws into itself the light of Divine grace and, when man on account of the union of two loves places himself next to the pipe of the Holy Spirit, the grace of revelation flows through that pipe into him. In other words, at that time Gabriel casts his bright shadow on that eager heart and inscribes a reflected picture of himself in it. As the name of the angel who is stationed in heaven is Gabriel, the name of this reflected picture is also Gabriel. If the name of the angel is the Holy Spirit, the name of the reflected picture also is the Holy Spirit. It is not that the angel enters into the man, but his reflection appears in the heart of the man. For instance, when you place a very clear mirror opposite to your face then according to the size of the mirror your features will be reflected in the mirror. It is not that your face and your head being separated from your body are placed in the mirror. They will retain their place in your body. What will be reflected in the mirror is their picture and the size of the reflection will be in accord with the size of the mirror of the heart. For instance, if you look at your face in a small mirror in a ring you will see the whole of your face but every feature will appear very small, but if you look at your face in a large mirror, which is sufficient for the reflection of all your features, you will behold the reflection of all your features and limbs at their proper size. The same is the case with the effect of Gabriel. It is Gabriel who casts the effect of revelation on the heart even of a minor saint, and the same Gabriel used to cast the effect of revelation

on the heart of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). But the difference between the two revelations is like the difference in the reflection in the mirror of the ring and in a large mirror. Though it is the same Gabriel and he has the same effects yet not all matter that is affected has the same extent and the same clearness.

The difference of the effects of Gabriel is not only in their quantity but is also with regard to their quality. That is to say, the purity of heart which is the condition of reflection is not of the same degree in all recipients of revelation. As you can observe not all mirrors possess the same degree of transparency. Some are so clear and bright that the reflection of the beholder is seen in its perfection in them, and some are so opaque and dusty and smoky that the reflection cannot be seen clearly in them. Indeed, some are so distorted that if the lips are visible in the reflection the nose is not, and if the nose is visible the eyes are not. The same is the case with the mirrors of the hearts. In a heart that is of the utmost purity the reflection is very clear and in a heart which is dusty, to some degree, the reflection is also vague to the same degree. This purity was possessed to a complete and perfect degree by the heart of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him); no other heart possessed such purity.

[*Tauḍīḥ-e-Marām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 3, pp. 85-88]

I wonder at the intelligence of people who consider the mediation of vapours as essential for rain which comes down from the clouds and deem it impossible for rain to descend without clouds, but for the rain of revelation which falls upon pure hearts, they laugh out of their ignorance at the mediation of angels which is essential

according to the law. They ask whether God Almighty could not send down revelation direct without the mediation of angels. They admit that it is contrary to the law of nature that a sound should be heard without the mediation of air, but they are unaware of the law of nature whereby that air is needed which would spiritually carry the voice of God Almighty to the hearts of the recipients of revelation. They agree that to enable physical eyes to see the light of the sun is necessary, but they do not concede the need of any heavenly light for spiritual eyes.

Now we know the Divine law, that this universe with all its physical and spiritual faculties is like the limbs of God. Everything in its place and time operates as such limbs. Every design of God Almighty is manifested through these limbs, and no design is manifested without their mediation. It should be realized that the relationship of Gabriel to Divine revelation that descends upon pure hearts, which is recognized as essential in Islāmic law, depends upon the true philosophy that we have just mentioned. According to the law of nature that we have mentioned for the communication of revelation or for the bestowal of the capacity to receive revelation, it is necessary that some creation should serve as a limb for the manifestation of the Divine design of revelation as is the case with the fulfilment of physical Divine designs. That limb is, in other words, called Gabriel, who following a movement of the Divine, immediately comes into motion like a limb. When God Almighty turns with love towards a heart that loves Him, then according to the law that we have just mentioned Gabriel, who is related to God Almighty like the air of the breath, or the light of the eye, has also to move simultaneously. In other words,

with the movement of God Almighty, Gabriel also comes into motion involuntarily as the shadow moves with the movement of the original. When the light of Gabriel comes into motion under the power of attraction and motion of the illumined breath of God Almighty, then simultaneously a reflection of it, which should be called the Holy Spirit, is inscribed in the heart of the sincere lover and becomes a necessary part of his true love. Then this power bestows the capacity of an ear for hearing the voice of God and becomes a substitute for eyes for beholding His wonders and works like inspiring heat for causing His revelation to flow from the tongue and guides the tongue forcefully along the lines of the revelation. Till this faculty is created man's heart is blind and his tongue is like a railway wagon which is disconnected from the locomotive. It must, however, be borne in mind that this faculty which is called the Holy Spirit is not produced to the same degree in every heart, but according to the degree of a man's love this light of Gabriel affects him.

It should also be remembered that this power of the Holy Spirit, which by the meeting of the two loves is produced in the heart of man by the reflection of the light of Gabriel, does not mean that a person should constantly hear the word of God Almighty or should constantly behold something through visions. It is a means for the absorbing of heavenly lights. In other words, it is a spiritual light to enable spiritual eyes to see, or is spiritual air for conveying sound to spiritual ears from God. It is obvious that unless there is something within sight mere light cannot exhibit anything, and that unless words issue from the mouth of a speaker no voice can be carried to the ears. This light or air is a heavenly aid which is

bestowed for spiritual senses, as for physical eyes the light of the sun and for physical ears air have been appointed as a medium.

When God Almighty designs to convey His word to the heart of a recipient of revelation then instantaneously a wave of light or a wave of air or a wave of heat for moving the tongue of the recipient of revelation is created in the light of Gabriel for conveyance, and in consequence of this wave or heat simultaneously that text appears before the eyes of the recipient of revelation in writing, or its sound reaches his ears, or its words flow from his tongue. Spiritual senses and spiritual light, which are bestowed as a faculty before revelation, are so bestowed so that before its descent the capacity to receive it should be created. Had it descended at a time when the heart of the recipient did not possess spiritual senses, or the light of the Holy Spirit had not reached his eye or his heart, then through the pure light of what eyes could he have perceived the Divine revelation? It is on account of this need that these two faculties are bestowed in advance upon the recipients of revelation.

Three Functions of Gabriel

Gabriel has three functions relating to revelation. First, when the womb receives the seed of a person whose nature God the Glorious, out of His *Rahmāniyyat*—with which man has nothing to do—desires to make him capable of receiving revelation, He casts the reflection of the light of Gabriel on him in that very condition. Then such a person's nature develops, under Divine direction, the capacity for receiving revelation and he acquires senses for the receipt of revelation.

Secondly, when the love of a servant falls under the

shadow of Divine love then, on account of the providential movement of God Almighty, a movement is produced in the light of Gabriel and that light falls on the heart of the true lover. That is to say, a reflection of that light falls on his heart and produces in it a reflection of Gabriel which operates as light or air or heat and dwells within him as a faculty for the receipt of revelation. One end of it is sunk in the light of Gabriel and the other enters into the heart of the recipient of revelation. This, in other words, is called the Holy Spirit or its reflection.

Thirdly, it is the function of Gabriel that when Divine word manifests itself he comes into motion like a wave and carries the word to the ears of the heart, or being illumined like light presents it to the eyes or, in the guise of heat, causes the tongue to utter the words of the revelation.

[*Tauḍīḥ-e-Marām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 3, pp. 91-94]

When Divine love descends upon human love, then by the meeting of the two a bright and perfect shadow of the **Holy Spirit** is created in the heart of man. At this stage of communion the light of the Holy Spirit is very bright. Extraordinary feats of power, which we have just mentioned, proceed from such people because the **light of the Holy Spirit** is ever present with them and dwells within them and this light never departs from them and they are never separated from it. That light issues from them every moment with their breath and falls upon everything with their look and exhibits its brightness in their words. The name of this light is the Holy Spirit, but this is not the Holy Spirit itself for the Holy Spirit itself is in heaven. This Holy Spirit is a reflection which dwells forever in pure breasts and hearts and brains and does not depart from them even for a moment. Anyone who thinks

that at any time the **Holy Spirit** with all its effects departs from them is entirely based upon falsehood and insults the holy elect of God Almighty by his dark thought. But it is true, that although the real Holy Spirit remains at its station, **its reflection, which is metaphorically called the Holy Spirit**, enters into the breasts and hearts and brains and limbs of those who, **after attaining the station of immortality (Baqā) and communion with God (Liqā)**, become fit for the perfect love of God Almighty with all its blessings to descend upon their pure and undefiled love. When that Holy Spirit descends it establishes a relationship with that person like the relationship of the soul with the body. It becomes the faculty of sight and works in the eyes, and putting on the garment of the faculty of hearing bestows spiritual sense on the ears, it becomes the power of speech of the tongue and the righteousness of the heart and the intelligence of the brain and flows through the hands and affects the feet. In short, it lifts all darkness from the body and illumines it from the hair of the head to the nails of the toes. Were it to depart for a moment, darkness would immediately take its place. It is such a **good companion** for the perfect people that it does not depart from them for a moment and to imagine that it can depart from them would be a confession that after entering into light they fall again into darkness, and that after having been protected and made secure their evil-directing minds revert to them and that after they are bestowed spiritual senses, those senses are rendered useless and are suspended....

Every light, comfort, satisfaction., blessing, steadfastness, and every spiritual bounty, is **bestowed upon the elect through the Holy Spirit**. As for the disbelievers and the wicked, **Satan** has been appointed **their evil companion** for

all time so that he might spread darkness over them every moment and should not leave them alone in their standing and sitting and movement and rest and sleep and waking. **Similarly** for those who are close to God, the **Holy Spirit has been appointed as a good companion** for all time so that it should constantly rain down light upon them and should support them every moment and should not depart from them at any time.

It is obvious that in contrast with the **evil companion** who is the servant and colleague of the wicked, it is necessary that the **good companion should always keep company with those who are close to God**, and the Holy Qur'ān confirms this. Our opponents, however, imagine and assert that the Holy Spirit is the name of **Gabriel** who sometimes descends from heaven and is in close contact with the elect, so much so, that he enters into their hearts, and sometimes he leaves them alone and separates himself from them and **ascends to heaven** at a measureless distance, and cutting off altogether from the elect conceals himself in his station. They are then deprived altogether of the light and blessing which at the time of his descent pervades their hearts and brains and their very hair. If such should be the case, **would it not follow** that after the departure of the **Holy Spirit** those elect are again surrounded by darkness and in place of the **good companion** they are subjected to the influence of the **evil companion**?

Now keep in mind the fear of God and reflect **whether it is consistent with respect and faith and insight and the love of the Holy Prophet** (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) to imagine that he was subject to this defective condition that the **Holy Spirit** departed from him for days, and that during such periods he was deprived of the holy lights which are a reflection of the **Holy Spirit**. Is it not an irony

that the **Christians** should believe firmly that from the moment that the **Holy Spirit** descended on Jesus it never departed from him and that he was supported every moment by the Holy Spirit, so much so, that it did not depart from him even in his sleep and that it never ascended to heaven leaving him alone and deserted and that the light of the Holy Spirit never departed from him for a moment; and **that the Muslims should believe** that the Holy Spirit some times separated himself from the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him).

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, pp. 72-75]

Angels Descend with the Advent of a *Khalīfah*

Someone might wonder what is the meaning of the descent of angels? It is the way of Allāh that when a Messenger or a Prophet or a *Muḥaddath* descends from heaven for the reform of people, such angels descend with him who convey guidance to eager hearts and incline them towards good, and they continue their descent till the darkness of disbelief and misguidance is removed and the dawn of faith and righteousness appears. As Allāh the Glorious says:

تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّؤْيُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَهُ
سَلَّمَ هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ⁴⁷

Thus the descent of angels and of the Holy Spirit from heaven takes place when a great personality invested with the robe of *Khilāfat* and honoured with the word of God descends to the earth. Such a one is specially bestowed

⁴⁷ 'Therein descend angels and the Spirit with their Lord's decrees concerning everything. Peace – so will it be even at the rising of the dawn.'—Al-Qadr, 97:5-6 [Publisher]

the Holy Spirit and the angels who accompany him descend on the eager hearts of the whole world. Then, wherever people possessing appropriate capacity are found, the reflection of that light falls upon them and a glow spreads over the whole universe. Through the holy influence of the angels good ideas surge up in the hearts and the Unity of God becomes dear. A spirit of truth-loving and truth-seeking is breathed into hearts that are straightforward, and the weak are strengthened and a wind begins to blow which helps the purpose and goal of that reformer. By the urging of a hidden hand, people begin to move towards goodness and a movement starts among nations. Then the ignorant ones imagine that the ideas of the world have of themselves taken a turn in the direction of truth, but in reality it is the doing of the angels who descend from heaven with God's *Khalīfah* and bestow extraordinary powers for accepting and understanding the truth. They awaken those who are asleep, and alert those who are heedless, and open the ears of the deaf, and breathe the spirit of life into the dead and pull out those who are in the graves. Then suddenly, people begin to open their eyes and their hearts begin to perceive those matters which were previously hidden.

These angels are not something separate from God's *Khalīfah*. They are the light of His countenance and they are the bright signs of His resolve who, by their magnetic power, draw to themselves everyone who is in accord with them whether physically he is near or far, or whether he is known or is a stranger, and is even unaware of the name of the *Khalīfah*. Whatever movement towards good takes place at the time and whatever eagerness for the acceptance of truth is generated, whether in the peoples of Asia, or of Europe, or of

America, is manifested through the urging of the angels that descend with God's *Khalīfah*. This is Divine law which never changes and is easy to understand.

[Fath-e-Islām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 3, pp. 12-13, footnote]

This humble one knows **from his own experience** that the **holiness of the Holy Spirit** operates all the time without cessation in all the faculties of the recipient of revelation, and that without the influence of the **holiness** of the Holy Spirit, he cannot safeguard himself against impurities for a moment. The cause of permanent lights and steadfastness and love and sinlessness and blessings is that the Holy Spirit is with him always and all the time. Then how can it be imagined with regard to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) that at any time he was left without these blessings and purity and lights.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, pp. 93-94, footnote]

It is worthy of note that these *Maulavīs* have raised Jesus high in everything and have insulted our lord and master the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). It is to be deplored that with regard to Jesus they believe that the Holy Spirit never departed from him and that he was free from the touch of Satan, and that these two characteristics were special to him, but with regard to the **Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him)** their belief is that neither the Holy Spirit remained with him all the time, nor was he free (God forbid) from the touch of Satan. Despite such beliefs they are called Muslims. In their estimation our lord and master Muḥammad, the chosen one (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) is dead, but Jesus is still alive and that the Holy Spirit is a permanent companion of Jesus, but that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on

him) is (God forbid) deprived of this bounty and that Jesus is safeguarded against the touch of Satan, but that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) is not thus safeguarded. Who can estimate the harm that is being done to Islām in this age by people who have such beliefs? They are hidden enemies of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) and every Muslim and true lover of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) should avoid them.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, pp. 110-111]

The same is the case with a deductive error of a Prophet. The Holy Spirit never departs from a Prophet, but on some occasions for some purpose of His own, God Almighty takes possession of the intelligence and perception of a Prophet and in such a condition some word or action proceeds from him in forgetfulness or error and then the Divine design becomes apparent. The river of revelation then flows in strength and the error is erased as if it never existed. Jesus advanced towards a fig tree to eat of its fruit and though he was accompanied by the Holy Spirit, it failed to warn him that the tree bore no fruit at the time. It must, however, be understood that that which is rare is as if it did not exist. In a million words and actions of **our lord and master Muḥammad, the chosen one (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him)** is observed a clear **manifestation of the Divine** and the shining lights of the Holy Spirit are seen in all his movements and words and actions. Then of what consequence is it if his humanness is displayed in one or two matters. Indeed, it was necessary that this should sometimes happen so that his humanness might be confirmed and people should not get involved in *shirk*.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, pp. 115-116]

The Holy Spirit Descends According to One's Degree of Love and Sincerity

A question is raised that if the **Holy Spirit** is bestowed only upon those Divine favourites who arrive at the stage of survival (*Baqā*) and meeting (*Liqā*), then how can it safeguard everyone? The answer is that the perfect descent of the Holy Spirit takes place upon Divine favourites, but its **general** support is enjoyed also by others according to their degree of love and sincerity. The **higher manifestation** of the Holy Spirit takes place when, at the stage of survival and meeting, Divine love descends upon human love and the meeting of the two loves produces that manifestation of the Holy Spirit compared with which other manifestations are as nothing. This does not mean that other manifestations do not take place at all. God Almighty does not let even a particle of sincere love go to waste. When His love descends upon the love of man, the Holy Spirit shines to the same degree. It is a firm Divine law that Divine love descends according to the degree of everyone's love, and when the river of human love flows a river of love descends from the other side, and when the two rivers meet a great light is generated which in our idiom is called the Holy Spirit. You will notice that if a teaspoonful of sugar is added to a jug of water, the water will not taste sweet, but it cannot be said that no sugar was added to it. This is the case with the Holy Spirit that descends in a deficient way upon deficient people. Its descent is not to be doubted for the idea of good is generated in the mind of the lowest person by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes a wicked evil-doer also sees a true dream and that is the effect of the Holy Spirit as is proved by the Holy Qur'ān and true *Aḥādīth*, but as compared to its great relationship

with the holy ones and favourites of God, it amounts to nothing and is as if it did not exist.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, pp. 77-80, footnote]

Angels can be Seen

Why angels are not visible is a useless speculation. The angels, like God Almighty, are imperceptible beings. Then how can they be visible to our physical eyes? Is God Almighty, whose existence is admitted by even these philosophers, visible to physical eyes? Besides, it is not true that angels cannot be beheld in any way. Those who possess insight behold angels with their spiritual eyes in their visions which they experience very often in a state of wakefulness. They talk to the angels and learn many things from them. I call God to witness that I am telling the truth when I say that I have, on many occasions, seen angels in my visions and have learnt things from them and have been told of past or future events which turn out to be facts. Then how can I say that angels are not visible? They are doubtless visible, but with other eyes. As these people laugh at these things, those who possess insight weep at their condition. If they were to keep company with me they could be satisfied through visions, but the trouble is that they suffer from arrogance which does not permit them to come over in humility as seekers after truth.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, pp. 181-183, footnote]

Angels are Mediators for the Spiritual Development of Man

One of the questions raised is: Why does God Almighty need angels for putting His designs into effect? Does His kingdom depend upon His staff like human governments

and does He need armies as they need them?

The answer is that God Almighty does not need anything, angels or sun or moon or stars, but He desired that His powers should be exhibited through the mediation of means so that thereby wisdom and knowledge should spread among people. If there had been no mediation of means, there would have been no astronomy, or physics, or medicine, or botany. It is the employment of means that gave rise to these sciences. If you will reflect you will find that if there is any objection to the employment of angels, the same objection applies to putting the sun and moon and stars and vegetables and minerals and elements into service. Anyone who possesses insight knows that every particle works in accordance with the Divine design and that a drop of water that goes inside us cannot produce any favourable or unfavourable effect upon our body without the command of God. Thus, all particles and heavenly bodies are in reality types of angels, who occupy themselves day and night with service; some serve the human body and others serve the human soul. The All-Wise, Who chose the mediation of means for the physical development of man and created many physical mediators to influence the human body in diverse ways, the same One without associate, Whose works have unity and symmetry, chose that man's spiritual development should also follow the system which has been adopted for his physical development so that the two systems, the external and the internal, and the physical and the spiritual, through their balance and harmony, should point to the **One Creator, Who regulates everything by His will.**

This is the reason why, for the spiritual and physical development of man, angels were appointed as media-

tors. All these mediators are under the control of God Almighty like a machine which is run by His holy hand. They have no will of their own, nor do they exercise any control. As the air influences our body by Divine command and goes out of it by His command, the same is the case with angels:

⁴⁸ يَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

It is a pity that **Pundit Dayānand** has raised an objection against the system of angels. Would that he had knowledge of God's physical and spiritual systems so that instead of raising objections he would have been convinced of the excellencies of the teaching of the Qur'ān, which presents a correct and true picture of the law of nature.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, pp. 85-88, footnote]

Angels Distribute and Regulate Matters

It is asked that if angels are the regulators and distributors of matters, then how is it that our plans succeed and most matters are concluded according to our will through our projects and plans? The answer is that our projects and plans are not independent of the mediation of angels and their suggestions and revelation. The functions that the angels perform by the command of God Almighty, they perform through persons who are naturally inclined towards acceptance of the suggestions of angels. For instance, when the angels desire to bring down rain upon a field, or a village, or a country with God's command, they cannot themselves become water nor can they make fire to perform the function of water, but they guide the

⁴⁸ 'They do what they are commanded.'—Al-Naḥl, 16:51 [Publisher]

clouds to the goal and, becoming regulators, cause rain to descend in accord with the quantity and to the limit that has been determined. The clouds possess all those faculties which are possible in a lifeless article which has no will and no intelligence and which are in accord with its condition and the character of its elements. The function of the angels is distribution and regulation. That is why they are called distributors and regulators. The suggestion and revelation that the angels communicate are according to the nature of the person concerned. The revelation that they communicate to God's elect, they cannot communicate to others. Indeed, they pay no attention to it at all.

Every person receives grace from the suggestions of angels according to his capacity. The help of angels is received in respect of the art or science to which one is inclined. For instance, when it is the Divine design that someone's constipation should be overcome by a medicine, an angel suggests to the physician the medicine that should be administered to him. The physician prescribes the medicine and with the help of angels the system of the patient accepts it and does not throw it out and the angels influence the action of the medicine and create a reaction in the body and the undesirable matter is expelled from the body by the command of God. By His extreme Wisdom and perfect Power, God Almighty does not let the system of external arts and sciences go to waste and does not suspend His Divine control and possession. Had God Almighty not possessed this minute control over the conditions of His creation and its continuation and destruction, He would not have been God, nor would His Unity have been established. It is true, however, that God Almighty has not desired that all these mysteries should become obvious and visible to the

mysteries should become obvious and visible to the eyes of the world for if they had been obvious there would have been no merit in believing in them.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, pp. 185-188, footnote]

Functions of the Holy Spirit and Satan

One of the questions raised is: If the Holy Spirit is appointed to restrain a person from evil conduct, then why does he commit sin and why is he involved in disbelief and disobedience and vice? The answer is that God Almighty has for the purpose of testing man appointed **two spiritual callers**; one **caller to good** whose name is the Holy Spirit and the other **caller to vice**, whose name is Iblīs and Satan. These two callers only call to good or evil but do not exercise any compulsion as is indicated in the verse:

فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا⁴⁹

This means that God reveals the wrong and the right....

The means of revealing the wrong is Satan, who makes evil suggestions, and the means of revealing the right is the Holy Spirit, who puts pure thoughts in the heart. As God Almighty is the **Cause of causes** He has attributed both these types of revelation to Himself because all this system is instituted by Him. Otherwise, what power would Satan have to make evil suggestions to anyone's heart and what power would the Holy Spirit have to guide anyone along the paths of righteousness?

Our opponents the Āryās, the Brahmūs and the Christians, out of their short-sightedness, raise an objection to the teaching of the Holy Qur'ān that according to it God

⁴⁹ Al-Shams, 91:9 [Publisher]

Almighty has Himself set Satan after man and thus He desires to mislead mankind, but this is a mistake. They ought to know that the Holy Qur'ān does not teach that Satan can exercise compulsion for leading anyone astray. Nor is it the teaching that Satan is appointed only for the purpose of calling to evil. The teaching is that this is a trial and a test. Man has been equally bestowed **the touch of angels and the touch of Iblīs**, one calling to good and the other to evil so that being confronted with this trial man should acquire merit or should become subject to chastisement. If only one type of means had been provided, for instance, if all man's external and internal emotions had drawn him only towards good, or if his nature had been such that he would not have been capable of doing anything except good, then there was no reason that he could have been awarded any rank of nearness to God on account of his good actions, inasmuch as all his means and emotions would have been for doing good and the desire of evil would from the beginning have been absent from his nature. In such case by what right could he have deserved merit for avoiding vice? For instance, if a person who from the beginning lacks sexual power and has no desire for women, should claim that he passed a certain time in the company of young beautiful women, but that he is so pious that he did not look upon them with desire even once and feared God all the time, there is no doubt that everyone would laugh at him. They would inquire from him when did he possess such power, for restraining which he could take pride in himself or could hope for merit.

It should be realized that in his elementary and intermediary conditions all hopes of merit of a seeker are created by opposing emotions and if in those stages his nature

should be such that he cannot commit any vice, he cannot deserve any merit either. For instance, our systems do not secrete, like scorpions and snakes, a kind of poison through which we could hurt anyone like scorpions and snakes. We cannot, therefore, deserve any merit in the estimation of Allāh by refraining from causing such harm.

This shows that opposing emotions which pull a person towards vice are the cause of merit for him, for when out of fear of God he discards such emotions, then he becomes worthy of praise in the estimation of God and wins His pleasure. He who arrives at the extreme point of virtue and is rid of all opposing motions as if his Satan had become a Muslim, would still deserve merit for he has traversed the stages of trial with great courage. A righteous person who in his youth has accomplished many great works receives merit for them even in his old age.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, pp. 80-85, footnote]

Some foolish people object to the existence of Satan, as if God Himself desired to lead people astray. This is not so. Every intelligent person can understand that everyone has two faculties, one is called the touch of Satan and the other is called the touch of angels. That is to say, human nature displays that sometimes through unknown means a good idea is generated in a person's mind and his heart inclines towards good works, and then sometimes an evil idea rises in his mind and he is inclined towards vice and wickedness and wrong and evil. The power that is the source of evil thoughts, according to the Qur'ānic teaching, is Satan, and the power that is the source of good ideas is an angel.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, p. 435]

If someone were to ask, why does Satan disobey God when he believes in His existence and Unity? The answer is that his disobedience is not like the disobedience of man; he has been created like that for the trial of man. This is a mystery the details of which have not been disclosed to man. It is the character of man that mostly he is guided aright by acquiring knowledge about God Almighty, as He says in the Holy Qur'ān:

رَتَمًا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ⁵⁰

but those who have a satanic character are outside this rule.

[Ḥaqīqat-ul-Waḥī, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 22, p. 122, footnote]

The Highest and Lowest Points of God's Creation

We have already stated that the possessor of extreme perfection whose being is situated at the highest point of the line of creation is the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) and in contrast with him the meanest being who is situated at the extreme lowest point is called Satan. The being of Satan is not apparent and felt, but observing this system of the line of creation, we have to confess that as at the highest point of exaltation is a being who is good personified who appeared in the world as a guide towards good, in contrast there should be at the extreme lowest point a being who incites towards evil and pulls towards it. For this reason in the heart of every person there is found internally the effect of both these beings. The holy effect of Muḥammad, the chosen one (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) the

⁵⁰ 'Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allāh.'—
Fāṭir, 35:29 [Publisher]

pure being who is also called the Spirit of Truth and Light, calls every heart to goodness and virtue through holy emotions and inner attention. To the degree to which anyone develops love and relationship with him, he is bestowed the faculty of faith and light spreads in his heart so that he takes on his colour and acquires by way of reflection all those excellencies that belong to him. The influence of the being who incites towards evil, that is to say, Satan, whose station is the extreme lowest point, pulls everyone whose heart has any relationship with him, towards *shirk*. To the degree to which anyone establishes a relationship with him, to that degree his thinking turns to disbelief and wickedness so that when he acquires a complete resemblance to him he takes on his colour and becomes a complete Satan and acquires all the grades of wickedness which belong to Satan. In the same manner, the friends of Raḥmān and the friends of Satan are pulled in different directions according to their relationship.

[Surmah Chashm Āryā, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 2, pp. 248-251, footnote]

5

PRAYER

I say truly that if crying before God Almighty is full of utmost humility, it moves His grace and mercy and draws them (towards the supplicator). I can say out of my own experience that I have felt the grace and mercy of God, which comes in the shape of the acceptance of prayer, coming towards me. Indeed, I rather say that I have actually seen it. If the dark-minded philosophers of this age cannot feel it or see it, this verity is not going to disappear from the world, more so because I am ready to demonstrate the acceptance of prayer at all times.

[Malfūzāt, vol. I, p. 198]

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE BOOKLETS OF SIR SAYYED AḤMAD KHĀN ṢĀḤĪB K.C.S.I.

Prayer, its Acceptance, and the Principle of Qur'ānic Interpretation

O prisoner of your own intellect, do not be too proud of
yourself;

This wonderful celestial sphere has brought forth many
like you.

One alienated from God can never find access to His
court;

Secrets of that Beloved are revealed only to those who
come from heaven.

To fathom the secrets of the Holy Qur'ān on one's own
is a false notion;

Whoever invents meanings by himself invents only filth and carrion.

In his booklets, Sayyed Şāhib sets forth his belief that:

The acceptance of prayer does not mean that the supplicant should be given what he asks for. If this should be the meaning of the acceptance of prayer two difficulties would be encountered. The first would be that thousands of supplications that are made most humbly and earnestly are not fulfilled, which means that the prayer has not been accepted, whereas God has promised acceptance of prayer. The second difficulty is that that which is to happen is determined and so is that which is not to happen. Nothing can happen contrary to that determination. If acceptance of prayer means granting the request made, then the Divine promise:

51 *أَدْعُونِي أَجْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ*

is not fulfilled concerning supplications the granting of which is not determined. According to this interpretation, the general promise of acceptance of prayer will be falsified inasmuch as only those requests are granted the fulfilment of which is determined, and yet the promise of acceptance of prayer is general and is not subject to any exception. Some verses indicate that those things which are not determined will not be granted and some verses indicate that no supplication is rejected and that all are accepted. The verse:

52 *أَدْعُونِي أَجْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ*

shows that God has promised the acceptance of all prayers. Thus, the only way of reconciling this contra-

⁵¹ ‘Pray unto Me, I will answer your prayer.’—Al-Mu’min, 40:61

[Publisher]

⁵² Ibid.

diction between the verses is that the acceptance of prayer should be interpreted as meaning the acceptance of an act of worship, that is to say, that prayer should be interpreted as a type of worship concerning which there is a Divine promise of acceptance when it is offered in the sincerity and earnestness of the heart. The acceptance of prayer is, therefore, no more than that it earns merit by being regarded as a type of worship. If the bestowal of something has been determined and it is also prayed for, it is bestowed not because of the prayer, but because it had been determined upon. The great benefit of prayer is that when at the time of prayer the heart is fixed upon the greatness of God and His limitless power that idea overcomes all the apprehensions which were the cause of restlessness and the supplicant experiences patience and steadfastness. This condition of the heart is produced by worship and this is what the acceptance of prayer is. Sayyed Şāhib observes that those people who are unaware of the reality of prayer and of the wisdom that is inherent in it can say that if that which is not determined cannot happen, then prayer is of no use. That is to say, that that which is determined will happen in any case whether one offers a prayer in respect of it or not and that a thousand prayers will not help where the matter has not been determined, thus prayer is vain and useless. In answer to this Sayyed Şāhib says that to supplicate for help in a time of distress is a characteristic of human nature and a person supplicates on account of his natural characteristic without thinking whether what is being supplicated for will happen or not. On account of this characteristic of his nature he has been told to supplicate God for whatever he desires.

This summary of the view held by Sayyed Şāhib indicates that his belief is that prayer cannot be the means of

achieving one's goal, nor has it any effect on such achievement. If by prayer the only purpose of the supplicant is that through his supplication his request should be granted his purpose is vain, inasmuch as no prayer is needed for that which has been determined and for that which has not been determined, humility and earnestness are without avail. He believes that prayer is only a form of worship and it is vain to adopt it as a means of achieving a specific purpose.

We shall, *Inshā'Allāh* (God willing), show later that Sayyed Şāhib has woefully misunderstood the verses of the Holy Qur'ān. At this stage, we would observe with regret that if Sayyed Şāhib's intellect had fallen short of the meaning of the Holy Qur'ān, had he at the time of writing these booklets overlooked the law of nature which he claims to follow and which he regards as the interpreter of Divine guidance and of the hidden mysteries of the Holy Qur'ān?

Is Sayyed Şāhib not aware that though nothing good or ill in this world is free from determination, yet nature has appointed such means for the achieving of the good or the ill, the true and correct effect of which is not questioned by any wise person? For instance, though keeping in mind determination, to have recourse to a remedy in case of illness is the same as praying or not praying for an object. Yet would Sayyed Şāhib affirm that the science of medicine is altogether without any basis and that remedies have no effect whatever? If, despite his belief in determination, he is persuaded that remedies are not without effect, then why does he create a distinction between this law and a similar and parallel law? Does he believe that God had power to invest certain medicines with such powerful effects that their full dose should

immediately move the stomach, or that certain poisons should have such powerful effect that a full dose of them should dispatch the consumer from this world within a matter of minutes, yet He should leave as dead and without effect the supplications of His elect which are full of resolve and attention and earnestness? Is it possible that there should be a contradiction in the Divine system and that the Divine design which works for the welfare of His servants through medicines should not operate in the case of prayer?

That is not so. Sayyed Şāhib himself is unaware of the true philosophy of prayer and has no personal experience of its high effectiveness. His case is like that of a person who over a period uses a stale medicine which has lost all its effectiveness and then concludes, as a general rule, that that medicine is ineffective. Sayyed Şāhib has reached an advanced age, but the natural system, that determination is closely related to means, has eluded him. That is why he has fallen into the error that anything can happen without the intervention of the means which nature has appointed spiritually and physically. As a general rule, nothing is free from determination. A person who derives advantage from fire, water, air, clay, corn, vegetables, animals, or minerals, does so under the rule of determination; but if a stupid one should imagine that without the help of the means which God Almighty has appointed, and without treading the paths that have been fixed by nature, something might be acquired without the mediation of physical or spiritual means, such a one seeks to falsify the wisdom of God Almighty.

The meaning of all that Sayyed Şāhib has put forth is that he does not regard prayer as one of the effective means, the existence of which he admits, and that he has in this

matter gone beyond the limit. For instance, if someone mentions the effect of fire to him, he will not deny it. He will not affirm that if anyone's being burnt has been determined he would be burnt without the intervention of fire. Then I am surprised that despite being a Muslim he denies the effectiveness of prayer which sometimes lights up the darkness like fire and sometimes burns the hand of an impertinent intervener. Does he remember determination at the time of prayer and forget it when fire or the like is mentioned? Does not the same determination comprehend both? When, despite determination, he adheres so strongly to effective means that he has acquired an ill reputation in his exaggeration, then what is the reason that the system of nature which he acknowledges is forgotten by him in the matter of prayer, so much so that while in his view a fly has some effect, yet prayer has none? The truth is that he is unaware of the effect of prayer and has no personal experience of it, nor has he had the advantage of keeping company with those who have such experience.

Miracles are Wrought by Prayer

The subject of the acceptance of prayer is a branch of the subject of prayer. A person who does not comprehend the principle encounters difficulty in comprehending a branch. This is at the bottom of the misunderstanding of Sayyed Şāhib. The principle of prayer is that there is a mutually attractive relationship between a pious servant and his Lord. To begin with, the mercy (*Raḥmāniyyat*) of God Almighty draws a servant to itself. Then through his sincerity the servant approaches close to God Almighty and in prayer that relationship, when it arrives at a certain stage, manifests its wonderful qualities. When a servant

being confronted with a great difficulty leans towards God Almighty with perfect certainty, perfect hope, perfect love, perfect fidelity and perfect resolve, and becoming extremely alert and tearing aside the veils of heedlessness advances far into the fields of the discarding of self, he beholds in front of him the court of the Divine and that He has no associate. Then his soul prostrates itself at that threshold and the power of attraction that is invested in him draws the bounty of God Almighty towards itself. Then God, the Glorious, addresses Himself towards fulfilling the purpose of the supplication and casts the effect of prayer on all those preliminary means which give rise to the means that are necessary for the achievement of the purpose of the prayer. For instance, if the prayer is for rain then on its acceptance the natural means that are needed for rain are created by the effect of the prayer. If the prayer is for famine the All-Powerful One creates the contrary means.

It has been proved to the satisfaction of those who have frequent experience of visions that in the prayer of a perfect person a power of fashioning is created. That is to say, by the command of God the prayer exercises control in the lower and higher world and turns the elements and heavenly bodies and the hearts of people to the direction that is desired. There are many instances of this in the holy Books of God Almighty.

The Effect of Prayer is Greater than the Effect of Fire

Some types of miracles are in reality the acceptance of prayer. The source of thousands of miracles that were manifested by the Prophets and the wonders that have been exhibited throughout by the saints was prayer, and

it is through the effect of **prayer** that extraordinary events display the power of the All-Powerful. Are you aware what was the wonderful event that happened in the deserts of **Arabia**, that hundreds of thousands of the dead came alive within a few days, and those who had been corrupted through generations took on Divine colour, and the blind began to see, and the tongues of the dumb began to flow with Divine insights, and such a revolution took place in the world which no eye had seen and no ear had heard before? **It was the prayers during dark nights of one who had been wholly lost in God which created an uproar in the world** and manifested such wonders as had appeared impossible in the case of that unlearned helpless one.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ بَعْدَ هَمِّهِ وَغَمِّهِ وَحُزْنِهِ لِهَيْدِهِ
الْأُمَّةِ وَأَنْزِلْ عَلَيْهِ أَنْوَارَ رَحْمَتِكَ إِلَى الْآبِيدِ⁵³

I have experience that the effect of prayers is greater than the effect of fire and water. Indeed in the systems of natural means **nothing has greater effect than prayer.**

Physical and Spiritual Means are Not Outside Determination

If a question is raised that some prayers are not heard and no effect of theirs becomes visible, I would say that the same is the case with medical remedies. Have medicines shut the door of death, or is it not possible for them to fail of their purpose? Yet, despite this, can anyone deny their effect? It is true that determination comprehends

⁵³ O Allāh send down blessings and peace on him and on his people proportionate to the amount of his suffering and sorrow for the sake of the *Ummah* and send down upon him the light of Thy mercy forever. [Publisher]

everything, but determination has not wasted or disgraced knowledge, nor has it rendered means unreliable. Careful consideration would show that physical and **spiritual means** are not outside determination. For instance, if the fate of a patient should be good, the means of a proper remedy become available and the body becomes ready to take advantage of them. In such a case, the remedy becomes most effective. The same is the case with **prayer**. All means and conditions for the acceptance of prayer come together where the Divine design is of acceptance. God Almighty has tied together His physical and spiritual systems in the same chain of causes and effects. It is a great mistake on the part of Sayyed Şāhib that he acknowledges the physical system but denies the spiritual system.

I deem it necessary to add that if Sayyed Şāhib does not repent of his wrong assumption and should require proof of the acceptance of prayer, **I have been commissioned by God to dispel such misconceptions. I promise that I shall inform Sayyed Şāhib in advance of the acceptance of some of my prayers** and will also publish the fact, provided Sayyed Şāhib promises that on my claim being established he will repent of his wrong assumption.

Must All Prayers be Accepted?

Sayyed Şāhib says that in the Holy Qur'ān God Almighty has promised acceptance of all prayers while the fact is that some prayers are not accepted. This is a misunderstanding on his part and the verse:

⁵⁴ اُدْعُونِيْ اَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

⁵⁴ 'Pray unto Me, I will answer your prayer.'—Al-Mu'min, 40:61
[Publisher]

does not help his purpose. The prayer that is prescribed in this verse as a command is not any ordinary prayer, but is the worship that has been made obligatory. Not all prayers are obligatory. At some places God, the Glorious, has praised those who are steadfast and at a time of trial commit themselves entirely to God. In this verse, prayer has not only been commanded but the verse goes on to describe it as worship and in case of disobedience warns of the torment of hell. It is obvious that in the case of other prayers this warning is not added. Indeed, in some cases Prophets were admonished in respect of their prayers. The verse:

رَأَيْتِ أَعْظَمَكَ أَنْ تَكُونِ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ⁵⁵

is an instance. This shows that if every prayer had been worship Noah would not have been rebuked about his prayer. In some situations, Prophets and saints have considered it disrespectful to supplicate and the righteous have followed the dictate of their hearts in respect of such prayers; that is to say, if at a time of distress the heart suggested prayer they turned to prayer and if the heart suggested steadfastness, they were steadfast and turned away from prayer. Besides, God has not promised acceptance of prayer in all cases, but has clearly said that He would accept if He so wills and would reject if He so wills. This is clearly indicated in the verse:

بَلْ رِجَاؤُهُمْ تَدْعُوهُنَّ فَيَكْشِفُ مَا تَدْعُوهُنَّ وَلَئِنْ شَاءَ⁵⁶
(Sūrah An‘ām, Part Number 7)

⁵⁵ ‘I advise thee lest thou become *one* of the ignorant.’—Hūd, 11:47
[Publisher]

⁵⁶ ‘Nay, but on Him alone will you call; then will He remove that which you call on Him *to remove*, if He please....’—Al-An‘ām, 6:42
[Publisher]

Conditions of Acceptance of Prayer

Even if we were to concede that the phrase '*Call Me*' means prayer, we would have to affirm that by prayer is meant such prayer as complies with all required conditions and that is not within the power of man unless he is helped by God. Humility alone is not enough for prayer, but righteousness, purity, truthfulness, perfect certainty, perfect love and perfect attention are all needed. It is also necessary that the object prayed for should not be opposed to the Divine design for the welfare in this world and in the hereafter of the supplicant, or of the one on whose behalf supplication is made. Very often, despite all other conditions being fulfilled, the object for which supplication is made is opposed to the Divine design and there is no good in its fulfilment. For instance, if a child should cry that his mother should hand over to him a burning brand, or a serpent, or should feed him a poison, which appears agreeable, the mother would not comply with his wish. Were she to do so, and though the child might escape with his life some limb of his should become useless, then arriving at years of discretion the child would have a grievance against his foolish mother. There are many other conditions in the absence of which prayer does not deserve that name and so long as a prayer is not inspired by full spirituality and there is not a close connection between him who supplicates and him on whose behalf supplication is made, there is little hope of the acceptance of prayer. Unless there is Divine willingness for the acceptance of prayer all these conditions are not fulfilled and full attention remains lacking.

Sayyed Şāhib acknowledges that the good fortune of the hereafter and its bounties and delights and comforts which constitute salvation, are the result of faith and

sincere prayers. That being so, Sayyed Ṣāhib would be compelled to acknowledge that a believer's prayers have effect and become the cause of the removal of calamities and the achievement of objectives. If that were not so, then how would they be of help on the Judgement Day? If prayer is truly a vain thing and cannot be the cause of removal of any calamity in this life, then how will it become a cause for their removal on the Judgement Day?

If our prayers truly possess the effect of safeguarding us against calamities then that effect should be manifested in this world also, so that our faith and hope might be fostered and we should pray more earnestly for our salvation in the hereafter. But if prayer amounts to nothing and that which is written is bound to happen, then as, according to Sayyed Ṣāhib, prayer is vain for the calamities of this world, it will be vain for the hereafter also and no hope could be placed in it.

[Barakāt-ud-Du'ā, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 6, pp. 5-14]

To Supplicate is Human and to Respond is Divine

When a child being driven by hunger cries for milk, then milk is generated in the mother's breasts. The child does not know what prayer is, but his cries draw the milk. This is a universal experience. Sometimes when the mother does not perceive the presence of milk in her breasts, the child's cries help to draw it. Then can our cries before God Almighty draw nothing? They certainly draw everything. But those sightless ones, who parade themselves as scholars and philosophers, cannot see it. If a person were to reflect on the philosophy of prayer, keeping in mind the connection and relationship which a child has with its mother, he would find it easy to understand.

The second type of mercy comes into operation after supplication. Go on asking and you will go on receiving.

أَدْعُونِي أَجْتَبْ لَكُمْ⁵⁷

is not mere verbiage, but is a characteristic of human nature. To supplicate is human to respond is Divine. He who does not understand and does not believe is false. The illustration of the child that I have set forth expounds the philosophy of prayer in an excellent way.

[Malfūzāt, vol. 1, pp. 129-130]

It is at a time of trial that the wonderful and rare qualities and effects of prayer are manifested. **The truth is that our God is recognized only through prayers.**

[Malfūzāt, vol. III, p. 201]

Etiquette of Prayer

Prayer is a wonderful thing. It is a pity that those who pray are not aware of the true manner of prayer, nor are they acquainted with the ways of the acceptance of prayer. The truth is that the very reality of prayer has become strange. There are some who deny the effectiveness of prayer altogether. There are others who do not deny it, but as their prayers are not accepted on account of their lack of knowledge of the manner of prayer and are not prayers in the true sense, their condition is worse than that of those who deny the effectiveness of prayer. Their practical condition has pushed many others to the verge of atheism.

The first condition for prayer is that a supplicant should not get tired and become a prey to despair that nothing

⁵⁷ ‘Pray unto Me, I will answer your prayer.’—Al-Mu’min, 40:61
[Publisher]

will happen. Sometimes it is seen that a prayer is carried on till it is about to be accepted and then the supplicant gets tired and the result is failure and frustration. Frustration results in the denial and effectiveness of prayer and gradually culminates in the denial of God. It is said if there is God Who accepts prayer why have not those prayers been accepted which were offered over a long period? If those who think thus and stumble were to reflect upon their lack of perseverance, they would come to know that all their frustration is the result of their own haste and impatience which generated an ill concept of the powers of God and resulted in despair. So one should never get tired.

Be Sincere and Determined

Praying is like the sowing of a seed by a farmer. Apparently he buries the good seed in the soil and who can expect at that time that the grain of seed will grow up in the form of a good tree and bear fruit? Outsiders and even the cultivator himself cannot see that the grain is assuming the form of a plant inside the earth. But the reality is that within a few days the grain undergoes a change and begins to assume the shape of a plant till its shoot emerges from the earth and becomes visible to everyone. From the moment when the grain was placed in the earth it had started its preparation to become a plant, but an eye that can only perceive the visible was not aware of it till its shoot emerged from the earth and became visible. An ignorant child cannot understand at that stage that it will bear fruit only at its due time. He desires to see it bearing fruit immediately, but an intelligent cultivator will know what is the time of its bearing fruit. He looks after it steadfastly and nurtures it till the

time comes when it bears fruit and which also ripens.

The same is the case with prayer, which is nurtured in the same way and brings forth fruit. Those who are in haste get tired quickly and give up, and those who are steadfast persevere and arrive at their objective. It is true that there are many stages in prayer, ignorance of which deprives the supplicants of the fruits of their prayers. They are in a hurry and cannot wait, whereas there is progression in the works of the Almighty. It never happens that a man marries today and a child is born to him next morning. Though God is All-Powerful and can do whatever He wills, yet compliance with the law and the system that He has appointed is necessary. In the first stages of child-bearing nothing is known, like the nurture of vegetation. For four months there is no certainty. Then a movement begins to be felt and after the expiry of the full period the child is born after great travail. The birth of the child is also gives a new life to the mother. It is difficult for a man to form a concept of the troubles and travails which a woman has to endure during her pregnancy, but it is true that the coming of a child is a new life for the mother. She has to accept death so as to have the joy of bearing a child. In the same way, it is necessary for a supplicant that he should discard haste and endure all troubles and should never imagine that prayer is not accepted. At last the time arrives for the result of the prayer to be manifested; the child which is the objective is born.

A prayer should be carried on to the limit until it produces a result. You will have observed that a piece of cloth is placed under a burning glass and the rays of the sun concentrate upon it and their heat arrives at the

degree which sets the cloth on fire. In the same way, it is necessary that a prayer should be carried on to a stage where it should develop the power of burning up failures and frustrations and to fulfil the desired purpose.

پیدا است ندر ارا کہ بلند است جنابت

One has to be occupied with prayer for a long time and then God Almighty manifests the result. It is my experience, which is borne out by the experience of the righteous in the past, that if there is silence for a long time, there is hope of success, but if there is a quick reply the purpose is not likely to be achieved. When a beggar goes to someone and begs with humility and earnestness and does not move from his place, even after he is rebuked, and continues his supplication, then in the end the person supplicated is moved and bestows something on the beggar despite his miserliness. Then should not a supplicant have at least so much steadfastness as an ordinary beggar? When God Almighty Who is Benevolent and possesses Majesty sees that His humble servant has been prostrate at His threshold for a long time, He does not lead him to a bad end. If a pregnant woman should become impatient after four or five months and should take some abortive medicine, the child would not be born, but she herself would be involved in despair. In the same way, he who is in a hurry before the due time only suffers loss and puts his faith in danger. In this condition some people become atheists. There was a carpenter in our village whose wife fell ill and then died. He said that if there had been a God, his multiple prayers would have been accepted and his wife would not have died. In this way he became an atheist.

If a righteous person practices fidelity and sincerity, his faith is fostered and he achieves his purpose. The riches of this world have no value in the estimation of God Almighty. He can do everything in a single moment. Have you not seen that He bestowed sovereignty on a people who were entirely unknown and made great kingdoms obedient to them and made kings out of slaves? If a person is righteous and becomes wholly God's, he would lead an excellent life, but the condition is that he should be sincere and possess resolve. His heart should never be shaken and there should be no showing off and *shirk* in it. What was there in Abraham which made him the father of his people and the father of those who are devoted to God, and God Almighty bestowed numberless great blessings on him? It was his righteousness and his sincerity. Abraham had offered a prayer that a Prophet should appear in Arabia from among his progeny. Was it accepted at once? For a long time after Abraham no one paid any attention to that prayer, yet it was fulfilled in the advent of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) and how grand was its fulfilment.

[Al-Hakm, vol. 7, Number. 8, 28 February 1903, pp. 1-3]

Two Ways of Acceptance of Prayer

It should be remembered that the acceptance of prayer is in two ways; one as a trial and the other as exaltation. As a trial sometimes the prayer of sinners and disobedient ones and even disbelievers is accepted, but such acceptance does not indicate a real acceptance, it is by way of trial. The condition of acceptance of prayer by way of

exaltation is that the supplicant should be one of the elect of God Almighty and the lights and signs of his being one of the elect should appear in him in all directions. God Almighty does not accept the prayer, as a true acceptance, of the disobedient ones. He accepts the prayer only of those who in His estimation are righteous and obedient to Him. The distinction between the two acceptances is that in the acceptance of the prayer which is as a trial, there is no condition that the supplicant should be righteous and a friend of God, nor is it necessary that on accepting such prayer God Almighty should intimate the acceptance through a special communication. Nor are those prayers of such a high degree the acceptance of which is a wonderful and extraordinary event. Those prayers that are accepted by way of exaltation have the following signs:

First, that the supplicant is righteous and truthful and a perfect individual.

Second, that he is informed of the acceptance of his prayer through the word of God.

Third, most of these prayers are of a high degree and relate to great affairs, the acceptance of which shows that it is not the work or planning of man, but is a special sample of Divine power which is manifested in the case of select servants.

Fourth, the prayers by way of trial are accepted rarely, but the prayers by way of exaltation are accepted in large numbers. Very often a supplicant by way of exaltation is involved in such difficulties that if any other person had been involved in them, he would have seen no way out of

them except through suicide. It happens that when those who worship the world and are far away from God Almighty are involved in great grief, and sorrows, and diseases, and disorders and trials from which there is no escape, they, on account of the weakness of their faith and their despair of God Almighty, take poison or jump into a well or kill themselves with a weapon. On such difficult occasions, the person who enjoys exaltation is helped by God Almighty in a wonderful manner on account of the strength of his faith and his special relationship with God. The favour of God takes hold of his hand in a wonderful manner so that the heart of one who is aware of these mysteries testifies involuntarily that the person concerned enjoys the support of God.

Fifth, a supplicant by way of exaltation is the recipient of Divine favours and God Almighty becomes his Guardian in all matters and the light of the love of God and the signs of acceptance by God and of spiritual delight and favours are manifested in his countenance as is said by God, the Glorious:

تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيمِ⁵⁸

and:

أَلَّا رَأَوْا لِلَّهِ أَكْوَافًا لَا حَافَظَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ⁵⁹

[Taṣdīq-un-Nabī, pp. 43-45 OR Maktūbāt-e-Aḥmadiyya, vol. III, pp. 75-77].

⁵⁸ ‘Thou wilt find in their faces the freshness of bliss.’—Al-Taṭṭif, 83:25 [Publisher]

⁵⁹ ‘Behold! the friends of Allāh shall certainly have no fear nor shall they grieve.’—Yūnus, 10:63 [Publisher]

What is Prayer?

When our soul in search for something, extends its hand with great earnestness and weeping towards the Fountainhead of grace, and, finding itself helpless, seeks light from somewhere through its reflection, this condition too is like a condition of prayer. All wisdoms have been manifested through such prayer and the key of every house of knowledge is prayer. No knowledge or insight is manifested without it. **Our thinking, our reflection and our search for the hidden objective are all parts of prayer.** The only difference is that the **prayer of those who possess insight** depends upon the manners of insight, and their soul recognizing the Fountainhead of grace extends its hand towards it with insight. The prayer of veiled ones is an effort which is manifested in reflection and thinking and the search for means. Those people who have not a connection of insight with God Almighty, nor do they believe in it, they too seek through reflection and thinking that some way of success might be indicated to their heart from the unseen, and a supplicant possessing insight also desires that God may open the way of success to him, but the veiled one who has no relationship with God Almighty does not know the Fountainhead of grace. He too, like one possessing insight, seeks help from another quarter and reflects on the means of obtaining such help, but a person possessing insight has an eye on the Fountainhead. The other one walks in darkness and does not know that whatever strikes the heart after reflection and cogitation is also from God Almighty, **Who, treating the anxiety of the anxious one as a supplication,** casts the necessary knowledge into the heart of one who cogitates. The point of wisdom and understanding that enters the heart through reflection also comes from

God and, though the person himself may not realize it, yet God Almighty knows that he is supplicating Him. In the end he is bestowed his object by God. This method of seeing light, if it is pursued with insight and with the recognition of the true Guide, is the prayer of a person of understanding; but if light is sought from an unknown source, only through reflection and cogitation without fixing one's gaze on the True Illuminer, it is only veiled prayer....

Prayer and Planning are Two Natural Demands

As the relationship between planning and prayer is proved by the law of nature, it is also proved by the testimony of the book of nature. It is often observed that as human temperaments at a time of distress incline towards planning and remedies, in the same way they incline by natural eagerness towards prayer and almsgiving and charity.... This is a spiritual argument that the inner law of man has, from the beginning, directed all peoples that they should not separate prayer from means and planning, **but should search for plans with prayer**. In short, prayer and planning are two natural demands of human nature which ever since the creation of man, have been the servants of human nature like two real brothers. Planning is the necessary consequence of prayer and prayer incites towards planning. The good fortune of man consists in this, that before entering upon planning he should seek help through prayer from the Fountainhead of grace so that being granted light from this ever-flowing spring good plans should be made available to him.

[Ayyām-uş-Şulḥ, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 14, pp. 230-232]

He who supplicates God at the time of difficulty and

distress and seeks the resolution of his difficulties from Him achieves satisfaction and **true prosperity** from God Almighty provided he carries his supplication to its limit. Even if he does not achieve the purpose of his supplication, he is bestowed some other kind of satisfaction and contentment by God Almighty and does not experience frustration. In addition, his faith is strengthened and his certainty increases. But the one who in his supplication does not turn towards God Almighty remains blind all the time and dies blind....

He who supplicates with the sincerity of his soul is never truly frustrated. That prosperity which cannot be achieved through riches and authority and health, but which is in the hand of God and He bestows it in whatever shape He wills, is bestowed through perfect prayer. If God Almighty so wills, a **sincere and righteous person** in the midst of his distress achieves such delight after supplication which an emperor cannot enjoy on the imperial throne. This is true success which is bestowed in the end on those who pray.

[Ayyām-uş-Şulḥ, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 14, p. 237]

Divine Attention is Drawn through Prayer

Is it not a satisfactory proof that from the beginning it has been the spiritual Divine law that, in consequence of prayer, Divine attention is attracted and satisfaction and contentment and true prosperity are bestowed? If in seeking an objective we are not in error, we achieve that objective, but if we are in error in our supplication, like the misguided child who demands from its mother a serpent or a burning brand, God Almighty bestows upon us that which is better for us. In either case, He fosters our faith, and for true supplication we are bestowed

knowledge by God Almighty in advance and our certainty increases as if we have seen God. There is a relationship between **prayer and acceptance** which has existed ever since man was created. When God Almighty addresses Himself towards the doing of a thing it is His way that some **sincere servant** of His occupies himself with prayer in restlessness, pain and distress, and devotes the whole of his resolve and attention towards the accomplishment of that objective. Then the prayers of the **mortal man** draw Divine grace from heaven and God Almighty creates such new means through which the purpose is achieved.

Though such prayer is apparently offered by man, yet in truth that person is **wholly lost in God** and at the time of supplication he arrives in the presence of the One and Glorious with such a stamp of being lost in God that at that time his hand becomes the hand of God Almighty. **Such is the prayer** through which God is recognized and the existence of that Glorious One becomes known Who is hidden in thousands of veils.

[Ayyām-uş-Şulḥ, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 14, pp. 238-239]

A foolish one thinks that prayer is a vain and useless thing, but he does not know that it is prayer in consequence of which God, the Glorious, manifests Himself to His seekers and conveys to their hearts the revelation: ***"I am the All-Powerful One."*** Everyone who is hungry and thirsty for certainty should remember that for the seeker of spiritual light in this world, prayer is the only means which bestows certainty with regard to the existence of God Almighty and removes all doubts and suspicions.

[Ayyām-uş-Şulḥ, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 14, pp. 239-240]

Four Reasons for Obligatory Prayers

It is also worthy of note that the prayer which has been made obligatory upon Muslims in the Holy Word of God has been prescribed for four reasons. (1) The first is, so that by turning to God Almighty at every time and in every condition, one should be firmly established on the Unity of God, inasmuch as supplicating Him is to acknowledge that **God alone bestows one's objective upon one**. (2) The second is, that **faith might be strengthened** by the acceptance of prayer and the achievement of the objective. (3) The third is, that if Divine favour is bestowed in any other way, **knowledge and wisdom might be increased**. (4) The fourth is, that if one is informed of the acceptance of prayer through a vision or revelation which is fulfilled, the **understanding of the Divine might be promoted** and understanding might grow into **certainty** and certainty into **love** and through love there might be **deliverance** from every sin and a **cutting asunder** from everything beside God, which is the fruit of **true salvation**.

[Ayyām-uş-Şulḥ, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 14, p. 242]

Acceptance of Prayer is a True Means of God's Recognition

As we have stated already, Muslims have been urged in *Sūrah Fātiḥah* to occupy themselves with prayer and have been taught the prayer:

لَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ⁶⁰

And it has been made obligatory that this prayer is to be offered on five occasions every day. It would therefore be a great mistake to deny the spirituality of prayer. The

⁶⁰ 'Guide us in the right path.'—Al-Fātiḥah, 1:6 [Publisher]

verdict of the Holy Qur'ān is that prayer comprises a spirituality and that in consequence of prayer a grace descends which bestows the fruit of success **in diverse forms**.

Thus every just person can understand that as despite the admission of determination, it is the way of Allāh that in hundreds of matters effort and endeavour produce results, in the same way, the effort that is put forth in the form of prayer is not wasted. At one place in the Holy Qur'ān, God Almighty has appointed it as a sign of His recognition that He hears the supplication of distressed ones, as it is said:

أَمَّنْ يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَّرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ⁶¹

As God Almighty has appointed the acceptance of **prayer** as a sign of His existence, how can any sensible person imagine that prayer does not result in visible signs of acceptance and that it is only a formal matter which has no spirituality in it? I consider that no one having true faith can be guilty of such disrespect. God, the Glorious, says that as by the contemplation of the creation of heaven and earth, the true God is recognized; in the same way, by observing the acceptance of prayer, faith in God Almighty is created. Then if there is no spirituality in prayer and no obvious grace truly and in fact descends in consequence of prayer, how can prayer be such a means of the recognition of God Almighty as are heaven and earth and heavenly bodies? Indeed the Holy Qur'ān shows that the best means of the recognition of God is prayer and that it is only through prayer that the complete and perfect understanding of the existence of God and

⁶¹ 'Or, Who answers the distressed person when he calls upon Him?.'—Al-Naml, 27:63 [Publisher]

His perfect attributes is obtained and that it cannot be obtained in any other way. It is prayer which, like a flash of lightning, pulls a person out of the pit of darkness and brings him into the open atmosphere of light and makes him stand before God Almighty. Through prayer thousands of the wicked are reformed and thousands of the corrupt are purified.

[Ayyām-uş-Şulḥ, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 14, pp. 259-260]

Divine Determination and Acceptance of Prayers

When the grace of God Almighty approaches, He provides the means of the acceptance of prayer, and a melting and a burning is created in the heart, but when it is not the time for the acceptance of prayer a sense of satisfaction and a turning to God are not generated in the heart. Whatever effort one might make one's mind pays no attention. The reason is that sometimes God Almighty accepts prayer and sometimes desires to enforce His determination. For this reason, till I see the signs of Divine command I have little hope of acceptance of prayer and reconcile myself to His determination with greater pleasure than I derive from the acceptance of prayer inasmuch as the fruits and blessings of being pleased with His determination are much greater.

[Malfūzāt, vol. 1, p. 460]

It is a truth that he who does not do good deeds for the acceptance of his prayer does not pray, but tries God Almighty. Therefore, before making supplication it is necessary to put forth every effort and that is the meaning of this prayer. First a supplicant should check up on his beliefs and actions for it is the way of God Almighty that reform comes in the shape of means which he makes available in some form or another.

[Malfūzāt, vol. 1, p. 124]

Prayer is a Kind of Death

There is a proverb in Punjābī: “He who asks dies a death, so die and then ask.” The meaning is that it is an afflicted one who prays and that prayer is a form of death. If a person drinks a drop of water and claims that his great thirst has been slaked, he utters a falsehood. His claim would be established if he were to drink a bowl full of water. When prayer is offered in great tribulation so that the soul melts and flows at the threshold of the Divine, that is true prayer and it is God’s way that when such a prayer is offered, He accepts it or responds to it in some other manner.

[Malfūzāt, vol. IV, p. 340]

When you stand up in prayer, you should know it for certain that your God has the power to do all that He wills. Then your prayer will be accepted and you will behold the wonders of God’s power that we have beheld. Our testimony is based on seeing and is not a mere tale. How should the supplication of a person be accepted and how should he have the courage to pray at the time of great difficulties when according to him he is opposed by the law of nature, unless he believes that God has power over everything? You should not be like that. Your God is One Who has suspended numberless stars without any support and Who has created heaven and earth from nothing. Then would you think so ill of Him as to imagine that your objective is beyond His power? Such thinking will frustrate you. Our God possesses numberless wonders, but only those observe them who become wholly His with sincerity and fidelity. He does not disclose His wonders to those who do not believe in His powers and are not faithful to Him.

[Kashfī Nūḥ, Rūḥānī Khazā’in, vol. 19, p.21]

Three Conditions for Acceptance of Prayer

So far as God Almighty has bestowed upon me the knowledge of prayer I conceive that there are three conditions for the acceptance of prayer.

First, a supplicant should be perfectly righteous, for only that one is acceptable to God Almighty who makes righteousness his habit and adheres firmly to all the paths of righteousness and who is trustworthy and pious and true in his promises and is filled with the personal love of God.

Secondly, his resolve and attention should be so firm and strong that he should be ready to lay down his own life for the revival of another and should be ready to enter himself into the grave to pull another out of it. His accepted servants are dearer to God Almighty than an only child, who is also handsome, is dear to its mother. When God, the Merciful and Benevolent, sees that one who is accepted of Him and is true to Him has, for the sake of saving the life of another, subjected himself to spiritual labours and disciplines to a degree that his own life is in danger, He finds it disagreeable that He should let him perish in that condition. Then for his sake He forgives the sin in respect of which the other person had been seized. If he is afflicted with a fatal disease or is in the grip of some other calamity, then by His power He creates means for his deliverance. Very often it happens that He is determined to ruin or destroy a person, but through the latter's good luck someone who has a good standing before God intervenes with his earnest supplications so that the record that had been prepared and completed for his chastisement has to be destroyed, for

the matter now is transferred from being concerned with a stranger to being concerned with a friend. It cannot happen that God would put His friend to trouble.

Thirdly, there is a condition which is more difficult to comply with than all other conditions, inasmuch as compliance with it is not in the hands of those who are accepted of God, but is in the hands of the person who desires to have a supplication made on his behalf. That condition is that he should be desirous of supplication being made for him with the utmost sincerity and in perfect trust and certainty and perfect goodwill and submission. He should decide in his heart that even if the supplication is not accepted this would not affect his trust and goodwill. His request for supplication should not be as a trial but should be made in full trust. He should fall most humbly at the door of the person from whom he is seeking supplication and, so far as it is possible for him, he should establish a close relationship with him by spending his money and rendering service and every obedience whereby he should enter his heart. Along with all this he should think well of him and should regard him as possessing righteousness of the highest degree and should regard it as disbelief to entertain a single thought inconsistent with his holy estate. He should prove his full belief in him through every kind of sacrifice. He should not regard any other in the world as his equal and should be devoted to him so much as to be ready to lay down his life and his property and his honour for him and should neither utter nor let his heart entertain anything derogatory of him from any point of view. He should establish it to his satisfaction that he believes fully in him and is his follower. With all this, he should wait with patience and even if he should be

frustrated fifty times in achieving his objective, he should not let his belief and goodwill be affected in any manner.

Such people have very delicate sensibilities and they can conclude from a person's countenance the degree of his sincerity. They are tender-hearted, yet they are self-sufficient. They have no regard for any arrogant, selfish and hypocritical person. Only those people can derive any benefit from them who obey them to a degree where they are ready to lay down their lives for them. A person who thinks ill of them at every step and entertains objections in his heart and lacks full love and goodwill derives no benefit from them and only ruins himself.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Part V, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 21, pp. 226-228]

God Treats Favourites as Friends

It is true that most of the prayers of those who are accepted of God are accepted. Indeed, their great miracle is the acceptance of their prayers. When their hearts are sorely distressed at a time of misfortune and in their distress they turn to God, at that time their hand becomes, as it were, the hand of God. God is a hidden treasure. Through His perfect favourites He displays His countenance. God's signs are displayed when His favourites are persecuted. When they are persecuted to the extreme that is an indication that the sign of God is near and indeed it is at the door. No one loves his son so much as God loves those who become wholly His. He displays His wonders for them and manifests such power on their behalf as if a sleeping tiger wakes up. God is hidden and these are the people who make Him manifest. He is behind a thousand veils and these are the people who display His countenance.

But it needs to be remembered that it is a wrong notion that every prayer of those who are God's favourites is accepted. The truth is that the dealing of God Almighty with them is like that of a friend; sometimes He accepts their prayers and sometimes He imposes His will upon them. That is what happens in friendship. At one time, a friend accepts what his friend proposes and acts accordingly, and at another time makes him accept what he himself wishes. At one place in the Holy Qur'ān God promises acceptance of the prayers of believers saying:

أَدْعُونِي أَجْتَبْ لَكُمْ⁶²

That is, Pray to Me, I shall accept your prayer.

And at another place instructs them to accept His determination with pleasure. It is said:

وَلَتَجِدَنَّ كَفْرًا بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَ
 الثَّمَرَاتِ، وَبَشِيرًا لِلظَّالِمِينَ ۝ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا
 لِلَّهِ وَرَأَيْنَا لِلَّهِ تَوَجُّهَاتٍ ۝⁶³

By reading both these verses together, one would know what is the way of Allāh in respect of prayers and what is the relationship between the Lord and a servant.

[Ḥaqīqat-ul-Wahī, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 22, pp. 20-21]

⁶² Al-Mu'min, 40:61 [Publisher]

⁶³ 'And We will try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives, and fruits; but give glad tidings to the patient, who, when a misfortune overtakes them, say: Surely, to Allāh we belong and to Him shall we return.'—Al-Baqarah, 2:156–157 [Publisher]

Why even the Prayers of Perfect People are not Always Accepted

Some ignorant people ask why some of the prayers of those who are perfect are not accepted. The answer is that God Almighty has kept under His own control the manifestation of their beauty. When this great manifestation takes place and their beauty shines forth in respect of any matter, then the particles of the universe are drawn to it and the impossible happens which, in other words, is called a **miracle**. But this spiritual manifestation does not appear always and at every place and depends upon external elements. This is because, as God is Self-Sufficient, He has invested His elect also with the quality of self-sufficiency. Like God, they are also self-sufficient and till someone puts in motion their mercy with full humility and sincerity that quality of theirs is not activated. These people possess the quality of mercy to a greater degree than the rest of the world, but it is a matter of wonder that it is not within their own power to activate it. They often wish that it should be manifested, but it is not manifested without the Divine will. They have no regard for those who deny them and for the hypocrites and for the weak in faith and consider them like dead insects. Their self-sufficiency is of the type which is possessed by a beloved person who conceals his face behind a beautiful veil. One aspect of this self-sufficiency is that when a wicked person thinks ill of them, they often foster this ill-thinking by disregarding them completely, for they take on Divine qualities, as God Almighty has said:

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا⁶⁴

When God desires that they should display a miracle, He creates an eagerness in their hearts and they become restless and disturbed for the achievement of a particular purpose. Then they put aside the veil of self-sufficiency and their beauty, which is not visible to anyone except God Almighty, is disclosed to the angels of heaven and to every particle. The removal of their veil means that with their perfect sincerity and fidelity, and with the spiritual beauty on account of which they have become the beloved of God, they turn to God in such an extraordinary manner and such a condition of welcoming God is produced in their hearts which draws the extraordinary mercy of God Almighty to itself and along with it every particle of this universe is drawn to them, and the heat of their loving warmth collects in heaven and discloses its countenance to the angels like the clouds. Their pains, which have the quality of thunder in them, create a turmoil in heaven. Then, by the power of God Almighty, those qualities are created which send down the rain of achieving the mercy that they desire. When their spirituality with its full yearning attends to the resolution of any difficulty, it draws God's attention to itself, inasmuch as they are counted among those who are beloved of God on account of the personal love that they entertain for God. Then everything which is under the command of God Almighty becomes eager for their help and Divine mercy gets ready for a new creation in order to fulfil their purpose, and those matters are manifested which appear impossible to the worldly and which are unknown to the

⁶⁴ 'In their hearts was a disease, and Allāh has increased their disease to them.'—Al-Baqarah, 2:11 [Publisher]

pursuers of lower knowledge. These people cannot be called God, but their relationship of love and closeness to God is so sincere and faithful that God appears to descend into them and the Divine Spirit is breathed into them as it was breathed into Adam. They are not God, but their relationship to God is such as a piece of iron has to fire when it is heated in the fire to such a degree that it assumes the colour of the fire.

When this happens, all that is under the command of God Almighty comes under their command, and the stars of heaven, the sun and the moon, the oceans, air and fire hear their voice and recognize them and serve them. Everything loves them naturally and is drawn to them like a true lover, except the wicked who are the reflections of Satan. Worldly love is ill-omened. It arises on one side and dies on the other, and also it is based upon beauty that is subject to decline and there are few people who come under its influence. But how wonderful is that spiritual beauty which is generated in a person by good behaviour, purity, righteousness and, after the manifestation of Divine love. It possesses a universal attraction, and draws eager hearts to itself as honey draws ants and not only men but also every particle of the universe is affected by its attraction. A person who has true love for God Almighty is Joseph for whom every particle of this universe is like Zulaikhā; but whose beauty has not yet been revealed to the world for this world cannot endure it. God Almighty says in His Holy Book, the Qur'ān, that the light of the believers is displayed in their countenances and a believer is recognized by the beauty, the name of which in other words is light.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Part V, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 21, pp. 221-224]

Why Acceptance of Supplications is sometimes Delayed

Sometimes it happens that a seeker supplicates with great yearning and pain, but he observes that the result of his prayers is being postponed and delayed. What is the reason? In this connection it is necessary to remember that there is a gradualness in the affairs of the world. How many stages has a child to pass through before becoming a full grown person? How much time is taken by a seed to become a tree? In the same way, Divine matters are also completed gradually. There is also this Divine purpose in such a delay that the supplicant should become confirmed in his resolve and courage and his understanding should be strengthened. To the degree to which a person desires to acquire high rank and gradations to that degree he is called upon to work hard and to wait. Perseverance and resolve are such excellent qualities that without them a person cannot traverse the stages of success. It is necessary, therefore, that he should first pass through difficulties. That is why it is said:

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا⁶⁵

[Malfūzāt, vol. III, pp. 202-203]

Sometimes it happens that a person supplicates for something, but his supplication is the result of his ignorance and stupidity. He desires something from God Almighty which under no circumstances can be useful or beneficial for him. In such a case, God Almighty does not reject his prayer, but fulfills it in some other form. For instance, a cultivator who needs a bullock for his

⁶⁵ ‘Aye, surely there is ease after hardship.’—Al-Inshirāh, 94:7
[Publisher]

plough goes to a ruler and asks him for a camel. The ruler knows that a bullock would be useful for him and he directs that he should be given a bullock. If that person should say that his request has not been granted, it would be foolish on his part, for if he were to reflect, that which happened was the best for him. In the same way, if a child beholding red burning brands should ask its mother for them, would a kind and compassionate mother hand them over to it? Thus, sometimes, circumstances arise in connection with the acceptance of prayer that people who are impatient and lack goodwill become the cause of the rejection of their prayer.

[*Malfūzāt*, vol. IV, p. 435]

Do not be Impatient and Hasty

During the interval between a supplication and its acceptance one is often subjected to trial after trial, some of which are back-breaking. A persevering and good-natured supplicant smells the perfume of the favours of his Lord in these trials and difficulties and his intelligence informs him that they will be followed by help. One aspect of these trials is that they foster eagerness for prayer. The greater the distress of the supplicant, the more his soul will be melted. This is one of the factors in the acceptance of prayer. So one should not lose heart and should not think ill of God through impatience and restlessness. One should never think that one's prayer is not accepted or will not be accepted. Such a notion is a denial of the attribute of God that He accepts prayers.

[*Malfūzāt*, vol. IV, pp. 434]

Prayer is very valuable and a person who is given to prayer succeeds in the end. However, it is foolishness and disrespect that a person should seek to avoid the design of God Almighty. For instance, to pray that the

sun should appear in the early part of the night is impertinence. A person who loses hope or desires fulfilment before it is time, suffers loss. For instance, if after ten days of marriage the husband and wife should desire that a child should be born to them, it would be foolish on their part.... In the same way, he who does not allow time for a plant to grow does not let the stage of the ripening of the grain to come....

Muslims in general are ignorant of the principles of prayer, and some of them are such who had the opportunity to pray but as they did not exercise patience and perseverance they were frustrated and adopted the view of Sayyed Aḥmad Khān that prayer is nothing. They fall into such error as they are unaware of the reality of prayer and do not know its effects. Seeing that their hopes of wealth are not fulfilled, they announce that prayer is nothing and they draw away from it. Prayer is a perfect relationship between Providence and servitude. If prayer had no effect, to have recourse to it or not would be equal.

[Malfūzāt, vol. III, pp. 203-204]

We should have recourse to prayer and should seek forgiveness from God Almighty for He is Self-Sufficient and is not subject to anyone's authority. He has no regard for a person who does not come to Him humbly and in submission. If a person goes to another begging or seeking a favour and puts forward his helplessness and poverty, he would be shown some favour, but if a person comes riding a horse and seeks a favour and threatens that if it is not granted he would have recourse to force, he would only be met by force. To seek a favour from God Almighty obstinately, and to make one's faith conditional, is a great mistake and is likely to prove a

stumbling block. Perseverance and steadfastness in prayer is one thing, but obstinacy is quite another. To say that if one's purpose is not fulfilled one would deny faith or would say this or that is great foolishness and betrays ignorance of the manner of prayer and amounts to *shirk*. Such people are not aware of the philosophy of prayer. Nowhere does the Holy Qur'ān say that God would accept prayer according to the desire of the supplicant. It is true that it is said in the Holy Qur'ān:

أَدْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ⁶⁶

but it is also part of our faith, as the Holy Qur'ān too says:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ⁶⁷

If by virtue of:

أَدْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ⁶⁸

God accepts your prayer, then by virtue of:

لَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ⁶⁹

He enforces His own will. It is the Benevolence and Generosity of God Almighty that He accepts the supplications of His servants; otherwise, it would not be inconsistent with His Godhead and Providence that He should always enforce His will. When He says:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ⁷⁰

⁶⁶ 'Pray unto Me, I will answer your prayer.'—Al-Mu'min 40:61
[Publisher]

⁶⁷ 'And We will try you with something of fear and hunger.'—Al-Baqarah, 2:156 [Publisher]

⁶⁸ 'Pray unto Me, I will answer your prayer.'—Al-Mu'min 40:61
[Publisher]

⁶⁹ 'We will try you . . .'—Al-Baqarah, 2:156 [Publisher]

⁷⁰ 'And We will try you with something of fear....'—Al-Baqarah,

at that time He desires to enforce His will. There is sometimes fear and sometimes hunger, and sometimes there is decline in wealth, or loss in trade, or poor harvest, or death of children or loss of fruits and harmful results. These are trials from God Almighty. At that time, God desires to display His authority and to enforce His will. At such times a sincere believer accepts the will of God cheerfully and gives it preference and is pleased with it and makes no complaint and thinks no ill. That is why Allāh the Exalted says:

وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ⁷¹

And give glad tidings to the steadfast.

God does not say that glad tidings should be conveyed to supplicants, but to those who persevere. It is necessary, therefore, that a supplicant should not lose heart if he meets with failure in his prayers, but should prefer the pleasure of God Almighty with steadfastness and perseverance. The men of God perceive the hopefulness of an enterprise and in that case they supplicate; otherwise, they are content with Divine determination. When they perceive the signs of a calamity, they supplicate, but if they feel that such is Divine determination, they are steadfast, as was the case with the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) on the demise of his children, one of whom was Ibrāhīm.

[Malfūzāt, vol. III, pp. 385-386]

It is my frequent experience that God is so Benevolent and Merciful that when in His Wisdom He does not accept a prayer, He accepts some other prayer in place of

it which is like it. As He has said:

مَا تَنْسَخُ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا تَأْتِي بِخَيْرٍ مِنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا
 أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ⁷²

[Haqīqat-ul-Wahī, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 22, p. 340]

Be not content with thinking that you pray every day and that the whole of *Ṣalāt* is prayer, for the prayer which issues after understanding and through grace is of a different type altogether. It is something that destroys; it is a fire that melts; it is a magnetic power that draws mercy and it is a death which in the end revives. It is a fierce inundation which finally becomes a vessel. Every frustration is remedied by it and every poison becomes an antidote through it.

God Comes Closer through Prayer

Blessed are the prisoners who supplicate and do not get tired for they shall one day be released; blessed are the blind ones who persevere in their prayers for one day they shall see. Blessed are those who are in the graves and seek the help of God through supplication for one day they shall be taken out of their graves.

Blessed are you who do not get tired in your prayers and your souls melt while you pray, and your eyes shed tears, and a fire is lit in your breasts and you are driven into dark chambers and desolated jungles seeking solitude, and you are rendered restless and mad and unconscious of self, for in the end you will become the recipients of

⁷² ‘Whatever Sign We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than that or the like thereof. Dost thou not know that Allāh has the power to do all that He wills?’—Al-Baqarah, 2:107
 [Publisher]

grace. The God to Whom we call is very Benevolent, Merciful, Modest, True, Faithful and Compassionate to those who are humble. You should also become faithful and supplicate with full sincerity and loyalty so that He should have mercy on you. Withdraw from the tumult of the world and do not make your faith a matter of personal contentions. Accept defeat for the sake of God so that you might become heirs to great victories. God will show a miracle to those who pray and will bestow extraordinary favour upon those who beg.

Prayer comes from God and returns to Him. Through prayer God comes close to you as your life is close to you. The first bounty of prayer is that it creates a holy change in the supplicant and in consequence of this change God makes a change in His attributes. His attributes are unchangeable, but for a person who has changed himself, He has a special manifestation of which the world does not know, as if He were another God. He does not become another God, but a new manifestation displays Him in a new light. In that special manifestation, He does for His transformed servant, what He does not do for others....

In short, prayer is that sovereign remedy which converts a handful of dust into precious metal. It is the water which washes out inner impurities. With such prayer, the soul melts and, flowing like water, falls at the threshold of the Divine. It stands before God and bows down before Him and prostrates itself before Him. Indeed, the *Ṣalāt* that Islām teaches is a reflection of such prayer.

The standing of the soul in prayer is that it is prepared to endure every misfortune for the sake of God and is eager to carry out His commands, and its bowing down means that, discarding all other loves and relationships, it leans

towards God and becomes His; and its prostration is that, falling at the threshold of God, it loses itself altogether and wipes out its own being. This is the *Ṣalāt* which brings about a meeting between God and the worshipper. The Islāmic law depicts its picture in the shape of the daily *Ṣalāt* so that the physical *Ṣalāt* should urge a worshipper towards the spiritual *Ṣalāt*.

God Almighty has so constituted man that the soul and the body act and react upon each other. When the soul is sad, tears start from the eyes and when the soul is happy the countenance displays cheerfulness so that sometimes the person begins to laugh. In the same way when the body is hurt and feels pain, the soul also partakes of pain, and when the body is pleased with a breeze, the soul is also affected by it. Thus the purpose of physical worship is that on account of the relationship between the soul and body, the soul should be moved towards God and should occupy itself in spiritual bowing and prostration.

[Lecture Siālkot, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 20, pp. 222-224]

To think that seeking help from God is sometimes without result and wondering that the *Raḥmāniyyat* and *Raḥīmiyyat* of God do not manifest themselves in the shape of help, is the result of misunderstanding. God Almighty surely hears the prayers that are offered in sincerity and helps the seekers of help as He considers proper. But sometimes it happens that the prayer and request for help of a person are not inspired by sincerity and lack the humility of the heart, and his spiritual condition is not up to the mark, so that while his lips utter the words of supplication his heart is inattentive or is only making a show. It also happens sometimes that God hears the supplication and bestows whatever He considers proper and most appropriate in His perfect Wisdom,

but the foolish supplicant does not recognize the hidden favour that God does to him and begins to complain on account of his ignorance and unawareness. He does not appreciate the verse:

عَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُهُوَ أَشْيَاءً وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ
 وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ⁷³

That is, it may be that you dislike a thing, which is really good for you, and it may also be that you like something, but it may be the worse for you. Allāh knows the reality of all things and you know not.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 430-431, footnote 11]

Acceptance of Prayer Demands Eagerness

God Almighty has taught such an excellent method of prayer in the *Sūrah Fātiḥah* than which nothing better is possible and which comprises all those matters which are necessary for inspiring the heart with eagerness in prayer. For the acceptance of prayer; it is necessary that there should be eagerness in it for the prayer that lacks eagerness is mere words and is not true prayer. It is obvious, however, that it is not the choice of a person that his prayer should be inspired by eagerness at all times. It is necessary that at the time of prayer the matters that inspire eagerness should be present in the mind of the supplicant. Every sensible person knows that the heart is inspired with eagerness in consequence of two feelings. First, that the worshipper should contemplate God as Perfect and Powerful and possessing all perfect attributes, and to consider His mercies and His benevolence as essential from the beginning to the end for his own

⁷³ Al-Baqarah, 2:217 [Publisher]

existence and preservation, and to consider Him as the Fountainhead of all grace. Secondly, to consider himself and all his fellow beings helpless and poor and dependent upon God's help. These are two matters that inspire eagerness in prayer. Eagerness is inspired when the supplicant finds himself altogether weak and without strength and dependent upon Divine help, and believes firmly that God is All-Powerful and Lord of the worlds and Gracious and Merciful and Master of Judgement and that the fulfilment of all human needs lies in His hands. The *Sūrah Fātiḥah* sets out in the very beginning that God is the Being Who is worthy of all praise and comprises all excellencies and is the Lord of the worlds and is the Fountainhead of all mercies and bestows upon everyone the reward of their actions. By setting out these attributes, God Almighty has proclaimed that all power is in His hands and that all grace proceeds from Him. He has proclaimed His greatness to the degree that He is the fulfiller of all needs in this world and the hereafter, that He is the Cause of all causes and that He is the Source of all grace. He has also indicated that without Him and His mercy the life and comfort and ease of an animate is not possible. Then the supplicant has been taught humility in the words:

إِلَهِكَ تَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ⁷⁴

This means: O the Source of all bounties! We worship Thee alone, and seek help from Thee alone.

That is, we are helpless and can achieve nothing ourselves unless we are bestowed strength and support by Thee. Thus, God Almighty has set forth two matters that

⁷⁴ Al-Fātiḥah, 1:5 [Publisher]

inspire eagerness in prayer; one, His greatness and mercy and the other the helplessness and humility of His servants. These are two matters which it is necessary for supplicants to keep in their minds at the time of prayer. Thus those who have some experience of prayer know that without the presence of these two inspirers of prayers there can be no prayer, and that without these the fire of the love of God does not raise its flames in prayer. It is obvious that a person who does not keep in mind the greatness and mercy and perfect power of God cannot turn to God, and that the soul of a person who does not acknowledge his own helplessness and poverty cannot incline towards the Benevolent Master. This is a verity which needs no deep philosophy for its appreciation. When the greatness of God and one's own humility and helplessness are truly reflected in the heart, that condition itself instructs the worshipper that that is the means of offering true prayer.

True worshippers know well that a concept of these two matters is essential for prayer: first, that God Almighty has the power to foster and to develop and to bestow mercy and reward and that these perfect attributes of His are always in operation; and secondly, that man can achieve nothing without the help and support of the Divine. These two concepts are such that when they are established in the heart at the time of prayer they work such a change in the condition of the worshipper that, being affected by them, an arrogant one falls on the earth and tears start running from the eyes of a haughty hard-hearted one. This is the machine that puts life in a heedless dead person. Through these two concepts every heart is drawn towards prayer. This is the spiritual means through which the soul of a person turns towards God

and observes its own weakness and the need of the help of God. Through it a person arrives at such a stage of selflessness in which no sign of his own opaque existence remains and the glory of a Great Being shines forth and that Being appears as All-Merciful and the Support of every being and the Remedy of every ill and the Source of every grace. At last, a condition of being lost in God manifests itself in consequence of which a person is left with no inclination towards any part of creation, or towards his own self, or towards his own designs, and is wholly lost in the love of God. By the manifestation of that reality one's own existence and the existence of the rest of creation appear as naught. This condition is called the straight path by God which a servant has been instructed to seek through the supplication:

اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ⁷⁵

That is to say: Bestow upon us that path of losing of self and of Unity of God and love of God which has been indicated in the previous verses and cut us asunder altogether from everything beside Thee.

In short, God Almighty has bestowed such true means upon man for creating eagerness in prayer that through their adoption a supplicant is transported from the consciousness of self to the world of non-existence. It should be borne in mind that the *Sūrah Fātiḥah* is not merely one of the many means for seeking guidance, but as has been established by the arguments that have been already set forth, it is the only means by the adoption of which prayer is offered with the eagerness of the heart and which the nature of man desires to follow under the

⁷⁵ Al-Fātiḥah, 1:6 [Publisher]

urge of a natural demand.

The truth is that as God has appointed rules for other matters, there is a particular rule for prayer and that rule is set out in the *Sūrah Fātiḥah*. It is not possible that there should be eagerness in prayer unless the factors that inspire the heart with eagerness are present to the mind. Thus, the natural way of prayer is that which is set out in the *Sūrah Fātiḥah*. It is one of the excellences of that Surah that it sets out prayer along with those factors that inspire it.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in vol. 1, pp. 569-575, footnote 11]

Humble Prayer ⁷⁶

O, Most Merciful One! a humble servant of Thine, useless and full of errors and without any merit, Ghulām Aḥmad, who dwells in India supplicates:

O, Most Merciful One! be Thou pleased with me and forgive my mistakes and sins for Thou art most Forgiving and Merciful. Cause me to do that which should please Thee greatly. Put away my ego from me as far as the East is from the West and make my life and my death and every faculty that I have, devoted to Thee. Keep me alive in Thy love and cause me to die in Thy love and raise me up among Thy perfect lovers.

Most Merciful One! do Thou, by Thy grace, carry to its

⁷⁶ Note: This prayer was sent by the Promised Messiah in a letter to Ḥaḍrat Ṣūfī Aḥmad Jān Ṣāḥib of Ludhiāna and he was instructed: 'It is your duty that you should pray in these very words, without any change, on my behalf in the House of Allāh, before the Most Merciful One. Keep this letter with you to help your memory'. Accordingly, Ṣūfī Ṣāḥib, on the day of the great pilgrimage in the year 1302 A.H. offered this prayer in the House of Allāh in a loud voice while his companions continued to respond with *Āmīn*.
[Publisher]

conclusion the task for which Thou hast appointed me and the service for which Thou hast created eagerness in my heart. Establish conclusively the truth of Islām through the hand of this humble one in the eyes of the opponents of Islām and in the eyes of all those who are unaware of the excellences of Islām. Keep this humble one and his friends and sincere companions in the shade and support of Thy forgiveness and Graciousness. Be Thou the Provider for them in matters of faith and in matters of the world and transport all of them to the house of Thy pleasure and send down peace and blessings to the utmost degree upon Thy Messenger and his companions and followers. Āmīn.

[Al-Ḥakam, 6th & 13th August 1898 /
Maktubāt-e-Imām-e-Hummām (hand-written manuscript), vol. 1, p. 61]

My Powerful God! hear my humble prayers and open the ears and hearts of this people. Show us the time when the worship of false deities should disappear from the world and Thou shouldst be worshipped sincerely in the earth. May the earth be filled with Thy righteous servants who believe in Thy Unity as the ocean is filled with water and may the greatness and truth of Thy Messenger Muḥammad, the chosen one (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) be established in the hearts of people. Āmīn.

My Powerful God! show me this change in this world and accept my prayers for Thou hast all power and strength. Āmīn, O Powerful God.

Our last call is that all praise belongs to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds.

[Ḥaqīqat-ul-Waḥī, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 22, p. 603]

6

REPENTANCE AND SEEKING FORGIVENESS

It is obvious that man is very weak by nature and has been charged with hundreds of Divine commandments. On account of his weakness, he falls short in carrying out some Divine commandments and sometimes he is overcome by the desires of the self that incite to evil. On account of his weak nature, he deserves that at the time of any slipping, if he should repent and seek forgiveness, God's mercy should save him from being ruined. It is a certainty that if God had not been the Acceptor of repentance, man would not have been charged with these hundreds of commandments. This proves conclusively that God turns towards man with mercy and is Most Forgiving.

Meaning of *Taubah* (Repentance)

Taubah (Repentance) means that a person should discard a vice with the resolve that thereafter, even if he is thrown into the fire, he would not commit that vice. When man turns towards God Almighty with such sincerity and firm resolve, then God, who is Benevolent and Merciful, forgives him that particular sin. It is one of the high Divine attributes that God accepts repentance and saves a sinner from ruin.

If man had not the hope of his repentance being accepted, he would not be able to refrain from sinning. The Chris-

tians also believe in repentance, but on condition that the person who repents should be a Christian. Islām lays down no condition for repentance. The repentance of the followers of every faith can be accepted leaving out only the sin of denying the Book of God and His Messenger. It is impossible that a person should attain salvation only through his conduct. It is the Benevolence of God that He accepts the repentance of some and bestows by His grace such powers on others that they are safeguarded against sinning.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 189-190]

To reject repentance and forgiveness is to shut the door of human progress. It is obvious to everyone that man is not perfect in himself, but in fact he stands in need of perfection. As after his birth he gradually widens his knowledge and is not born learned and well informed, in the same way, when after his birth he begins to be sensible of his surroundings, his moral condition is at a very low ebb. Observation of the condition of small children would show that most children are inclined to beat others on the slightest provocation and many of them are given to telling lies and using foul language with other children. Some steal and carry tales and are envious and miserly. When they grow up, they fall into the grip of the self that incites to vice and are guilty of diverse types of evil and wickedness.

Thus for most people the first stage of life is impure, but when a fortunate person emerges from the fierce flood of youth, he turns towards God and withdraws from undesirable activities through sincere repentance and occupies himself with purifying the garment of his nature. These are stages of human life which a person has commonly to traverse. This shows that were it true that repentance is

not accepted, it would mean that God does not desire to bestow salvation on anyone.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 192-193]

Repentance Washes out the Stains of Sin

Though God Almighty has announced that the seed of the Unity of God is present in every soul, He has also expounded that that seed is not in equal strength in everyone and that the natures of some are overcome to such a degree by their passions that that light almost disappears. It is obvious, therefore, that the innateness of animal or aggressive faculties is not inconsistent with the innateness of belief in One God. However much a person may be given to following his desires, and however much he might yield to his evil-directing self, he possesses to some degree a natural light. For instance, if under the impact of passion or anger a person commits theft, murder, or adultery then though this act of his is a demand of his nature, yet the light of well-doing which is invested in his nature rebukes him at the very time when he indulges in any of these improper activities. Allāh the Exalted refers to it in the verse:

فَالِهَمَّهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا⁷⁷

(Part Number 30)

This means that God bestows a type of revelation upon every person which is called the light of the heart and which is the faculty of distinguishing between good and evil.

For example, when a thief commits theft, or a murderer commits murder, God puts it in his heart at the same time

⁷⁷ Al-Shams, 91:9 [Publisher]

that he has done ill and not good, but he pays no attention to it for the light of his heart and his reason are weak and are overcome by his animal faculties and his ego is insistent.... The turmoil of the ego of such people cannot be reduced, for that which God has imposed cannot be removed by anyone else; yet God has provided a remedy. What is that remedy? It is **repentance, seeking forgiveness and remorse**. This means that if they do evil in conformity with the demands of their ego, or an evil thought arises in their minds and they seek a remedy through repentance and seeking forgiveness, God forgives them. If they stumble repeatedly and are remorseful each time and repent, the remorse and repentance wash out the stain of their sin. This is the true atonement which is the remedy of a natural sin. Allāh the Exalted refers to it in the verse:

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا⁷⁸

Whoso does some evil or wrongs his soul in any way, and then asks forgiveness of Allāh with remorse, will find Allāh Most Forgiving, Ever Merciful.

This verse which is so profound and full of wisdom means that as stumbling and sinning are the characteristics of defective souls, which are manifested by them, there are corresponding to them the eternal attributes of God which are mercy and forgiveness and He is inherently Forgiving and Merciful. His forgiveness is not casual but is His eternal attribute which He loves and which He desires to exercise on deserving people.

Whenever a person turns to God in remorse and repentance at the time of stumbling or sinning, he becomes deserving that God should turn to him with mercy and

⁷⁸ Al-Nisā', 4:111 [Publisher]

forgiveness. This is not limited to once or twice, but it is the eternal attribute of God Almighty that He turns towards a remorseful and repentant servant whenever the latter turns to Him. Thus it is not God's natural law that a **weak person should not stumble** or that the nature of those who are overcome by their animal faculties should be changed, but **His eternal law is that those who commit sin should be forgiven through repentance and seeking forgiveness.**

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 185-187, footnote 11]

Man Turns to God with Remorse and God Turns to Man with Mercy

In Arabic idiom, *Taubah* (repentance) means 'returning', and that is why in the Holy Qur'ān God's name is also *Tawwāb*, that is to say, He Who is Oft-Returning. This means that when a person discarding sin turns to God with a sincere heart, God Almighty turns even more to him. This is altogether in accord with the law of nature. God Almighty has made it part of human nature that when a person turns to another with a sincere heart, the latter's heart is also softened for him. Then how can reason accept that when a servant turns towards God Almighty with a true heart God should not turn to him? Indeed God, Who is Benevolent and Merciful, turns even more towards His servant. That is why in the Holy Qur'ān, God's name, as we have just mentioned, is also *Tawwāb*, meaning Oft-Returning.

Man's turning to God is through remorse and humility and meekness, and God's turning to man is with mercy and forgiveness. If mercy were not one of the attributes of God Almighty, no one would be delivered. It is a pity that people do not ponder over the attributes of God Almighty and depend entirely upon their own actions.

But can it be the attitude of God, Who without any action proceeding from man, has created thousands of bounties for him upon the earth, that, when weak man, being warned of his heedlessness should turn to Him, a turning which is like death and should put off his old garment and should be consumed in the fire of His love, God should not turn to him with mercy? Is this the law of nature?

لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ⁷⁹

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 133-134]

Three Conditions for Repentance

It should be borne in mind that there are three conditions for repentance, without fulfilment of which true repentance is not achieved.

The first condition is to get rid of wicked fancies which arouse evil propensities. Ideas have great influence. Every action is preceded by an idea. Thus, the prime condition for repentance is that evil thoughts and fancies should be discarded. For instance, if a person has an illicit relationship with a woman and desires to repent, it is necessary that he should conceive of her as ugly and should call to mind all her low qualities. As I have just said fancies exercise a powerful influence. I have read that some Ṣūfīs carried their fancies to such a length that they saw a person in the form of an ape or pig. Every thing takes on the colour of how you imagine it to be. Thus, the first condition of repentance is that all thoughts, which give rise to evil pleasures, should be discarded altogether.

⁷⁹ Curse of Allāh be upon the liars. [Publisher]

The second condition is remorse. Everyone's conscience admonishes him over every evil, but an unfortunate person leaves his conscience suspended. So a sinner should express remorse over his sin and evil action and should reflect that the pleasure to be derived from them is temporary. He should also consider that every time there is a decline in that pleasure and that in the end, in old age when his faculties are weakened, he will perforce have to give up all these pleasures. Then why indulge in that which in the end has to be given up anyhow? Most fortunate is the person who turns in repentance and becomes determined to discard all corrupt thoughts and vile fancies. When he gets rid of this impurity, he should be remorseful.

The third condition is a firm resolve that he will not revert to those vices. If he adheres to this resolve, God will bestow upon him the strength for true repentance and he will be rid altogether of his vices which will be replaced by good morals and praiseworthy actions. This is a moral victory. It is for God Almighty to bestow the power and strength for it for He is the Master of all power and all strength, as He has said:

أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا⁸⁰

[Malfūzāt, vol. I, pp. 138-40]

The Meaning of *Istighfār*

The true meaning of *Istighfār* is to supplicate God that no human weakness should be manifested and that God might support nature with His strength and might enclose it in the circle of His help and protection. The root of

⁸⁰ 'All power belongs to Allāh.'—Al-Baqarah, 2:166 [Publisher]

Istighfār is *ghafara*, which means to cover up. Thus, the meaning of *Istighfār* is that God should cover up the natural weakness of the supplicant with His power. This meaning is then enlarged to include the covering up of a sin that has been committed, but the true meaning is that God should safeguard the supplicant against his natural weakness and should bestow upon him power from His power, and knowledge from His knowledge, and light from His light.

Having created man, God has not become separated from him, but as He is man's Creator and the Creator of all his external and internal faculties, He is also All-Sustaining, that is to say, He safeguards with His support everything that He has created. It is, therefore, necessary for man that as he has been created by God, he should seek to safeguard the features of his creation through the All-Sustaining attribute of the Divine....

Thus this is a natural need of man for which he has been directed to carry out *Istighfār*. This is referred to in the verse:

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ⁸¹

.... He is both Creator and All-Sustaining. When man was created, the function of creation was completed, but the function of sustaining is forever and that is why *Istighfār* is needed all the time. Every attribute of God possesses a grace and *Istighfār* is needed for winning the grace of the attribute of 'All-Sustaining'. The same is indicated in the verse of *Sūrah Fātiḥah*:

رَبِّكَ تَعَبُّدٌ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ⁸²

⁸¹ 'Allāh – there is no God but He, the Living, the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining.'—Al-Baqarah, 2:256 [Publisher]

This means that: we worship Thee alone and implore Thee alone for help. Thy attributes of Providence and All-Sustaining should help us and should safeguard us against stumbling, lest our weakness may become manifest and we should fall short of worshipping Thee.

It is thus obvious that the true meaning of *Istighfār* is not that a default has occurred, but that no default should occur. Human nature finding itself weak naturally seeks strength from God, as a child seeks milk from its mother. As God has bestowed upon man from the beginning, tongue, eyes, heart, and ears, etc., so He has bestowed upon him from the beginning the desire for *Istighfār* and has made him feel that he is dependent upon God for help. This is indicated in the verse:

وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِرَبِّكَ وَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ⁸³

This means that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) was directed to supplicate that his nature should be safeguarded against human weakness and should be so strengthened that that weakness should not become manifest. He was also directed to supplicate by way of intercession on behalf of the men and women who believed in him that they should be safeguarded against the punishment for the defaults that might have been committed by them and that during the rest of their lives they should be safeguarded against sin.

This verse comprises a very high philosophy of protection against sin and intercession. It indicates that a person can achieve a high stage of protection against sin and win

⁸² Al-Fātiḥah, 1:5 [Publisher]

⁸³ ‘Ask forgiveness for thy frailties, and for believing men and believing women.’—Muḥammad, 47:20 [Publisher]

intercession if he prays constantly for the suppression of his own weakness and for delivering others from the poison of sin and himself draws strength from God through his supplication and desires that those who are related to him through faith should also partake of that strength. A sinless person needs to supplicate God for strength inasmuch as human nature possesses no excellence of its own but receives excellence at every moment from God, and has no strength of its own but receives strength at every moment from God, and has no perfect light of its own but receives light from God. A perfect nature is bestowed an attraction so that it might draw to itself strength from above, but the treasure of strength is the Being of God. **Angels draw strength for themselves from this treasure and so also perfect man draws the strength of sinlessness and grace from this Fountainhead of strength through the pipe of servitude. Thus from amongst men, he alone is perfectly innocent who draws Divine strength to himself through *Istighfār* and occupies himself throughout with humble supplication so that light should continue to descend upon him....**

Then what is *Istighfār*? It is an instrument through which strength is obtained. The whole secret of Divine Unity is that the quality of innocence should not be regarded as a permanent possession of man, but God should be taken as the Fountainhead for acquiring it. God Almighty metaphorically resembles the heart which has a store of pure blood and the *Istighfār* of a perfect man is like the veins and arteries which are connected with the heart and draw pure blood from it and convey it to the limbs that need it.

Priority of *Istighfār* over Repentance

Istighfār and *Taubah* (repentance) are two separate matters. From one point of view, *Istighfār* has priority over repentance, inasmuch as *Istighfār* is the help and strength which are obtained from God and repentance means standing on one's own feet. It is the way of God that when a person seeks help from Him, He bestows strength and with that strength the supplicant stands on his own feet and thus possesses the faculty to do good, which is called 'turning to God'. This is the natural sequence of it. It is appointed for seekers that they should seek help from God in every condition. Till a seeker obtains strength from God, he can do nothing.

The strength for repentance is acquired after *Istighfār*. If there is no *Istighfār*, the faculty of repentance dies. If you will thus follow up *Istighfār* with repentance, the result will be as set out in the verse:

84 *يُمَتِّعُكُمْ مَتَاعًا حَسَنًا لَّئِنْ أَجَلِي مُسَمًّى*

This is the way of God, that those who follow up *Istighfār* with repentance will achieve their cherished grades. Every sense has its limits within which it achieves its high grades; not everyone can be a Prophet or a Messenger or a Truthful (*Ṣiddīq*) or a Testifier (*Shahīd*).

[Malfūzāt, vol. II, pp. 68-69]

Istighfār is a Spiritual Exercise

85 *وَ أَنْ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ*

⁸⁴ 'He will provide for you a goodly provision until an appointed term.'—Hūd, 11:4 [Publisher]

⁸⁵ 'And that you seek forgiveness of your Lord, and then turn to Him.'—Hūd, 11:4 [Publisher]

Remember, the Muslims have been bestowed two things; one for obtaining strength and the other for the practical demonstration of the strength that has been obtained. *Istighfār* is for obtaining strength. It is also called seeking help. The *Ṣūfīs* have said that as physical strength and power is fostered through exercise, in the same way, *Istighfār* is spiritual exercise. Through it, the soul obtains strength and the heart achieves steadfastness. He who desires strength should do *Istighfār*.

[*Malfūzāt*, vol. II, p. 67]

Gates of God’s Grace are Never Closed

The gates of the grace and benevolence of God Almighty are never closed. If a person turns to Him with a true heart and in sincerity, then He is Forgiving and Merciful and accepts repentance. It is great impertinence and disrespect to speculate how many sinners will God Almighty forgive. The treasures of His mercy are unlimited. He lacks nothing and His doors are not shut upon. All those who arrive before God shall attain high ranks. This is a sure promise. The one who despairs of God Almighty, and his last moment arrives in a state of heedlessness, is most unfortunate and ill-fated because at that time the door is closed.

[*Malfūzāt*, vol. III, pp. 296-297]

There are some people who are aware of sin and there are others who are not even aware of it. That is why God Almighty has prescribed *Istighfār* in all circumstances so that man should occupy himself with *Istighfār* with regard to all sins, whether external or internal, and whether he has knowledge of them or not. A person should seek forgiveness for every type of sin whether of the hands, or of feet, or of tongue, or of nose, or of ears,

or of eyes. In these days we should supplicate like Adam:

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ⁸⁶

This prayer has already been accepted. Do not live heedlessly. He who is not heedless would not be involved in any calamity that is beyond his strength. No misfortune arrives without Divine command. That is why I have been taught the prayer in a revelation:

رَبِّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَادِمَكَ رَبِّ فَاحْفَظْنِي وَأَنْصُرْنِي وَارْحَمْنِي⁸⁷

[Malfūzāt, vol. IV, pp. 275-276]

Heedlessness arises from unknown causes. Sometimes without a person knowing it, his heart is suddenly afflicted with rust and darkness. Hence the need for *Istighfār*. It means that one should not suffer from that rust and darkness. The Christians foolishly argue that *Istighfār* shows that the supplicant has been sinful. The true meaning of *Istighfār* is that no sin should be committed. If *Istighfār* means forgiveness of sins committed, then what is the phrase for suppressing sins in future? *Ghafara* and *kafara* have the same connotation. All Prophets needed *Istighfār*. The more a person supplicates by way of *Istighfār* the more innocent he is. Its true meaning is that God saved him. To call someone innocent means that he has been forgiven.

[Malfūzāt, vol. IV, p. 255]

⁸⁶ ‘Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves; and if Thou forgive us not and have not mercy on us, we shall surely be of the lost.’—Al-A‘rāf, 7:24 [Publisher]

⁸⁷ Lord, everything serves Thee; then Lord protect me and help me and have mercy on me. [Publisher]

Salvation Comes from God's Grace

Then arise and repent and win the pleasure of God through good works. Remember that the punishment of wrong beliefs is after death. Being a Hindū or a Christian or a Muslim will be determined on the Day of Judgment. But a person, who goes beyond the limit in wrongdoing, transgression, disobedience and vice, is punished in this life. Such a one cannot escape God's chastisement. So hasten to win God's pleasure and before the dreadful day arrives namely the day of intensity of the plague of which the Prophets have warned, make your peace with God. He is very Benevolent. Through the one moment of the repentance that melts the heart, He can forgive the sins spread over seventy years. Do not say that repentance is not accepted. Remember that you cannot be saved by your deeds. It is grace that saves and not deeds. Benevolent and Merciful Lord, bestow Thy grace upon all of us. We are Thy servants and have fallen down upon Thy threshold. Āmīn.

[Lecture Lāhore, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 20, p. 174]

7

SALVATION

Man having arrived in this house of darkness cannot attain salvation unless, being himself honoured by the converse of God, or keeping company with someone who is the recipient of sure revelation and who has witnessed clear signs, he arrives at the certain knowledge that he has a God Who is All-Powerful, Benevolent and Ever Merciful, and that Islām which is his faith is in fact true and the Judgement Day and heaven and hell are realities. As a matter of tradition all Muslims believe in the existence of God and in the truth of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), but this faith has no sure foundation. Through such weak faith it is not possible to be deeply affected and to cultivate the true hatred for sin.

[Nuzūl-ul-Masīḥ, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 18, pp. 485-486]

The True Meaning of Salvation

It is a pity that most people are unaware of the true meaning of salvation. According to the Christians, salvation means deliverance from the punishment of sin. This is not the true meaning of salvation. It is possible that a person may not commit adultery or theft, or bear false witness, or kill anyone, or commit any other sin so far as he knows, and yet be unacquainted with salvation, for salvation means the achievement of that eternal prosperity for which human nature hungers and thirsts. It is achieved only through the personal love of God after

His full understanding and the establishment of a perfect relationship with Him and its condition is that love should surge up on both sides....

For a seeker after truth the only question is how to achieve true prosperity which should be the means of eternal joy and happiness. The sign of a true religion is that it should carry one to that prosperity. Through the guidance of the Holy Qur'ān we learn that that eternal prosperity is found in the **true understanding** of God Almighty and His holy and perfect and personal love, and in perfect faith which **should create a lover's restlessness in the heart**. These are a few words and yet even a volume cannot set forth a complete exposition of them.

[Chashma-e-Masīhī, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 20, pp. 359-360]

What the Holy Qur'ān says in this context is summarised below:

O My servants, do not despair of Me. I am Ever Merciful and Benevolent and cover up sins and forgive them and am more Merciful towards you than anyone else. No one will have mercy on you as I have. Love Me more than you love your fathers for I am greater in love than they are. If you come to Me I shall forgive all your sins and if you repent, I shall accept your repentance. If you advance towards Me slowly, I shall run to you. He who seeks Me shall find Me and he who turns to Me shall find My door open. I forgive the sins of a penitent even if they are more than the mountains. My mercy upon you is great and My wrath is little because you are My creatures. I have created you and therefore My mercy comprises all of you.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, p. 56]

The Cause of Spiritual Decline

After deep reflection and the receipt of constant revelation from God, I have come to know that though there are a large number of religious sects in this country and religious differences swell up like a flood, the cause of all these contentions is that most people suffer from a decline of the spiritual faculties and of the fear of God. The heavenly light by means of which man can distinguish between truth and falsehood has disappeared from most hearts. The world is taking on the colour of atheism and though the tongues utter the words 'God' and 'Permeshwar', the hearts are more and more inclined towards denial. This is testified to in practice by an absence of good actions. I do not question the integrity of anyone who practices righteousness in secret, but the general condition is that the true purpose of religion is ignored. Most people pay little attention to **purity of heart, true love of the Divine**, true sympathy with His creatures, gentleness, mercy, justice, meekness and all other pure moral qualities like righteousness, cleanliness and truth which are the spirit of religion. It is a matter of regret that religious contentions are on the increase, but spirituality is declining.

The real purpose of religion is to recognize God Who has created the universe and to arrive in His love at a stage where the love of everything else is burnt up and to have sympathy with His creatures and to put on the garment of true purity. I observe, however, that this purpose is neglected in this age and most people adhere to some branch of atheism. The recognition of God Almighty has sadly declined and for this reason boldness in committing sin is increasing. It is obvious that that which is not recognized is not followed by the heart, nor is there any

love for it or any fear of it. All types of fear and love and appreciation are created by recognition.

This shows that the prevalence of sin in today's world is due to lack of understanding. One of the great signs of a true religion is that it should present many means of acquiring the recognition and understanding of God Almighty so that man might be able to restrain himself from committing sin, and so that becoming aware of Divine beauty he should partake of perfect love and so that he should regard cutting asunder from God as worse than hell. **To avoid sin and to be devoted to the love of God Almighty is a grand goal for man and is that true comfort which can be described as heavenly life.** All desires that are opposed to the pleasure of God are the fire of hell and to spend one's life in their pursuit is to lead a hellish life. But the question is how can one be delivered from such a life? The knowledge that God has bestowed upon me in this context is that deliverance from this house of fire depends upon true and perfect understanding of the Divine. Carnal passions that pull people to themselves constitute an irresistible flood which is flowing fiercely to destroy faith, and it is impossible to stem that which is irresistible except through that which is perfect and overwhelming in itself. For this reason, perfect understanding of the Divine is needed for the attainment of salvation.

[Lecture Lāhore, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 20, pp. 147-149]

O my dears! It is a true and tried philosophy that to escape sin, man needs perfect understanding and not any type of atonement. I tell you truly that if the people of Noah had attained the perfect understanding which creates perfect fear, they would not have been drowned, if the people of Lot had been bestowed that understand-

ing, they would not have been subjected to a rain of stones, and if this country had been bestowed that recognition of the Divine Being which makes one tremble with fear, it would not have suffered ruin from the plague as it did. But deficient understanding yields no benefits, nor can its result, which is fear and love, be perfect. The faith that is not perfect is useless and the love that is not perfect is useless, and the fear that is not perfect is useless, and the understanding that is not perfect is useless, and the food and drink that are not perfect are useless. Can your hunger be satisfied with a grain of food or can your thirst be quenched by a drop of water?

Then, O ye who have little resolve and exercise little effort in the search for truth, how can you hope for great Divine grace in return for a little love and a little fear? To purify a person from sin and to fill his heart with love of the Divine is the work of the All-Powerful One, and to establish the fear of His greatness in any heart is dependent upon His will. The eternal law of nature is that all this is bestowed after perfect understanding.

The root of fear and love and appreciation is perfect understanding. He who is bestowed perfect understanding is bestowed perfect fear and perfect love, and he who is bestowed perfect fear and perfect love is delivered from every sin which arises from fearlessness.

For such deliverance we need no blood and no cross and no atonement. We need a sacrifice of self which need is felt by our nature. This sacrifice is in other words Islām. The meaning of Islām is to stretch forth one's neck for slaughter; that is to say, to place one's soul at the threshold of God with complete willingness. The name Islām is the soul of all law and is the life of all commandments.

To stretch forth one's neck for slaughter willingly and cheerfully demands perfect love and devotion, and perfect love calls for perfect understanding. The word Islām indicates that for true sacrifice perfect understanding and perfect love are needed and nothing else. This is indicated by Allāh the Exalted in the verse:

لَنْ يَسْتَأْذِنَ اللَّهُ لِحُومِهَا وَلَا دِمَائِهَا وَلَكِنْ يَسْتَأْذِنُ الْتَقْوَىٰ مِنْكُمْ⁸⁸

This means that the sacrificial meat you offer cannot reach Me, nor can its blood. On the contrary, the only sacrifice that reaches Me is that you shall fear Me, and be righteous for My sake.

[Lecture Lāhore, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 20, pp. 150-152]

Faith Without Understanding is Not Enough for Salvation

It may be asked that if the blood of Jesus cannot purify from sin, as indeed it cannot, then is there any way of being purified from sin, for a sinful life is worse than death. My answer to this question, which I set forth with full force from my personal experience, is that from the time that man was created up to today there has been only one means of escaping sin and disobedience. That means is that through convincing arguments and shining signs a person should arrive at the understanding which truly makes God manifest, and through which one realizes that God's wrath is a consuming fire, and which proves through a manifestation of Divine beauty that every perfect delight is in God. In other words, through such understanding all veils are lifted from glory and beauty. This is the only way by which passions are restrained and man experiences inner change. On hearing

⁸⁸ Al-Ḥajj, 22:38 [Publisher]

this answer many people will exclaim: Do we not believe in God; do we not fear God and love Him; does not the whole world, with few exceptions, believe in God? Then why is it that they commit all manner of sins and appear involved in diverse forms of wickedness? The answer to this is that faith is one thing and understanding is another. I do not mean that a believer avoids sin, but I mean that a man of perfect understanding avoids it, that is to say a person who has tasted both the fear of God and the love of God. Someone might ask: Why is Satan disobedient though he possesses perfect understanding? The answer is that Satan does not possess that perfect understanding which is bestowed upon the fortunate ones. It is part of human nature that man is necessarily influenced by perfect knowledge and that he does not place himself in the way of ruin when he beholds its terrible countenance. Faith only means to believe as the result of thinking well of a thing; but understanding means to behold that in which one has put one's faith. Thus understanding and sin cannot exist together in a heart as day and night cannot co-exist at the same time.

It is your daily experience that when something proves to be useful, one is immediately attracted towards it and when something is proved to be harmful, one begins to fear it. For instance, if a person does not know that what he has in his hand is arsenic he might swallow a large dose of it deeming it to be some useful medicine. But he who knows that it is a fatal poison will not swallow even the smallest quantity of it, for he would realize that by the eating of it he would pass out from this world. In the same way, when a person knows for certain that God undoubtedly exists and that every type of sin is punishable in His estimation, all sins automatically fall away

from him.

Why Sins are Committed and How they can be Avoided

Someone might raise the question that while we know that God exists and we also know that sins will be punished, yet we commit sins, which shows that we need some other way of avoiding sin. Our answer would still be that which we have already given. It is not at all possible that realizing fully that with the commission of a sin its punishment would fall upon you like lightning, you would yet dare to commit sin. This is the philosophy that is not open to any objection or exception. Reflect well that when you are quite certain of being punished for a sin, you will not act contrary to this certainty. Would you thrust your hand into the fire? Would you jump down from the top of a mountain? Would you jump into a well? Would you lie down in front of a running train? Would you thrust your arm into the mouth of a tiger? Would you present your foot to a mad dog? Can you stay somewhere where lightning is striking repeatedly? Do you not run out quickly from a room the roof of which is about to fall down? Is there any one of you who would not jump out of bed on perceiving a poisonous snake in it? Is there anyone who would not run out of a room in which he is sleeping and in which a fire has broken out? Tell me, why do you do this and run away from all these harmful things, but do not run away from the sins to which I have drawn your attention? The only answer that a wise person can give after full reflection is that there is a difference of knowledge in the two cases. In the matter of sins, the knowledge of most people is defective. They consider sins as evil, but do not look

upon them as they look upon a tiger or a serpent. Hidden in their minds is the notion that the punishment of sins is not certain. They even doubt the existence of God and if they believe in His existence they doubt whether the soul survives after death; and if it survives death, they do not know whether there is any punishment for these sins. They may not be conscious of it, yet most of them have these notions hidden in their minds. But with regard to those occasions of danger of which I have cited instances, and which they avoid, they are certain that if they did not move away from them they would be destroyed and so they run away. Even if they encounter any of them by chance, they run away from it in terror. Thus the truth is that with regard to these things man has certain knowledge that they are fatal, but with regard to religious commandments their knowledge is not certain and is only speculation. One is a case of seeing and the other is only a story. Sins cannot be avoided by stories. I tell you truly that not one Jesus even if a thousand of them were to be crucified, they would not procure you true salvation, for it is only perfect fear or perfect love that rescues from sin. The death of Jesus upon the cross is in itself a fiction, and in any case it has nothing to do with stemming the tide of sin. This is a claim which is all darkness. Experience does not support it, nor is there any relationship between the suicide of Jesus and the forgiveness of other peoples' sins.

The philosophy of true salvation is that man should be delivered from the hell of sin in this very life. Consider then whether you have been delivered from the hell of sin by these tales or has anyone been so delivered through tales which have no truth behind them and which have no relationship with true salvation. Search in the

East and the West and you will not find any people who had through these stories achieved such true purity whereby God becomes visible, and not only one is disgusted with sin but one begins to enjoy the heavenly delights of truth, and one's soul flows like water and falls on the threshold of God and a light descends from heaven and dispels all darkness of the ego.

When on a bright day you open all the windows of your room, the light of the sun will enter your room under a natural law, but if you keep your windows shut, the light will not come in merely by virtue of a tale or story. To obtain light you will have to get up and open your windows and then light will enter and will illumine your room. Can anyone quench his thirst by thinking of water? Indeed not. A thirsty one must somehow or other arrive at a spring of water and apply his lips to the water. His thirst would then be quenched. Thus the water that will satisfy you and will remove the burning sensation of sin is certainty. There is no other means under heaven of getting rid of sin. No cross can deliver you from sin. No blood can restrain your passions. These things have no relationship with true salvation. Understand reality and reflect over verities. As you try things of the world, try this also and then you will soon understand that there is no light beside true certainty which can rescue you from the darkness of self. Without the clear water of perfect insight nothing can wash out your inner filth. Your burning cannot be assuaged without the refreshing water of beholding the Divine. False is the person who proposes other remedies to you, and ignorant is the one who desires to subject you to other treatment. These people cannot bestow light upon you but push you into the pit of darkness. They do not give you sweet water, but increase

your burning sensation. No blood can be of any benefit to you but the blood which might be generated inside you by the nourishment of certainty, and no cross can deliver you but the cross of the straight path; that is to say steadfastness in the way of truth. Then open your eyes and see whether it is not true that you can only see with the help of light and by no other means, and that you can arrive at your goal by following the straight path and in no other way. Worldly things are close to you and the things of the faith are far away. Then reflect on that which is close and understand its law and then apply it to that which is far, for it is the same One Who has framed both these laws....

True Salvation is Bestowed in this Very World

It is not possible that without obtaining light and by remaining blind you should attain salvation through anyone's blood. Salvation is not something which will be bestowed after this world. True and real salvation is bestowed in this very world. It is a light which descends upon the hearts and shows who is floundering in the pit of ruin. Follow the way of truth and wisdom for thereby you will find God. Create warmth in your hearts so that you might be able to move towards the truth. Unfortunate is the heart that is cold, and ill-starred is the nature that is melancholy, and dead is the conscience which is not bright. Be not less than the bucket that falls into the well and comes out full, and be not like the sieve which cannot hold any water which enters it from one side and goes out at the other. Try that you should become healthy and that the poisonous heat of the fever of seeking the world may be removed in consequence of which there is no light in the eyes, there is no hearing in the ears, the taste of the tongue is corrupted, there is no grip in the

hands and there is no strength in the feet. Cut asunder one relationship so another might be established. Block your heart in one direction so that it might find its way in another direction. Throw away the foul insect of the earth so that you might be bestowed the brilliant diamond of heaven. Turn to the Fountainhead which revived Adam with the Divine Spirit so that you may be bestowed kingdom over all things that was bestowed upon your father.

[Review of Religions—Urdū, vol. I, pp. 23-29]

Love of God Leads to Salvation

Next to understanding, what is needed for salvation is the love of God. It is obvious that no one seeks to torment a person who loves him.

Love attracts love and pulls toward itself. If one loves another truly then even if one does not inform that person of one's love it has at least this much effect that the person loved cannot become an enemy of the one who loves. That is why it has been said that a heart inclines towards another heart. The cause of the power of attraction which Prophets and Messengers possess, whereby thousands of people are drawn towards them and love them so much that they are prepared to lay down their lives for them, is that their hearts are filled with sympathy for mankind so that they love people even more than a mother loves her children and desire their comfort even by suffering pain and hardship themselves. In the end their power of attraction begins to attract good hearts towards themselves. Thus when man, although he does not know that which is hidden, becomes aware of the hidden love of a person, how can God Almighty, Who knows the hidden, remain unaware of the sincere love of

anyone? Love is a wonderful thing. Its fire overcomes the fire of sin and puts out the flame of disobedience. True and personal and perfect love cannot subsist along with punishment. One of the signs of true love is that it is a part of the nature of a true lover that he is fearful of his beloved cutting asunder from him, and considers himself lost if he commits the slightest default, and deems it a poison to oppose his beloved, and always yearns to meet him and is so deeply affected by distance and absence that he becomes like one dead. He estimates as sin not only that which the common people regard as sin, for instance, murder, adultery, theft, bearing false witness, but he considers the slightest neglect as a great sin and so also that leaving God he should have the least inclination towards anything else. He is, therefore, constantly occupied with *Istighfār* before the Eternal Beloved and as his nature is never reconciled to any separation from God Almighty, he considers the least neglect which might result from his humanness as a mountain of sin. That is the reason why those who have a holy and perfect relationship with God Almighty occupy themselves constantly with *Istighfār*. It is a characteristic of love that a true lover is always fearful lest his beloved should be annoyed with him and as his heart is thirsty that God should be wholly pleased with him, he is not content even if God Almighty tells him that He is pleased with him. As the winebibber is not satisfied with drinking once and always demands more, in the same way, when the love of the Divine surges up in the heart of a person, it demands that it should win the pleasure of God more and more. The intensity of love demands more and more of *Istighfār*. That is why those who love God perfectly concentrate all the time on *Istighfār*. The great sign of an

innocent one is that he should be occupied with *Istighfār* more than anyone else. The true meaning of *Istighfār* is to supplicate God that, through His grace, the human weakness through which a person might stumble and be guilty of default might be covered up and should not be manifested. Then the meaning of *Istighfār* is extended for the common people so as to comprise a supplication that whatever default might have been committed, God Almighty might be pleased to safeguard the supplicant from its ill consequences and poisonous results in this world and in the hereafter.

Thus the source of true salvation is the personal love of God, the Glorious, which draws to itself the love of God Almighty through humility and supplication and constant *Istighfār*. When man's love of God becomes perfect and its fire burns up human passions, then God's love for him suddenly falls upon his heart and pulls him out of the foulness of the lower life. He then acquires the colour of the holiness of God the Ever-Living and All-Sustaining, and he partakes by way of reflection in all Divine attributes. He then becomes a manifestation of Divine reflections and, through him all the mysteries hidden and latent in the eternal treasure of *Rubūbiyyat* are disclosed to the world.

[Chashma-e-Masīhī, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 20, pp. 378-380]

Do not expect that any other design can purify the human ego. As darkness can be dispelled only by light, in the same way, the remedy for the darkness of sin are the Divine reflections in word and action which in a miraculous way descend upon a good heart from God with fierce rays, and show him that God exists and remove the foulness of all doubts and bring satisfaction and contentment. By the strong attraction of His heavenly power,

that good person is raised to heaven. All other remedies that are put forward are fakes and useless. But for complete purification, understanding alone is not enough. It must be accompanied by earnest prayers. God Almighty is Self-Sufficient, and to attract His grace there is great need of prayers that are accompanied by weeping, crying, sincerity, piety, and tribulation of the heart. It is a common observation that though a suckling infant fully recognizes its mother and loves her and the mother also loves it, yet its crying has close relationship with the mother's milk. On the one side the infant cries bitterly out of hunger and on the other side the mother is so affected by its crying and weeping that milk is generated in her breasts. In the same way, every seeker should prove his spiritual hunger and thirst by his weeping and crying so that the spiritual milk might be generated that would satisfy him.

For spiritual purification understanding alone is not enough. Heart-rending weeping and crying like little infants is also necessary. Do not give up hope and do not be discouraged by the thought that you are involved in many sins and that your supplications cannot have much effect. Man has been created for the love of God and even if he is aroused by the fire of sin, he possesses the faculty of repentance which can put out that fire. You will have observed that however much water is heated, yet when it is poured over fire it puts the fire out.

Ever since God Almighty has created man, his heart has always been cleansed through this means. Without the Living God manifesting His existence and power and Godhead through word and action, and displaying His shining majesty, man cannot be purified from sin by any other means.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Part V, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 21, pp. 33-34]

How to Establish Relationship with God

The means, which the Holy Qur'ān has taught us of establishing a spiritual and perfect relationship with God, is Islām and the prayer set out in the *Sūrah Fātiḥah*. This means that one must first devote one's life to the cause of God, and then should be occupied with the prayer that the Muslims have been taught in *Sūrah Fātiḥah*. This is the essence of Islām. This is the only means of reaching God and drinking of the water of true salvation. This is the only means which the law of nature has appointed for man's higher progress and his meeting with God. Only those find God who enter into the spiritual fire, which is the essence of Islām, and occupy themselves with the supplication taught in the *Sūrah Fātiḥah*. Islām is the burning fire which, by consuming our lower life and by burning up our false deities, offers the sacrifice of our lives and properties and honour before our Holy God. We drink the water of a new life from this spring and all our spiritual faculties establish a relationship with God. Like lightning, a fire emerges from inside us and another fire descends upon us from above and by their meeting all our passions and the love of anything beside God are consumed and we become dead to our previous life. This condition is called Islām by the Holy Qur'ān. Through Islām our passions suffer a death and through prayer we are revived again. For this second life revelation is necessary. Arrival at this stage is called meeting with God, that is to say, beholding God. Arriving at this stage a person establishes a relationship with God as if he sees Him with his eyes. He is bestowed strength and all his senses and inner faculties are illumined and the attraction

of a pure life is generated with great force. On arriving at this stage, God becomes the eye of a person with which he sees and becomes his tongue with which he speaks, and becomes his hand with which he grips, and becomes his ear with which he hears, and becomes his feet with which he walks. This is the stage to which Allāh the Exalted refers by saying:

يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ⁸⁹

The hand of God is above their hands;

and also as He says:

مَا كَذَبْتِ إِذْ كَذَبْتِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَى⁹⁰

It was not thou who didst throw but it was God Who threw.

At this stage complete unification ensues with God Almighty and His holy will saturates the soul, and moral faculties that were weak become firm like mountains, and reason and intellect acquire a high degree of delicacy. This is the meaning of the verse:

وَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ يَرْزُقُ مِنْهُ⁹¹

He strengthened them with a spirit from Himself.

At this stage the streams of love and devotion well up in such a manner that to die for Almighty and to endure thousands of hardships for Him and to be disgraced for His sake, becomes as easy as breaking a straw. A person is pulled towards God Almighty and does not know who is pulling him. A hidden hand upholds him, and to do

⁸⁹ Al-Fath, 48:11 [Publisher]

⁹⁰ Al-Anfāl, 8:18 [Publisher]

⁹¹ Al-Mujādilah, 58:23 [Publisher]

God's will becomes the purpose of his life. At this stage God Almighty appears very near as He has said:

تَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ لَكَ مِنْ حَنَاجِلِ الْوَرِيدِ⁹²

We are closer to him than his jugular vein.

In that condition a person is like ripe fruit which falls of itself from the tree. In the same way, all the low relationships of such a person come to an end and his relationship with God becomes so strong that he draws away from creation and is honoured with the converse of God Almighty. For achieving this rank, the doors are still open as they were open before, and God's grace bestows this bounty upon the seekers today as He bestowed it before. But this path is not found through mere words and this door is not opened by useless talk and boasts. There are many who desire but there are few who find. The reason is that this rank depends upon true endeavour and true sacrifice. You can go on talking till Judgement Day without avail. To step out in sincerity on to the fire of which people are afraid is the first condition of this path. If there is not practical eagerness, it is vain to talk of it. In this connection God Almighty says:

وَإِذَا سَأَلْتَّ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِي إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِلِقَائِي كَلَّهْم مِرْشَدُونَ⁹³

When My servants inquire from thee concerning Me, tell them I am close. I respond to the call of the supplicant when he calls Me. So they should seek to attain my nearness through prayers and be guided.

[Islāmī Uṣūl kī Philosophy, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 10, pp. 394-396]

⁹² Qāf, 50:17 [Publisher]

⁹³ Al-Baqarah, 2:187 [Publisher]

The **philosophy** of salvation is that those who establish a holy and perfect relationship with God become the manifestations of that light which has no decline, and falling into the fire of His love depart from their existence like a piece of iron, which when it is heated in the fire, assumes the character of fire though it is not fire and is still a piece of iron. As through the manifestations of God a surprising change takes place in His lovers, in the same way, God also makes a change for their sake. It is true that God is unchangeable and is free from change, but for such of His servants He manifests such wonderful works as if He is a new God and is not the same God Who is the God of the common people. To the degree to which righteous servants of God **move** towards Him through their pure deeds and their sincerity and fidelity, so much so that they become dead to their previous existence, God also moves towards them with **benevolence and help** so much so that He displays His help and support and jealousy for them in an extraordinary way.

It is impossible and contrary to God's benevolence that He should condemn to hell a servant of His who is **devoted to Him in his love** with his whole heart and soul and with full sincerity in a manner which is the characteristic of true love. Such a servant does not consider anyone equal to Him and regards everyone in contrast with Him as naught and is ready to lay down his life in His cause. How can such a person be the subject of torment? Indeed the truth is that **perfect love is salvation**. Can you deliberately cast into the fire a child of yours whom you love? Then how will God, Who is **altogether love**, cast into the fire **those who love Him** and every particle of whom is sunk in His love? No sacrifice is better than the sacrifice that a person should so love the

True Beloved that he should realize that no one else beside Him is **dear** to him. Not only this, but he should give up the love of his own self and should adopt a bitter life for His sake. When he arrives at this stage, then undoubtedly he **attains salvation**. At this stage of love, he has no need of passing through the chain of transmigration, nor has he the need to have anyone **crucified** for his sake. At this stage of love a person does not merely imagine that he has attained salvation, but his love teaches that the love of God is with him and the love of God causes contentment and peace to **descend** upon his heart. God begins to treat him as He has always treated **those who are dear to Him** and are accepted of Him. He accepts most of his prayers and teaches him fine insights, and informs him of many hidden things, and brings about changes in the world according to his desire. He makes him known and **accepted** in the world with **honour**, and disgraces the person who persists in enmity towards him and strives to disgrace him. He supports him in an extraordinary manner and puts his **love** in the hearts of millions of **people** and manifests wonderful things through him. The hearts of people are drawn to him through Divine revelation and they hasten to serve him with diverse kinds of **gifts** and with money and other articles. God speaks to him in delicious and majestic words as a friend speaks to a friend. The **God Who is hidden from the eyes of the world** manifests Himself to him and comforts him with His words at the time of every sorrow. He carries on a **dialogue** with him in His eloquent and delicious and majestic words and answers his questions and informs him of things that are beyond the knowledge and power of man. He does this not like astrologers, but like mighty kings whose words are full

of kingly power. He discloses to him prophecies which are a sign of his honour and of the disgrace of his enemies, which indicate his victory and the defeat of his enemies. In this way, through His words and His works, manifests His existence to him. Then that servant being purified of all sin arrives at the perfection for which he has been created.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 418-421]

Faculties for Seeing God Can be Developed in this Very World

The Holy Qur'ān teaches us that salvation is a matter that is manifested in this very life as He has said:

مَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَى فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَى⁹⁴

That is, he who is blind in this world will be blind in the hereafter also. This means that a person takes with him from this world the faculties for seeing God and the means of eternal salvation.

God has repeatedly indicated that the means of man's attaining salvation is eternal as God Himself is Eternal. It is not that after a time He recalled that if men cannot attain salvation by any other means, he should bestow salvation on them by killing Himself. A person can be described as having attained salvation when all his passions are consumed and God's will becomes his will and he becomes so devoted to God out of love that nothing remains his and everything becomes God's. All his words and deeds and movements and designs should be for God and he should perceive in his heart that all his delights are now in God and that a moment's separation

⁹⁴ Banī Isrā'il 17:73 [Publisher]

from God means death for him. He should be so inebriated with the love of God that everything beside God should be naught in his estimation. If the whole world should attack him with swords and should seek to separate him from God through fear, he should remain steadfast like a firm mountain. The fire of perfect love should flare up within him and he should hate sin. As other people love their children and wives and friends so that their love pervades their hearts, and the death of any of them distresses them so much as if it was their own death, that type of love and indeed a greater love should be generated in his heart for God, so much so, that he should become like an insane person in the grip of that love and should be ready to endure every torment and every wound for the sake of that love so that God Almighty may be pleased with him.

When a person is overcome to this degree by his love for God, all his passions are burnt up by the fire of love and a great revolution takes place in his nature and he is bestowed a heart that he did not possess before, and is bestowed eyes that he did not have before, and he is so much affected by certainty that he begins to see God in this very world. That burning sensation for the world with which the nature of the worldly is afflicted like hell, is totally removed from him and he is bestowed a life of comfort and pleasure and delight. This condition of his is called **salvation** inasmuch as his soul falling upon the threshold of God with love and devotion finds unending comfort and the union of his love with the love of God transports him to a station of devotion which is beyond description.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 416-417]

Who Deserves Salvation?

Salvation is not attained through one's effort, but through the grace of God Almighty. The law that God Almighty has appointed for acquiring this grace is never falsified. That law is:

إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ⁹⁵

وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ⁹⁶

Salvation is not something whose blessings and fruits will be known to man only after his death. It is something the effects of which are manifested in this very world and a person who has attained salvation is bestowed a heavenly life in this world. The followers of other religions are altogether deprived of this. If it is said that the Muslims are also in the same condition, the answer is that they are deprived because they do not follow the Book. A person who possesses a medicine but does not use it and is careless will derive no benefit from it. That is the case of the Muslims that they have a Holy Book like the Qur'ān but they do not follow it. Those who turn away from the Word of God Almighty are deprived of lights and blessings. Turning away is of two kinds; one, in action and the other in doctrine. A person cannot partake of lights and blessings unless he acts as God Almighty has commanded:

كُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ⁹⁷

[Malfūzāt, vol. IV, pp. 206-207]

⁹⁵ 'If you love Allāh then follow me, Allāh will then love you.'—Āl-e-Imrān, 3:32 [Publisher]

⁹⁶ 'He who seeks a faith other than Islām, it will not be accepted from him.'—Āl-e-Imrān, 3:86 [Publisher]

⁹⁷ 'Keep company with the righteous.'—Al-Taubah, 9:119 [Publisher]

Prophets are Mirrors of God's Countenance

It is perfectly true that he who does not recognize God's Messengers does not recognize God either. A mirror of God's countenance are His Messengers. Everyone who sees God sees Him through this mirror. Then what kind of salvation is this that a person denies the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allāh be on him) all through his life and rejects the Holy Qur'ān and God Almighty does not bestow eyes upon him nor a heart and he remains blind and dies blind and yet attains salvation? It is our observation that when God Almighty desires to bestow mercy upon someone He first bestows sight upon him and bestows knowledge upon him from Himself. There are hundreds of people in our movement who have joined it in consequence of dreams or revelation. The mercy of God Almighty is very wide. If one advances towards Him one step, He comes two steps and if a person hastens towards Him, He runs towards that one and opens the eyes of the blind. Then how can it be accepted that a person believes in Him and accepts Him as One without associate and loves Him and joins the company of His friends and yet God keeps him blind and he remains so blind that he does not recognize God's Prophet? This is supported by the *Ḥadīth*:

من مات ولم يعرف إمام زمانه فقد مات ميتة الجهالة

He who dies without recognizing the Imām of his age dies the death of ignorance and is deprived of the straight path.

[Ḥaḳīqat-ul-Waḥī, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 22, p. 151]

The Vedās Represent God as Vengeful

It is worthy of note that of all the religions, that of the

Vedās is the only one which presents Permashwar as wrathful and vengeful and is opposed to the doctrine that God Almighty forgives the sins of His servants through repentance and seeking forgiveness. Yet it also teaches that Permashwar is the Master of all creation and controls the fate of all animates, and He is the one before Whom all sinners are brought. Unfortunately for mankind, He possesses the attribute of wrath whereby He punishes sin with dire chastisement, but He does not possess the attribute that He can forgive anyone's sin through repentance and supplication. Once a default is committed, there is no acceptance of repentance and no attention is paid to any supplication though it is obvious that man, on account of his natural weakness, cannot safeguard himself against sin and is apt to stumble at every step, yet the Vedās do not offer any way of salvation. The Vedās have only one prescription, which is altogether wrathful and vengeful and which is that for the least sin it prescribes a long and endless chain of incarnations. A sinner deserves mercy on this account also that his weak faculties that fall into sin are not self-created but are created by God. In this situation man deserved that allowance should have been made for this. According to the Āryās, Permashwar makes no allowance in awarding punishment for the fact that He too has something to do with the occurrence of sin.

The Vedās have laid it down as a condition for salvation that man should be purified completely from sin. Judged by the standard of the law of nature, it will be found that it is impossible for man to fulfil this condition, for till man carries out all the obligations that he owes to God Almighty, he cannot claim that he has fulfilled all the requirements of obedience. The law of nature and the

book of man's nature bear witness that at no stage of progress and perfection can man be acquitted of the default that he has not been truly grateful for all Divine bounties and has fallen short in the complete fulfilment of Divine commandments. Thus if man can attain salvation only by carrying out all the obligations that he owes to God Almighty, without a single default, this way of salvation is an impossibility. No one can attain that degree of fulfilment of obligations and therefore no one will attain salvation. That which is impossible and is contrary to the law of nature and contradicts the book of nature cannot be a Divine commandment.

Seek through the East and the West and you will not be able to discover one person who is wholly free from, and innocent of, all defaults and neglects and who has fulfilled all the rights due to man and who claims that he has carried out all the obligations of obedience and gratitude. If there is no such person in the world today, then be sure that such a one has never existed, nor is there any hope of his coming into existence in the future. Then, as it is impossible in view of the law and the book of nature that any person on his own strength should be able to discharge all his obligations to God Almighty, and should be completely grateful to Him. The experience of every person bears witness to this. Therefore it does not behove a book that claims to be from God, to make salvation dependent upon a matter which is impossible to achieve. It is possible, however, that, as in many other respects the Vedās had been perverted, this might also be a perversion and may not be the true teaching of the Vedās.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 50-52]

Christian Concept of Salvation is Contrary to Justice and Mercy

The Christians are agreed that after Jesus, revelation has been sealed and has been left behind and now there is no way of receiving it, and that the door of grace is closed till the Judgement Day. This may be the reason that they have invented a new way of attaining salvation and have proposed a new prescription which is contrary to all principles and is altogether opposed to reason, justice and mercy. It is said that Jesus took upon himself the sins of the whole world and consented to death upon the cross so that through his death mankind might be delivered. God put His innocent son to death to save sinners. We fail to understand, however, that the hearts of people can be purified from the foulness of sin through such a wrongful death and how, by the slaughter of an innocent one, the past sins of others can be forgiven. This is opposed both to justice and to mercy, inasmuch as it is contrary to justice to seize an innocent one in place of a sinner and it is contrary to mercy to kill one's son in this hardhearted manner. Besides, all this has achieved nothing.

[Lecture Lāhore, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 20, p. 163]

The Holy Qur'ān does not endorse the doctrine of salvation which is set out in the Gospel, namely, the crucifixion of Jesus and his atonement. The Holy Qur'ān affirms that Jesus was a great Prophet and was the beloved of God and near to Him and honoured, but he was only a man. It does not consider it necessary for salvation that the burden of a sinner should be placed upon an innocent one, nor does reason permit that for the sin of X, Y should be held responsible. No government has ever followed this principle.

It is a pity that the Āryās have also taken a wrong stand on the question of salvation, as have the Christians and they too have forgotten the reality. According to the doctrine of the Āryās, repentance and seeking forgiveness amount to nothing. Till a person goes through all the incarnations, which are appointed as a penalty for a sin, salvation cannot be attained and when attained, it is only limited. Permashwar has not the power to forgive sin, and true repentance, which is a spiritual death and is a fire in which a person is willing to consume himself in order to please Permashwar, amounts to nothing. This shows the miserliness—God forbid—of Permashwar. When He directs His servants to forgive those who offend them and does not act upon it Himself, He seeks to teach His servants that which He does not practice Himself. In such case the followers of that religion are bound to think that if Permashwar does not forgive the sins of an offender then how can they do that which is contrary to the qualities of Permashwar? What would be the plight of the subjects who are under the rule of kings and sovereigns, who like Permashwar, have no notion of forgiving offenders?

Besides, what evidence is there to prove the reincarnation of souls? We have never observed that the soul of a person who has died has entered into another body. Then such punishment is also useless, for if a soul which is reborn is not warned that it has been placed in a lower incarnation on account of a particular sin, how will it refrain from that sin?

It should be borne in mind that while human nature possesses many excellent qualities, it is also subject to the defect that on account of its weakness it is prone to commit sins and defaults. The Almighty Who has made

human nature has not invested it with the inclination to commit sins so that He might condemn man to torment, but so that His attribute of forgiveness might be manifested. Sin is doubtless a poison, but the fire of repentance and *Istighfār* converts it into an antidote. Thus after repentance and remorse, sin becomes the means of progress and roots out from inside a person the feeling that he amounts to something and stamps out arrogance and pride and self-exhibition.

Salvation is Only Possible through Grace

Remember that no one can attain salvation through his deeds; salvation is attained purely through grace. The God in Whom we believe is Most Merciful and Benevolent. He is Almighty and suffers from no weakness and defect. He is the Source of all manifestations, and is the Fountainhead of all grace, and is the Creator of all creation, and is the Master of all bounties. He comprises all praiseworthy and perfect qualities, and is the Source of all lights, and is the Life of all lives, and is the Sustainer of everything. He is close to everything but we cannot say that He is all things. He is higher than everything, but we cannot say that there is something intervening between Him and us. He is Imperceptible and Hidden and yet is more manifest than everything. All true delight and comfort is in Him. This is the true philosophy of salvation.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 414-416]

The Christian doctrine that God loved the world, and to provide salvation for the world He arranged to put the burden of the sins of the disobedient ones and of disbelievers and of wicked ones on His beloved son Jesus, and made him accursed in order to deliver the world from sin

and hanged him on the accursed rood, is false in every aspect and is shameful. If it is appraised from the point of view of **justice**, it is obviously wrong that the sin of X should be fastened upon Y. Human conscience does not approve that the punishment of an offender should be inflicted upon an innocent one.

If one reflects upon the reality of sin from the point of view of spiritual philosophy, that also condemns this doctrine. Sin is a poison which is generated when a person is deprived of obedience to God, His eager love and His loving remembrance. As a tree which is uprooted from the earth and is unable to suck water begins to dry up and loses its greenness, the same is the case with a person from whose heart the love of God is uprooted so that it begins to dry up and falls into sin. In God's law of nature there are three remedies for this dryness. One is love; the second is *Istighfār* which means the desire to suppress and cover up, for so long as the root of a tree is firm in the earth there is hope of its greenness; and third is repentance, that is to say, to turn humbly towards God in order to draw the water of love and to get close to Him and to pull oneself out of the darkness of disobedience with the help of good deeds. Repentance is not merely by word of mouth but is completed by good deeds. All virtues are for the perfection of repentance, for the purpose of all is to approach close to God.

Prayer is also repentance for through it we seek nearness to God. That is why God having created the life of man and called it the soul, inasmuch as its true comfort lies in the affirmation of the existence of God and His love and His obedience. He also called it self inasmuch as it seeks union with God. To love God is to be like that tree in the garden which is firmly planted in the ground. This is

man's heaven. As a tree sucks the water of the earth and draws it into itself and thereby expels its poisonous vapours, so is the condition of a person's heart. It sucks in the water of God's love and is thereby enabled to easily expel its poisonous matter and, being based in God, is purely nurtured and spreads and exhibits pleasant greenness and brings forth good fruits. But he who is not firmly related to God, cannot suck in nourishing water and therefore dries up progressively and in the end loses its leaves and only dry and ugly branches are left.

[Sirāj-ud-Dīn 'Īsā'ī ke Chār Sawālon kā Jawāb, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 12, pp. 328-329]

Repentance, Istighfār, and Intercession as Means of Salvation

It is the eternal natural law of God that He forgives sin through repentance and *Istighfār* and accepts the prayers of the virtuous by way of intercession. But we have never observed that X should strike his head with a stone and this should cure the headache of Y. Then we do not know by what law the suicide of Jesus can remove the inner disease of others. Nor are we aware of any philosophy on the basis of which the blood of Jesus can wash out the inner impurity of anyone else. Indeed observation contradicts this. Till Jesus had made up his mind to commit suicide, the Christians possessed the quality of virtue and the worship of God, but after the event of the crucifixion it appeared as if a dam had burst and the banked up water had spread in every direction. That has happened to the passions of the Christians. There is no doubt that if Jesus laid down his life deliberately, he acted very improperly. Instead if he had devoted his life to admonition and preaching, it would have done much good to people. What good did his improper act do? If

after his suicide Jesus had come back to life and had ascended to heaven in the presence of the Jews, they would have believed in him. As it is, the Jews and all wise people consider the ascension of Jesus to heaven a fiction.

[Chashma-e-Masīhī, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 20, pp. 347-348]

I had apprehended that some false charge would be laid against me. For when an enemy is completely refuted he delivers an attack against life and honour. So it happened in my case and this charge of conspiracy to murder was laid against me.... The Christian missionaries were greatly offended with me. My activities had occasioned them great loss. In addition to heavenly signs, **my criticism** of their doctrine had ripped apart the warp and woof of their religion. Their doctrine of atonement was totally refuted by my pointing out that if the curse of the sins of all the sinners had settled on Jesus, it meant that his heart had been emptied of all understanding of God Almighty and His love and that he had become an enemy of God. As a **curse** in its true meaning is not permissible in the case of a righteous one like Jesus, then how can the doctrine of atonement be supported which is based entirely upon his becoming accursed?

I had also pointed out that no act of the Divine is contrary to His eternal way and that means that there should be a large number of illustrations. If sending a son is the way of God then there should be many more sons of God so that a way might be established and some sons should be crucified for the jinns and some for men and some for those creatures which dwell in other spheres. This objection was also such that a moment's reflection on it would rescue a person from the darkness of Christianity....

I pointed out that the doctrine of atonement is also untenable, for its purpose would be either that in consequence of it sin should be abolished altogether, or that every type of sin, whether relating to the rights of God or the rights of people, should be continuously forgiven. The first supposition is entirely false. We observe that the men and women of Europe have not been able to abstain from sin after the atonement and that the people of Europe are guilty of all manner of sins. Alright, leave that aside, and consider the case of ‘prophets’⁹⁸ whose faith was stronger than that of others, even they could not escape sin, and the disciples of Jesus too were involved in sin. Thus there is no doubt that the atonement is not a dam that can bank up the flood of sin. As regards the second supposition, that those who believe in the atonement would be exempted from all punishment for sin, and that whether they commit theft or robbery or murder or misconduct of every description God will not call them to account; this also is untrue as it would cancel God’s eternal commandments and destroy the purity of the law.

[Kitāb-ul-Bariyyah, Rūḥānī Khazā’in, vol. 13, pp. 59-60]

The Curse of Sin cannot be Transferred

The Christians should have shown what provision the Gospel has made for that certainty with regard to the existence of God which bestows upon man the insight of the fear of God and burns up the fuel of sin. How can sin be discarded through useless means? These people do not realize that it is altogether unrealistic and wholly ficti-

⁹⁸ The word ‘prophet’ has been used here in the biblical sense and not as an Islāmic term. [Translator]

tious that the sins of the whole world were cast upon one person and that the curse of the sinners was taken from them and was imposed on the heart of Jesus. This would mean that thereafter, with the exception of Jesus, everyone had acquired a pure life and the understanding of God and that Jesus alone was burdened with a curse which was a collection of millions of curses. But when we see that every person has his sins with him and that everyone feels the passion that nature has bestowed on him, whether he accepts Jesus or not, it shows that the accursed ones have not been separated from their cursed lives and that their curse has not fallen upon Jesus. As a curse is firmly fixed to its subject, how could it then have been transferred to Jesus? It is the height of injustice that the curse of every wicked and accursed one, who believes in Jesus, should fall on Jesus and that the person himself should become free from blame and pure. If this unending chain of curses, which will extend to the **Judgement Day**, will continue to be heaped upon poor Jesus afresh, when will he be freed from curses?... This would mean that Jesus would never see the day again when he should dwell under the shade of the love of God and the light of His understanding. All that this doctrine would achieve would be that a holy one of God might be subjected to unending foulness.

[Kitāb-ul-Bariyyah, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 13, pp. 63-64]

No Contradiction Between Divine Justice and Mercy

The Christian doctrine that Divine justice would not be fulfilled without atonement is utterly absurd. They believe that in his human aspect Jesus was sinless and yet their God burdened him without cause with the curse of

the whole world and had no regard for His own justice. This shows that their God cares not at all for justice. What a spectacle is this that what was sought to be escaped was adopted in its worst form. The great concern was that somehow justice should not be contravened and mercy may also be fulfilled. But by the slaughter of an innocent one, neither justice was established nor was mercy fulfilled.

The notion that justice and mercy cannot subsist together in the Being of God Almighty, inasmuch as justice demands punishment and mercy demands forbearance, is an error in which short-sighted Christians are involved through lack of reflection. They do not reflect that the **justice of God Almighty is also mercy....**

It should be borne in mind that the basic attribute of God is mercy. Justice comes into play after reason and law have been established. Justice is also mercy in another form. When a person is bestowed reason and through it he becomes aware of the limits and laws of God Almighty, he becomes subject to the demand of justice. But for mercy there is no condition of reason and law. As God Almighty desired to exalt mankind through mercy, He laid down the rules and limits of justice. Thus it is ignorance to imagine that there is contradiction between justice and mercy.

Death is not the Fruit of Sin

The Christians say that the death of man and all animals is the fruit of sin, but this is open to two objections. In the first place, it cannot be denied that there was a creation before Adam and that they were subject to death. There was no Adam at the time nor was there his sin. Then how did death come about? Secondly, there is

no doubt that with the exception of one fruit Adam ate everything in the garden and so he must have eaten meat. This also shows that animals were killed before the sin of Adam. Even apart from this, Adam drank water, for eating and drinking go together, and research has established that every drop of water contains thousands of germs. Thus there can be no doubt that before the sin of Adam, millions of germs used to die. One is, therefore, compelled to affirm that death is not the fruit of sin and this refutes the thesis of the Christians.

[Kitāb-ul-Bariyyah, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 13, pp. 72-74]

According to their principle, the Christians attach no importance to righteous conduct; in their view the atonement of Jesus is a sufficient means for the attainment of salvation. We have shown that the atonement of Jesus did not rescue the Christians from sin, nor is it true that because of the atonement every vice has become permissible for them. There is, however, one further matter which is worthy of note, that reason proves that righteous conduct has an effect that bestows the fruit of salvation upon the pious. Even the Christians acknowledge that vice has an effect whereby a person guilty of it is condemned to hell forever. If that is so, one has to make allowance for the corresponding law of nature that good also has an effect and that he who practices it can become heir to salvation.

Was Jesus Free from Inherited Sin?

Another objection we had put forward was that the expiation that the Christians set forth is opposed to the eternal Divine law of nature. There is no instance in the law of nature that to safeguard the inferior the superior might be put to death. We have before us the Divine law

of nature which proves that the inferior is always sacrificed to safeguard the superior. All animates, even the germs in the water, are sacrificed for the preservation of man, who is the noblest of creation. The sacrifice of Jesus is contrary to this obvious law. Every reasonable person can understand that for the protection of that which is dearer and more valuable, that which is inferior to it has to be sacrificed. God Almighty lets millions of animates be sacrificed for the preservation of man, and we, by our very nature, follow the same law. You can thus understand how inconsistent is atonement, in which the Christians believe, with the Divine law of nature.

Another objection that we had raised was that the claim of the Christians that Jesus was free from hereditary as well as acquired sin is obviously unfounded. The Christians admit that Jesus had acquired his body from his mother and that she was not free from sin. The Christians also acknowledge that all pain and hurt are the fruit of sin and there can be no doubt that Jesus felt hunger and thirst and might have suffered from chickenpox and smallpox in his childhood and would have borne the pain of teething and would have suffered from seasonal fevers. According to the Christians, all these are the fruits of sin. Then how could Jesus be regarded as a sinless sacrifice? Besides, according to the Christians, only that person can establish a relationship with the Holy Spirit who is wholly free from sin. Then how did the Holy Spirit establish a relationship with Jesus who was not free from hereditary sin nor escaped the fruit of sin? Apparently, Melchisedec was more deserving of a relationship with the Holy Spirit, for according to the Christians he was free from every kind of sin.

Did Crucifixion Save Christians from Sin?

The Christians acknowledge that the true means of attaining salvation is to be free from sin and yet they do not set forth the true means of achieving freedom from sin. They present a shameful fiction which has no true relationship with freedom from sin. It is obvious that as man has been created for God, his whole comfort and prosperity lie in this that he should become wholly God's, and he can never manifest true comfort till he establishes this relationship with God in practice. When man turns away from God, his case is like that of a person who shuts the windows of his room that open towards the sun. There can be no doubt that with the shutting of the windows the room will become dark and that the light of the sun having been excluded will be suddenly replaced with darkness. It is that darkness which is described as misguidance and hell for it is the root of all pain. If the removal of this darkness and deliverance from this hell is sought in accordance with the law of nature, then there is no need to crucify anyone. The windows should be opened, the shutting of which had caused the darkness. Can anyone believe that we can obtain any light while we insist upon keeping the windows shut through which light could enter? The forgiveness of sins is not a tale which would be illustrated in a future life. Nor is this matter without foundation or comparable to the disobedience and forgiveness of worldly governments. A person is accounted an offender or a sinner when, turning away from God, he draws away from confrontation with the light and brightness which descend from God upon human hearts. That condition is called *Junāh* in the Word of God, which has been perverted by the Parsees into *Gunāh* (sin). The root of the

word means to incline away and to move away from the centre. It acquired the connotation of sin, inasmuch as by turning away a person leaves the spot where Divine light falls and moving away from it puts himself at a distance from the light that can be obtained in the original position. In the same way *Juram* (crime), which also connotes sin, means cutting asunder. Thus an offender cuts asunder all his relationship with God. *Juram* is thus more serious than *Junāḥ*, for the latter merely means a wrong inclination, but the former signifies that a person deliberately commits an offence by breaking God's law and being heedless of any relationship with Him.

That being the reality of true purity, the question arises whether those lights which a person loses through his love of darkness can be acquired by believing in the crucifixion of anyone. The answer is that such a notion is false. The truth is that for the acquiring of those lights it is the eternal law that we should open the windows that face the true sun and the rays that had been averted by shutting them would be revived again. This is borne out by the physical law of nature that we cannot get rid of darkness till we open the windows that let in the direct rays of the sun. Doubtless, therefore, the only correct course that appeals to reason is that those windows should be opened whereby not only shall we obtain light, but shall also behold the Source of all light.

For the removal of the darkness of sin and neglect, it is necessary to obtain light. This is indicated by God, the Glorious, in the verse:

مَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Banī Isrā'īl, 17:73 [Publisher]

He who is blind in this world shall be blind in the hereafter and even more astray.

This means that the eyes for beholding God and the senses for discovering Him are bestowed in this life and that he upon whom they are not bestowed **in this life** will not find them in the hereafter. The righteous who will see God on the Day of Judgement will carry with them the senses through which they will see Him, and he who does not hear the voice of God in this world will not hear it in the next. To recognize God as He is without any error and to obtain true understanding of His Being and attributes in this world is the source of all light. It is thus obvious that those who believe that God is subject to death and distress and misery and ignorance, and that He can become accursed and can be deprived of true purity and mercy and true knowledge, flounder in the pit of misguidance, and are unaware of true knowledge and insight which are the basis of salvation. The Christians are guilty of gross error in thinking that salvation is freely available and that good deeds are irrelevant in that context. He whom they have deified observed forty fasts. Moses also observed fasts in Sinai. If good deeds are nothing, why did these two exalted ones pursue this vain purpose? As it is clear that God Almighty is disgusted with vice, we can understand that He is greatly pleased with virtue. In this way, virtue becomes an atonement for vice. When a person after being guilty of a vice performs a good deed that pleases God, it follows that the previous condition has been replaced by the subsequent one; otherwise, it would be disrespect. Accordingly, God the Glorious says in the Holy Qur'ān:

إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ¹⁰⁰

Surely good deeds do away with evil deeds.

We can also say that vice has a poisonous quality, which destroys, and that virtue has the quality of an antidote that rescues from death. For instance, to shut all the doors of a room is a vice, the necessary consequence of which is darkness. Opposed to this is the opening of the doors that face the sun. This is the virtue the necessary consequence of which is that the light that had been shut off will re-enter the room.

[Kitāb-ul-Bariyyah, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 13, pp. 76-81]

Belief in Kalimah

Your saying is quite true that it is the teaching of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) that sins are removed by the affirmation that:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ¹⁰¹

It is a reality that he who believes in God as One without associate and that Muḥammad, the chosen one (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) was sent by the same All-Powerful Unique One, will doubtless attain salvation, if he dies in the belief. There is no salvation under heaven through the suicide of anyone and no one can be more insane than one who thinks so. But to believe in God as One without associate and so Compassionate that by His great mercy, in order to rescue the world from misguidance, He sent His Messenger whose name is

¹⁰⁰ Hūd, 11:115 [Publisher]

¹⁰¹ There is none worthy of worship except Allāh and Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh. [Publisher]

Muḥammad, the chosen one (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) is the doctrine by adhering to which the darkness of the soul is removed and the ego is replaced by the belief in the Unity of God. In the end the mighty upsurge of Unity spreads over the whole heart and a heavenly life begins in this very world. As you observe that by the advent of light darkness disappears, in the same way, when the bright reflection of:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ¹⁰²

falls upon a heart, the dark passions of the ego disappear. The essence of sin is that there is a tumult in the passions of the ego by yielding to which a person is called a sinner, and the meaning of:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ¹⁰³

which are derived from its various meanings in the Arabic lexicon is that:

لَا مَطْلُوبَ لِي وَلَا مَحْبُوبَ لِي وَلَا مَعْبُودَ لِي وَلَا مُطَاعَ لِي إِلَّا اللَّهُ

That is, there is no one to be desired, or to be loved, or to be worshipped, or to be obeyed except Allāh. Now it is obvious that this concept is totally opposed to the reality of sin and its true source. If a person with the sincerity of his heart establishes this meaning in his soul, then necessarily any opposite concept will be driven out of his heart, inasmuch as opposites cannot subsist together. When the passions of the ego are excluded, that is the condition which is called true purity and real righteousness. The purpose of the second part of the credo, that is

¹⁰² There is none worthy of worship except Allāh. [Publisher]

¹⁰³ Ibid.

to say, to believe in the Messenger of God, is that faith might be established in the Word of God also, for it is necessary for a person who confesses that he desires to become an obedient servant of God that he should believe in God's commandments; and belief in God's commandments is not possible without belief in him through whom the commandments have been conveyed. This is the true meaning of the credo.

[Nūr-ul-Qur'ān No. 2, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 9, pp. 418-420]

8

THE PILLARS OF ISLĀM

I have stressed it many times that you should not be satisfied merely with that you are Muslims and profess that:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ¹⁰⁴

Those who have studied the Holy Qur'ān know well that God Almighty is not pleased merely with words. The Holy Qur'ān sets out the annals of the Jews that they were in the beginning bestowed great bounties by God Almighty, but when the time came that they were satisfied with only verbal professions and their hearts became full of deceit, dishonesty and evil thoughts, God Almighty imposed diverse types of torments upon them, so much so that some of them were designated apes and swine.

This happened despite the fact that they had the Torah and the Psalms and they professed to believe in them and acknowledged all Prophets. But God was not pleased with them because all their professions were mere words and they had nothing in their hearts....

Reflect on the meaning of the credo لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ¹⁰⁵. By affirming this by his tongue and confirming it with his heart a person proclaims that he has no God beside Allāh.

¹⁰⁴ There is none worthy of worship except Allāh. [Publisher]

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Ilāh is an Arabic word and connotes the One worshipped Who is the Beloved and the True God. This credo, which the Muslims have been taught, is the epitome of the Holy Qur'ān. It is difficult for every one to commit long books to memory. God Almighty is All-Wise and has announced a brief credo. Its meaning is that till God is preferred to everything, till He is acknowledged as the only One to be worshipped and till He becomes the True Goal, man cannot achieve salvation. It is mentioned in the *Hadīth* that:

مَنْ قَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فَدَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ

He who declares that '*There is none worthy of worship beside Allāh*' will enter paradise.

People have misunderstood this *Hadīth*. They imagine that it is enough to repeat the credo verbally for a person to enter paradise. God Almighty is not concerned with words. He is concerned with hearts. This means that those who impress the true concept of the credo upon their hearts, so that the greatness of God Almighty is fully impressed on their minds, will go to heaven.

When a person truly believes in the credo, no one beside God can remain the object of his affection or worthy of his worship or his desired one. The spiritual station of the *Abdāl* a *Qutab* and a *Ghauth* is none other than the sincerest belief in the *Kalima*:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ¹⁰⁶

.... This sublime credo excludes all deities beside Allāh. It is, therefore, necessary to push out of one's heart all personal and universal gods so that the heart is purified

¹⁰⁶ There is none worthy of worship except Allāh. [Publisher]

for Allāh alone. Some idols are manifest but some are subtle. For instance, to rely on material means beside Allāh is also an idol, but a subtle one....

Those subtle idols that people carry about under their arms are difficult to throw out. Great philosophers and wise people cannot get rid of them. They are very fine insects which **cannot be perceived except through the microscope of the great Grace of God**. They inflict great harm on a person. Those idols are **personal emotions** which carry men a far distance in repudiation of the rights of their fellow beings and of God Almighty. Many who are called learned and erudite and *Maulavīs* and who study the *Aḥādīth* cannot recognize these idols inside them, and worship them. To avoid these idols is possible only for a very brave man. Those who follow these idols cultivate rancour in their hearts, deny the rights of others, and imagine that they have captured a quarry. They lay undue stress upon material means and rely entirely upon them. Till these tendencies are removed altogether, the Unity of God cannot be established.

[Speeches to Jalsah Salāna, 1906, pp. 1-5]

Ṣalāt Leads to God

After comprehending the meaning of ¹⁰⁷ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ pay full attention to the Prayer services, the observation of which has been repeatedly emphasised in the Holy Qur'ān; but along with this it is said:

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ ۗ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ ۗ¹⁰⁸

That is, Woe unto those worshippers who are unaware of

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Al-Mā'ūn, 107:5-6 [Publisher]

the reality of prayer.

It should be well understood that **Prayer is an entreaty** which a worshipper makes to God at the time of his separation from Him in torment and with a melting heart that he may be granted a meeting with God, inasmuch as no one can be purified unless God purifies him and no one can meet with God until God brings about a meeting. Man is held in a diversity of chains and collars. He desires to get rid of them but they persist. Despite man's intense desire to be purified his Reproaching Self (*Nafs-e-Lawwāmah*) does sometimes stumble. It is for God to purify a person from sin. There is no power that can purify you by force. God has prescribed **Prayer** for the generation of pure sentiments. *Ṣalāt* is a prayer which is submitted to God in travail and burning with a heart aflame, so that vicious thoughts and evil designs may be got rid of and a holy love and a pure relationship may be established and one may be enabled to keep God's commandments. The word *Ṣalāt* indicates that true Prayer is not offered only with the tongue but must be accompanied by burning and sizzling and being consumed by fire. God Almighty does not accept Prayer until the worshipper at the time of prayer arrives a kind of death....

***Ṣalāt* is prayer at a very high level, but people do not appreciate it duly.** In this age many Muslims are devoted to frequent repetition of pious formulas, as, for instance, the *Naushāhīs* and *Naqshbandīs*, etc. It is a pity that none of these is free from innovations. These people are unaware of the reality of *Ṣalāt* and defame God's commandments. For a seeker none of these innovations is of any benefit compared with the *Ṣalāt*. The way of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him)

was that at a time of difficulty he made his ablutions and stood up in *Ṣalāt* and made his supplications in the *Ṣalāt*. **My experience is that nothing takes one so near to God as *Ṣalāt*.** The various postures of the *Ṣalāt* demonstrate respect, humility and meekness. In *Qiyām* (standing posture) the worshipper stands with his arms folded as a slave stands respectfully before his master and king. In *Rukūʿ* (bowing) the worshipper bends down in humility. The climax of humility is reached in *Sajdah* (prostration), which indicates extreme helplessness.

[Speeches to Jalsah Salāna, 1906, pp. 6-8]

Observe Prayer services regularly. Some people content themselves with one Prayer service daily but they must remember that no one is exempt from them, not even Prophets. It is narrated in a *Ḥadīth* that a company of men who had just accepted Islām requested the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) to be exempted from the *Ṣalāt*. He observed: A religion that does not demand action is no religion at all.

[Malfūzāt, vol. 1, p. 263]

I tell you again that if you wish to establish a true relationship with God, hold fast to *Ṣalāt* in such a way that your body and your tongue and your spiritual designs and emotions should all become a true embodiment of *Ṣalāt*.

[Malfūzāt, vol. 1, p. 170]

What is Ṣalāt?

What is *Ṣalāt*? It is a supplication addressed to the **Lord of Honour** without which a person cannot be truly alive, nor can he procure any means of security and happiness. When God Almighty bestows this grace upon a person it is only then that he obtains true comfort. From that moment he will begin to feel pleasure and delight in

Ṣalāt. As he derives pleasure from delicious food he will begin to derive pleasure from his weeping and crying in *Ṣalāt*. Before he experiences that condition in his *Ṣalāt* it is necessary that he should persist in *Ṣalāt* as he swallows bitter medicine so that he may be restored to health. In the same way it is necessary for him to persist in *Ṣalāt* and in making his supplications while he derive no pleasure from them. In such condition he should seek pleasure and delight in *Ṣalāt* with the supplication:

Allāh! Thou knowest how blind and sightless I am, and at the moment I am like the dead. I know that in a little while I shall be called and shall present myself before Thee and no one will be able to stop me. But my heart is blind and unenlightened. Do Thou cause to descend upon it such a flame of light that thereby it may be inspired with Thy love and devotion to Thee. Do Thou bestow upon me such grace that I shall not be raised up sightless nor join the blind.

When he supplicates in this manner and persists in the supplication he will see that a time will arrive when something will descend upon him while he is engaged in such type of prayer which will melt his heart.

[Malfūzāt, vol. IV, pp. 321-322]

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ¹⁰⁹

This means those believers... who are themselves watchful over their Prayers and do not need any reminder from anyone else. Their relationship with God has the quality that the remembrance of God becomes dear to them and becomes the source of their comfort and their very life, so that they are constantly watchful of it and every moment of theirs is devoted to it and they do not

¹⁰⁹ ‘And who diligently guard the observance of their Prayers.’—Al-Mu’minūn, 23:10 [Publisher]

like to be parted from it at any time.

It is obvious that a person is extremely watchful every moment only of that the loss of which he deems would spell his ruin, like one who, while traversing a waterless wilderness in which there is no likelihood of his finding water or food for hundreds of miles, is most watchful of such provisions as he has with him, holding them as dear as his life because of his conviction that their loss would mean his death. Thus the true believers are watchful of their prayers like such a traveller. They do not neglect their prayers even at the risk of losing their wealth or honour, or of incurring someone's displeasure. Any apprehension of missing their prayer causes them great anguish and brings them near unto death. They cannot endure the thought of being neglectful of the remembrance of God for a single moment. They deem prayer and the remembrance of God their essential nourishment on which depends their very life. This condition is reached when God Almighty loves them and a bright flame of His personal love, which is the very soul of their being, descends upon their heart and bestows a new life upon them and thereby their spiritual being is illumined and becomes alive. In such a condition they occupy themselves with the remembrance of God, not out of any sense of formality or desire for appearance, but because God makes their spiritual life, which they hold dear, dependent upon the nourishment provided by His remembrance, as He has made man's physical life dependent upon physical nourishment. Therefore they love this spiritual nourishment more than physical nourishment and are apprehensive of its loss.

This is the consequence of the spirit which is caused to descend upon them like a flame and which generates

perfect inebriation with the love of God in their hearts. They do not desire to be separated from it for a single moment. They suffer for it and endure torments on its account but do not wish to be separated from it for a moment, and are constantly watchful of their prayers. This becomes natural for them, inasmuch as God has made the *Ṣalāt*, which is their loving remembrance of Him, an essential nourishment for them, and by manifesting His personal love for them has bestowed upon them the delicious delight of Divine remembrance. In this way the remembrance of God becomes as dear to them as, and even dearer than, life itself. The personal love of God is a new soul that falls on their hearts like a flame and makes *Ṣalāt* and the remembrance of God a nourishment for them. Thus they believe that they live not by bread and water but by the *Ṣalāt* and the remembrance of *Allāh*.

Ṣalāt Strengths a Believer's Spiritual Faculties

The remembrance of God charged with love, which is called the *Ṣalāt*, truly becomes their food without which they cannot survive and which they guard and watch constantly, like a traveller who in the midst of a stark wilderness guards his scanty supply of bread and water. The Absolute Bestower has appointed this condition also as a stage in the spiritual progress of man which is the last stage. **The remembrance of God charged with love, the technical name of which is *Ṣalāt***, truly becomes for a worshipper a substitute for nourishment. Indeed he repeatedly seeks to sacrifice his physical soul in return for this nourishment and cannot survive without it, as fish cannot survive without water. He deems a single moment away from God as death itself. His soul is always in prostration at the threshold of God and he finds

all his comfort in God. He is convinced that if he were parted from the remembrance of God for even a moment, he would die.

As food generates a feeling of freshness in the body and strengthens the physical senses like seeing and hearing, in the same way at that stage the remembrance of God which is surcharged with love and devotion strengthens a believer's spiritual faculties, that is to say, his eye acquires the faculty of beholding visions clearly and in a subtle manner, and his ears hear the word of God Almighty and his tongue gives expression to that word in a clear, bright and delightful manner. He sees true dreams frequently which are fulfilled like the advent of the dawn, and on account of his pure and loving relationship with God he partakes of a great number of true dreams that convey good tidings to him. This is the stage at which a believer feels that the love of God serves him as nourishment. This new birth takes place after the spiritual framework becomes ready, and then the spirit, which is aflame with the personal love of God, falls upon the heart of such a believer and suddenly a superior power lifts him above the stage of humanity.

This is the stage which is designated spiritually as a **new creation**. At this stage God Almighty causes a blazing flame of His personal love, which is designated the **spirit**, to descend upon the heart of a believer and thereby removes all its darkness and pollutions and weaknesses. With the breathing of this spirit the beauty of the believer, which hitherto was at a lower stage, arrives at its climax and he acquires a spiritual glory, and the narrowness of a vicious life is totally removed and the believer feels that a new spirit has entered into him which was not there before. He acquires a wonderful sense of serenity

and contentment through the spirit. His personal love surges up like a fountain and waters the plant of his servitude. The fire that hitherto had only possessed a certain degree of warmth blazes up at this stage and burning up all the straw and tinder of the human self brings it under complete control of the Divine and comprehends all the limbs. Then, like a piece of iron which when it is heated in a fierce fire becomes red and looks like fire itself, such a believer manifests Divine signs and actions, as the red hot piece of iron manifests the effects and qualities of fire.

This does not mean that such a believer becomes God. Only it is a characteristic of Divine love that it bestows its own colour upon that which is manifest, while the inner qualities of servitude and its weakness continue. At this stage God becomes the bread of the believer, which sustains his life, and God becomes the water by drinking which the believer is delivered from death, and becomes the cool breeze that comforts the heart of the believer. At this stage it would not be inappropriate to say metaphorically that God enters into the believer and saturates his whole being and makes his heart His throne; then he beholds not through his own spirit but through the spirit of God and hears through it and speaks through it and walks through it and overcomes his enemies through it inasmuch as at this stage he arrives at the station of non-being and the spirit of God bestows upon him a new life through the manifestation of its personal love for him. Then he becomes the illustration of the verse:

فَمَا أَنشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ ، فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ . . . Then We develop it into another creation. So blessed be Allāh, the Best of creators.’—Al-Mu’minūn, 23:15 [Publisher]

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Part V, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 21, pp. 212-216]

Ṣalāt Should be Offered in the Most Befitting Manner

It is folly to be satisfied with the outward performance of *Ṣalāt*. Most people observe the *Ṣalāt* only formally and get through it quickly as if it were a burdensome tax which should be got rid of speedily. Then there are those who get through the *Ṣalāt* quickly and thereafter occupy themselves with long drawn out prayers which take twice or three times as much time as the *Ṣalāt*, whereas the *Ṣalāt* itself is nothing but prayer. He who does not observe it in that spirit and does not occupy himself with supplication in the course of it fails to observe the *Ṣalāt*. You should seek to make your *Ṣalāt* delicious like food and cold water, lest it should bring woe upon you rather than blessing. *Ṣalāt* is an obligation due to God. It should be carried out in an excellent manner.

[Malfūzāt, vol. VI, p. 370]

Supplication during Ṣalāt

***Ṣalāt* is the effective criterion of the piety of a worshipper.** He who weeps throughout his *Ṣalāt* is bestowed security. As a child weeps loudly in its mother's lap and is comforted by the love and compassion of its mother, in the same way he who supplicates God with humility and a melting heart in his *Ṣalāt* places himself in the lap of the compassion of Gracious Lord. **He who finds no delight in the *Ṣalāt* has not yet truly tasted the pleasure of believing.** *Ṣalāt* does not merely mean physical postures and movements. Some people get through the *Ṣalāt* quickly like the nibbling of a hen and then start long supplications, that is to say perform the *Ṣalāt* quickly as if it were a formal ceremony, whereas that is the time for supplicating God

Almighty. Having emerged from it without any gain they start their supplications. Make your supplications during the *Ṣalāt*; make the *Ṣalāt* a means of supplication and prayer.

[*Malfūzāt*, vol. II, p. 145]

Recitation of Al-Fātiḥah in Ṣalāt

Prayer is the purpose and spirit of the *Ṣalāt*. How can that purpose be really achieved except by praying during *Ṣalāt*. Such a worshipper is like one who is granted an opportunity of presenting himself before the Sovereign and submitting his petition, but he says nothing at the time and after he leaves the presence he presents his petition. That would not avail him anything. That is the case of the people who do not pray humbly and earnestly during the *Ṣalāt*. Make all your supplication during the *Ṣalāt* and observe it with all its due requirements.

God Almighty has taught us a prayer at the very beginning of the Holy Qur'ān and has also instructed us in all the requirements of prayer. The recitation of *Sūrah Fātiḥah* is obligatory in the *Ṣalāt*, which indicates that true prayer is offered only in the course of the *Ṣalāt*.

[*Malfūzāt*, vol. III, p. 258]

Ṣalāt to be Offered in Arabic

The *Ṣalāt* may not be observed in any language except the language of the Holy Qur'ān. But after the prescribed prayers and supplications you may supplicate God Almighty in your own vernacular also. You must not neglect the prescribed prayers. The Christians having departed from this principle have lost everything.

[*Malfūzāt*, vol. III, p. 288]

What is the *Ṣalāt*? It is the supplication made humbly in the form of glorification and praise of God, proclaiming His holiness, seeking His forgiveness and calling down His blessings on the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). When you are occupied with the *Ṣalāt* do not confine yourselves only to the prescribed prayers like heedless people whose *Ṣalāt* is all formality and has no reality behind it. When you observe the *Ṣalāt*, then besides the prescribed prayers taught by the Holy Qur'ān and by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), you should set forth your supplications in your respective vernaculars so that your hearts may be moved by your humility and your earnestness.

[Kashfī Nūḥ, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 19, pp. 68-69]

Supplications may be Offered in One's Own Vernacular

Make your supplications during your five daily prayer services. You are not forbidden to supplicate in your own vernaculars. The *Ṣalāt* is not properly observed except with concentration, and concentration cannot be achieved without humility, and humility is generated by a comprehension of that which is said. Therefore, eagerness and travail of the soul are generated more easily by supplication in one's vernacular. But this does not mean that you should dispense with the prescribed prayers and offer the *Ṣalāt* in your own language. That is not what I mean. What I have in mind is that after the prescribed prayers you should also supplicate in your own language. There is a special blessing in the prescribed prayers. *Ṣalāt* means prayer. Therefore during the *Ṣalāt* pray for deliverance from the calamities of the here and the hereafter, and that your end may be good. Pray also for your wives

and children. Be good and shun all evil.

[Malfūzāt, vol. VI, p. 146]

The Philosophy of the Five Daily Prayers

What are the five daily prayer services? They are pictures of your different conditions during the course of the day. You pass through five conditions at a time of trial and your nature demands that you must pass through them. The first of these is when you are warned that you are about to be afflicted with a calamity. For instance, imagine that a warrant has been issued for your presence in court. This is the first condition which disturbs your serenity and contentment. This condition resembles the time when the sun begins to decline, as on the receipt of the court warrant. Corresponding to this condition, the noon prayer (*Zuhr*) has been prescribed, the time of which begins with the decline of the sun.

You experience the second condition when you are drawn close to the place of the calamity. For instance, when having been taken into custody under the warrant you are produced before the magistrate. At that time you are in terror and the light of security seems as if it were about to depart from you. This condition resembles the time when the light of the sun diminishes and the human eye can fix itself upon the sun and it becomes obvious that the time of its setting is near. Corresponding to this spiritual condition the afternoon prayer (*‘Aṣr*) has been prescribed.

The third condition sets in when you lose all hope of deliverance from the calamity. For instance, when after the recording of the prosecution evidence, which is designed to bring about your ruin, you are charged with an offence and a charge sheet is prepared. At this time

you almost lose your senses and you begin to think of yourself as a prisoner. That condition resembles the time when the sun sets and hope of daylight comes to an end. The sunset prayer (*Maghrib*) is prescribed corresponding to this spiritual condition.

The fourth condition is when you are afflicted by the calamity and its deep darkness envelops you completely. For instance, when after the close of the evidence you are convicted and sentenced and are committed to the custody of the police. This condition resembles the time of nightfall, when everything falls into deep darkness. The evening prayer (*'Ishā*) is prescribed corresponding to this spiritual condition.

When you have spent a certain time in the darkness of the affliction, Divine mercy surges up and delivers you from the darkness, as the dawn succeeds the darkness of the night and daylight begins to appear. The dawn prayer (*Fajr*) is prescribed corresponding to this spiritual condition. God Almighty in view of your five changing conditions has prescribed five prayer services for you. You can thus understand that these services have been prescribed for the benefit of your soul. If you desire security against these calamities you should not neglect the five daily services, as they are a reflection of your inner and spiritual conditions. The *Ṣalāt* is a remedy for the calamities that may threaten. You know not what type of circumstances the new day might confront you with. So before the beginning of the day supplicate your Divine Master earnestly that the day may prove to be a source of benefit and blessing for you.

[Kashfī Nūḥ, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 19, pp. 69-70]

Ṣalāt Protects from Sin

Ṣalāt is an instrument for delivery from sin. It is a quality of the *Ṣalāt* that it makes a person secure against sin and vice. So seek a *Ṣalāt* of that type and try to make your *Ṣalāt* such. *Ṣalāt* is the soul of bounties. The grace of God Almighty is received through the *Ṣalāt*. Then observe it duly so that you might become heirs to the bounties of God Almighty.

[Malfūzāt, vol. V, p. 126]

Significance of Postures in Ṣalāt

What is the *Ṣalāt*? It is the submission of one's humility and one's weakness to God and to seek the fulfilment of one's needs from Him. In the course of the *Ṣalāt* the worshipper sometimes stands before God with folded arms signifying his consciousness of the glory of God and his eagerness to carry out His Commandments; at other times he falls into prostration in complete humility and devotion and seeks the fulfilment of his needs. Sometimes like a beggar he praises Him from Whom he begs and proclaiming His greatness and His glory seeks to move His mercy and supplicates Him. A faith that has nothing comparable to the *Ṣalāt* is altogether empty.... *Ṣalāt* means the love and fear of God and the preoccupation of the heart with His remembrance. That is faith. He who seeks escape from Prayer is no better than an animal. To eat and drink and sleep away the hours like an animal is not faith. This is the practice of the disbelievers....For him who desires to meet God and is anxious to reach Him the *Ṣalāt* is a conveyance by climbing into which he can arrive at his goal speedily. He who gives up the *Ṣalāt*, how shall he arrive?

Since the Muslims have abandoned the *Ṣalāt* or have

given up observing it with the serenity and comfort and love of the heart, being neglectful of its true reality, Islām has begun to decline. The time when the *Ṣalāt* was observed properly was a great time for Islām, when it had become dominant in the whole world. Since the Muslims have given up the proper performance of the *Ṣalāt* they themselves have been abandoned. It is the *Ṣalāt* performed with heartfelt earnestness that delivers a person from all difficulties. It is my repeated experience that I pray for the resolving of some difficulty and while I am still occupied with the *Ṣalāt* God resolves the difficulty.

What happens in the *Ṣalāt*? One raises one's hands in supplication and the Other listens to him well. Then a time comes when He Who listens speaks and responds to the supplicator. This is the situation in the *Ṣalāt*. The worshipper falls into prostration before God Almighty and submits his difficulties and his needs to Him. The result of true and real *Ṣalāt* is that soon the time comes when God Almighty responds to the supplicant and comforts him with His words. Can such an experience be possible without the true observance of *Ṣalāt*?

[*Malfūzāt*, vol. V, pp. 253-255]

The Real *Ṣalāt*

Ṣalāt is truly so called when a sincere and holy relationship is established with God and the worshipper becomes so devoted to the pleasure of God Almighty and His obedience and so upholds his faith above all worldly values that he is ever ready to lay down his life in the cause of God. It is only then that it can be said that his *Ṣalāt* is worthy to be called by that name. So long as this condition is not established and the worshipper does not become a model of sincerity and faithfulness his prayers

and other actions are without effect.

[Malfūzāt, vol. VI, p. 240]

Ṣalāt, Supplication, and Certainty of Faith

Do not perform the *Ṣalāt* as a mere ceremony, but observe it with the burning and the melting of the heart and supplicate continuously in the *Ṣalāt*. **It is the key to the resolving of all difficulties.** In addition to the prescribed prayers and glorification supplicate much in your vernacular so that your heart should melt, and continue this effort till you arrive at that condition for that is the means of the achieving of all true objectives. All physical postures during the *Ṣalāt* should represent the condition of the heart also. When the worshipper stands in the *Ṣalāt* his heart should also be standing erect for God's obedience; when he bows down the heart should also bow down; and when he goes into prostration the heart should also prostrate itself, which means that the heart should not let go of God at any time. When he reaches that condition he will begin to get rid of sins.

[Malfūzāt, vol. VI, pp. 367-368]

Ṣalāt means Relationship between Man's Servitude and God's Providence

The Holy Qur'ān mentions two gardens; one of these is the garden that is bestowed in this life and that is the delight of the *Ṣalāt*.

The *Ṣalāt* is not a burdensome tax but is a permanent relationship between man's condition of servitude and God's Providence. God Almighty has prescribed the *Ṣalāt* for the establishment of that relationship and has charged it with delight which serves to maintain the relationship. For instance, if married couple do not find

delight in their relationship, the relationship is likely to be disrupted. In the same way if there is no delight in *Ṣalāt* the relationship between the servant and the Master is disrupted. Supplicate behind closed doors that that relationship may be continued and may become a source of delight. The relationship between man's servitude and God's Providence is very deep and is full of light, the reality of which cannot be expressed in words. Until that delight is experienced man continues in a state which resembles animals. Even if that delight is felt only two or three times the worshipper experiences a taste of it, but he who has not even that much experience continues blind:

مَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَى فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَى¹¹¹

[Malfūzāt, vol. VI, p. 371]

Istighfār means that the light has been obtained from God Almighty may be safeguarded and may be fostered. The *Ṣalāt* is prescribed for this purpose **so that five times daily this light may be repeatedly sought from God**. He who possesses insight knows that **the *Ṣalāt* is a spiritual exaltation** and that the only way of deliverance from spiritual ills is repeated supplication in *Ṣalāt* which is charged with earnestness and melting of the heart.

[Malfūzāt, vol. VII, pp. 124-125]

If a worshipper finds that he has lost the eagerness and delight that he used to experience in the *Ṣalāt* he should not become weary, nor be discouraged. He should seek to recover with great eagerness that which has been lost; the appropriate means for which are repentance, *Istighfār* and

¹¹¹ 'Whoso is blind in this world will be blind in the hereafter.'—
Bani Isrā'īl, 17:73 [Publisher]

earnestness. *Ṣalāt* should not be neglected because of lack of delight in it, but should be on that account multiplied and intensified, as an alcoholic does not give up drinking because he cannot get drunk but goes on drinking till he begins to feel the effect and delight that he desires in liquor. Thus a worshipper who finds the *Ṣalāt* insipid should multiply the *Ṣalāt* and should not become weary of it. In the end his insipidity will be turned into delight. A person who starts digging a well in his search for water has to continue digging till he reaches water. Those who give up digging before water is reached deprive themselves altogether, but those who persist and do not become weary reach water in the end. To find delight in *Ṣalāt* what is needed is *Istighfār*, regular *Ṣalāt*, persistent supplication, eagerness, and steadfastness.

[Malfūzāt, vol. V, p. 432]

The weapons for our achieving supremacy are *Istighfār*, repentance, knowledge of the faith, the upholding of the Majesty of God Almighty and observance of *Ṣalāt* five times a day. *Ṣalāt* is the key to the acceptance of prayer. Supplicate throughout *Ṣalāt* and do not be neglectful. Shun every vice whether it relates to the obligations due to God or to the obligations due to your fellow beings.

[Malfūzāt, vol. V, p. 303]

In order to estimate the degree of a person's fear of God it is enough to observe his regularity in *Ṣalāt*. I am convinced that a person who observes *Ṣalāt* diligently and is not held back from it by fear or sickness or worldly trials undoubtedly believes truly in God Almighty. But this degree of faith is bestowed mainly upon the poor. Few of the wealthy partake of this bounty.

[Izāla-e-Auhām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 3, p. 540]

Both fasting and *Ṣalāt* are forms of worship. The fast affects powerfully the body and *Ṣalāt* affects powerfully the soul. *Ṣalāt* generates a condition of burning and melting of the heart, and is, therefore, a higher form of worship than fasting. The latter fosters the capacity for visions.

[*Malfūzāt*, vol. VII, p. 379]

Ṣalāt Purifies the Spirit and Fast Illuminates the Heart

شَهْرٌ مَضَانٌ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ¹¹²

This verse indicates the greatness of the month of Ramaḍān. The *Ṣūfīs* have recorded that this is a good month for the illumination of the heart. One who observes the fast has frequent experience of visions in this month. The *Ṣalāt* purifies the spirit and the fast illumines the heart. The purification of the spirit means that one may be delivered from the passions of the self that incites to evil; and the illumination of the heart means that the gates of vision may be opened so that one may be able to behold God.

[*Malfūzāt*, vol. IV, pp. 256-257]

On one occasion I began to reflect on the purpose of the prescribed expiation of missing a fast and I conceived that the expiation is prescribed so that one may be bestowed the capacity and the strength to observe the fast. God Almighty alone can bestow such strength and everything should be sought from God Almighty. He is the All-Powerful; if He so wills He can bestow the strength for observing the fast on one who is afflicted

¹¹² ‘The month of Ramaḍān is that in which the Qur’ān was sent down.’—Al-Baqarah, 2:186 [Publisher]

with tuberculosis. The purpose of the prescribed expiation is that one may be bestowed the strength for the observation of the fast, and this can be achieved only through the grace of God Almighty. One should supplicate:

Lord! this is Thy blessed month and I am being deprived of its blessings. I know not whether I shall be alive next year, or would find the opportunity of observing the fasts that I am missing. Do Thou bestow upon me, by Thy grace, the strength that should enable me to observe the fast.

I am sure that one with such a heart would be bestowed the needed strength by God Almighty. If God Almighty so wished He would not have prescribed limitations for the Muslims as He had prescribed for earlier peoples; but the purpose of the limitations is the promotion of the welfare of the people concerned. According to me the principle is that when a person supplicate God Almighty with perfect sincerity that he should not be deprived of the blessings of the month of Ramaḍān, he is not so deprived, and if such a one should become ill during the month of Ramaḍān his illness becomes a source of mercy for him, inasmuch as the value of every action is determined by the motive that inspires it. It behoves a believer that he should prove himself brave in the cause of God Almighty.

He who is heartily determined that he would observe the fast but is held back from doing so on account of illness while his heart yearns after the observation of the fast would not be deprived of the bounty resulting from the observation of the fast and angels would observe the fast in his place. This is a subtle matter. If a person finds the observation of the fast difficult on account of the sloth-

fulness of his spirit and imagines that he is not in good health, and that if he misses a meal he would suffer from various types of disorders, such a one, who imagines that a Divine blessing would sit heavy on him, would not deserve any spiritual merit. On the other hand, a person who feels happy at the approach of the month of Ramaḍān and is eager to observe the fast, but is held back by illness from doing so, would not be deprived of the blessings of Ramaḍān.

Many people merely seek excuses and imagine that as they can deceive their fellow beings they can also deceive God. Such people make their own interpretations and deem them correct, but they are not correct in the estimation of God Almighty. The field of such interpretations is vast and a person given to them might become accustomed to the performance of the *Ṣalāt* throughout his life in a sitting posture and may abstain altogether from observing the fast. But God is well aware of the motive and design of a person whose conduct is inspired by sincerity and devotion. God Almighty knows that his heart is eager and He bestows plentifully upon him, for the eagerness of the heart is valuable in the estimation of God.

Those who seek excuses rely on their interpretations, but such interpretations have no value in the estimation of God Almighty. On one occasion when I continued observation of the fast for six months I met a company of the Prophets in a vision who admonished me against imposing so much hardship on myself and directed me to desist. Thus when a person imposes hardship upon himself for the sake of God, He takes pity on him like the parents of a child and directs him to desist.

The Purpose of Fasting is Purification

I have already spoken of the *Ṣalāt*. Next in order is **worship in the shape of the fast**. It is a pity that some who call themselves Muslims at this time desire to modify these forms of worship. They are blind and are not aware of the perfect wisdom of God Almighty. These forms of worship are essential for the purification of the spirit. These people seek to intervene absurdly in a sphere of which they have no knowledge and devise false schemes for the improvement of a territory that they have not visited. Their lives are devoted to worldly affairs; of spiritual matters they have no notion. To be moderate in eating and drinking and to bear hunger and thirst are necessary for the purification of the spirit and promote the capacity for visions. Man does not live by bread alone. To discard all thought of eternal life is to invite Divine wrath.

It should be remembered that the fast does not mean merely that a person should abstain from food and drink over a certain period. During the fast one should be occupied greatly with the remembrance of God. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) occupied himself greatly with worship during the month of Ramaḍān. During that month one should discard one's preoccupation with eating and drinking; and cutting asunder from these needs should address oneself wholly towards God. Unfortunate is the person who is bestowed material bread and pays no attention to spiritual bread. Material bread strengthens the body, and spiritual bread sustains the soul and sharpens the spiritual faculties. Seek the grace of God, as all doors are opened by His grace.

The Institution of Ḥajj

Another form of worship is *Hajj*—the Pilgrimage; which does not mean that a person should carry out the formality of the Pilgrimage by providing for his journey across the ocean with money lawfully or unlawfully acquired, and having repeated the prayers and formulas according to the directions of the servitors of the *Ka'bah*, should come back and boast that he has performed the Pilgrimage. The purpose that God Almighty has appointed for the Pilgrimage is not achieved in this manner. The truth is that the last stage of the seeker's journey is that withdrawing himself altogether from the demands and desires of self he should be completely engulfed by the love of God and complete devotion to Him. A true lover sacrifices his soul and heart; and the circuit of the House of Allāh is a visible sign of such a sacrifice. As there is a House of Allāh here below on the earth, so there is one in heaven. Until a person performs the circuit of the House above, his circuit of the House below is not truly performed. One who performs the circuit of the House below puts aside all garments, retaining only one of them to cover his body, but he who performs the circuit of the House above discards all garments altogether and becomes naked for the sake of God. The circuit is a sign of the lovers of God. They go round the *Ka'ba* as if they have no will of their own left and they are devoted wholly to Him.

The Paying of *Zakāt*

Another form of worship is *Zakāt*. Some people pay the *Zakāt* but take no care whether that which they pay as *Zakāt* was lawfully or was unlawfully acquired. If a dog is slaughtered and at the time of its slaughter the name of

Allāh is pronounced upon it, or a pig is slaughtered in the same way, would the eating of the flesh of the dog or the pig become lawful? That which is unlawful will remain unlawful in all circumstances. **The root of the word *Zakāt* means purification.** When a person who acquires something lawfully and out of it spends in the cause of the faith, the rest of it is purified. Many people are involved in these errors and they do not recognize the reality. All this must be discarded.

All the ordinances of Islam are means of salvation, but through their errors people go astray. One should not take pride in one's good actions, nor be pleased with them until such sincere faith is achieved that no one is associated in one's worship of God Almighty and one is enabled to worship righteousness all the time.

[Speeches to Jalsah Salāna, 1906, pp. 20-21]

9

JIHĀD WITH THE SWORD

The philosophy of Jihād and its true significance is so recondite and profound a matter that the people of this age and those of the middle ages have committed grave mistakes on account of their failure to understand it, which has rendered the teachings of Islām open to the criticism of its opponents, whereas Islām is a holy religion which is a mirror of the law of nature and manifests the glory of God.

The root of the Arabic word Jihād means striving and has been metaphorically applied to fighting in the cause of religion....

Why did Islam have to resort to fighting and what is the purpose of Jihād? With the very birth of Islām it was confronted with great difficulties and all peoples conceived enmity against it. It has always been the case that on the advent of a Prophet or a Messenger his opponents, perceiving that his followers are a company of earnest, righteous and courageous people who are likely to march forward quickly, begin to entertain rancour and jealousy against them. More particularly is that the case with the divines and leaders of every religion.... They begin to devise projects to harm the new faith. Very often they feel in their hearts that by persecuting a righteous one of God they have become subject to God's wrath and their wrongful conduct also betrays that their hearts feel guilty, yet the fierce fire of jealousy drives them into the pits of enmity. These were the causes which not only

prevented the leaders of the polytheists and the Jews and the Christians from accepting the truth, but also incited them to bitter enmity and they began to consider means of wiping out Islām from the face of the earth.

As in the beginning the number of Muslims was small, their opponents, out of the natural arrogance which inspires the minds of people who consider themselves superior to the followers of the new faith in respect of wealth, numbers, esteem and rank, treated the Muslims with bitter hostility as they did not desire that Islām, the heavenly plant, should take root upon the earth. They put forth their utmost effort to destroy the righteous and left out no means of causing them hurt. They were afraid lest the new religion should become firmly established and its progress might ruin their own religion and culture. Out of this fear, which terrified their hearts, they had recourse to every type of coercion and cruelty in the attempt to destroy Islām. They killed Muslims savagely and during a long period which extended over thirteen years, they persisted in this form of persecution.

The swords of these wild beasts cut to pieces most cruelly the faithful servants of God who were the pride of mankind; and orphan children and weak and humble women were slaughtered in the streets of Mecca. Throughout this period it was the Divine command that evil should not be opposed and the righteous ones carried out the command in every case. The streets became red with their blood but they raised no cry. They were slaughtered like sacrificial lambs but they breathed no sigh. The Holy Messenger of God, upon whom be the endless peace of heaven and earth, was repeatedly made the target of stones that drew his blood; yet that mountain of truth and steadfastness bore all these torments with a

cheerful and loving heart. This attitude of humility and steadfastness encouraged their enemies to intensify their persecution and they made this holy community their quarry. Then God who does not permit that cruelty and mercilessness should exceed all bounds turned with compassion towards His persecuted servants and His wrath was kindled against the wicked, and He informed His servants through the Holy Qur’ān that He was a witness to everything that had been inflicted upon them and that He now gave them permission to oppose their opponents and that He was Mighty and would not leave the wrongdoers unpunished. **This was the commandment which was designated Jihād.** The original text of this commandment is there in the Holy Qur’ān, which is as follows:

أَذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلِمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ تَضَرُّعِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ
 بِالَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِحَقِّ¹¹³

[Government Angrezī Aur Jihād, Rūḥānī Khazā’in, vol. 17, pp. 3-6]

If the **Christian missionaries would listen to me I would counsel them to refrain from raising** objections which can be directed against their own scriptures also. For instance, one of their principal criticisms of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) is directed against the battles that he had to wage under Divine command against those disbelievers who persecuted him and his companions for thirteen years at Mecca and inflicted every kind of torment upon them,

¹¹³ ‘Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged—and Allāh indeed has the power to help them. Those who have been driven out of their homes unjustly...’—Al-Ḥajj, 22:40-41 [Publisher]

and then devised a project of killing the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) himself, so that he and his companions were compelled to leave Mecca. But his persecutors did not desist even then. They pursued him and treated him with every type of impertinence and continued to proclaim him false. They subjected the weak ones from among the Muslims who had been left in Mecca to extreme torment. Thus in the estimation of God Almighty, on account of their tyrannical behaviour, they became deserving of chastisement according to the eternal law of God. This chastisement was earned also by those who had helped the Meccans in their misconduct and by those who had on their own carried the torment of the Muslims and the ridicule of their faith to the extreme and used all their power to block the propagation of Islām. Thus those who drew their swords against Islām were destroyed by the sword on account of their wickedness. Then is it fair to object to this kind of fighting, forgetting the battles of Moses and other Prophets of Israel in which thousands upon thousands of suckling babies were slaughtered?

Such objections result from a spirit of mischief and deceit and disorderliness. The Christians sometimes make the response that the battles fought by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) were characterised by too much tenderness towards the enemy in that those of them who accepted Islām escaped all punishment, suckling babies, women, old people, monks and travellers were all spared, nor were churches and synagogues demolished; while the Israeli prophets held all such practices lawful, so much so that more than 300,000 babies were slaughtered at one time. It is a strange conception that the battles fought by Islām

should be open to criticism because of the clemency extended to the enemy and because they fell short of the severity that characterised the battles of Moses and other Israeli Prophets. Had the battles fought by Islām imposed the same degree of severity upon the enemy as was done in the battles mentioned in the Bible, apparently the Christian missionaries would have accepted these battles also as having been carried out under the command of God Almighty. Now every sensible person can decide whether this attitude is an honest one. On the one hand the Christians proclaim that God is mercy, and even His punishment has an aspect of mercy. Then if the battles of Moses despite their severity are believed to have been directed by God Almighty, how is it that the battles that possessed the fragrance of Divine mercy are not accepted as having been imposed by God Almighty? Why should those who deem the slaughter of suckling babies before the very eyes of their mothers and the merciless slaughter of the mothers within sight of their children as having been carried out under Divine command, not accept as falling in the same category battles which a persecuted people were permitted to fight in order to repel the aggression of their persecutors?

[Āryā Dharam, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 10, pp. 81-83, footnote]

If chastisement by the sword is in conflict with Divine attributes then this objection would apply primarily and very strongly to Moses who slaughtered whole peoples and caused rivers of blood to flow and left no room for anyone's repentance. The battles undertaken according to the teachings of the Holy Qur'ān kept the door of repentance open which is in accord with the law of nature and with Divine mercy. We observe that when God Almighty sends His punishment upon the world in the shape of

plague or cholera, He, at the same time, bestows upon the physicians knowledge of such herbs and remedies as prove effective in putting out the fire of such epidemics. Therefore, it is the method of warfare adopted by Moses which is open to the objection that it did not permit a way of escape for the enemy according to the law of nature. Even when such a way was permitted, it was partial and not complete. It is clear that it has been the Divine way from the beginning that the wrongdoing enemies of the Prophets have been destroyed by the sword. Then why is a similar commandment in the Holy Qur'ān considered as open to objection? Was the God of the time of Moses different from the God of the time of Islām? Or is it that in the time of Moses God loved battle, but now He considers it an evil?

Taking Up Arms Against a Just Non-Muslim Government is not Permitted

It should also be remembered that Islām permits the taking up of the sword only in opposition to people who themselves take it up first, and it permits the slaughter only of those who embark upon slaughter first. It does not lay down that the Muslims while they are the subjects of a non-Muslim sovereign who deals with them with justice and equity should take up arms against him as rebels. According to the Holy Qur'ān this is the way of the wicked and not of the righteous. But the Torah has not made this distinction clear at any place. This shows that the Holy Qur'ān in all its commandments, whether of majesty or of beauty, adheres to the straight line of equity, justice, mercy and beneficence and is unique in this respect also among all the scriptures.

[Anjām-e-Ātham, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 11, p. 37]

It is a great error on the part of our opponents that they imagine that revealed guidance must under no circumstances inculcate resistance to the enemy and should demonstrate its love and mercy only by way of meekness and gentleness. Such people imagine that they display great reverence for God, the Lord of Honour and Glory, by attributing to Him only the qualities of gentleness and tenderness. But those who are given to reflection and pondering can easily perceive that such people are involved in gross and obvious error. A contemplation of the Divine law of nature clearly shows that it certainly is pure mercy. But that mercy does not manifest itself by way of gentleness and tenderness in all circumstances. Like an expert physician, it sometimes administers a sweet draught to us and at other times it prescribes a bitter medicine for us.

[Islāmī Uṣūl kī Philosophy, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 10, p.451]

Prohibition of the Use of Force

No true Muslim has ever believed that Islām should be spread by the sword. Islām has always been propagated through its inherent qualities. Those who, calling themselves Muslims, seek to spread Islām by means of the sword are not aware of its inherent qualities and their conduct resembles the conduct of wild beasts.

[Tiryāq-ul-Qūlūb, Rūḥānī Khazā'in , vol. 15, pp. 167]

The Holy Qur'ān clearly forbids the use of force for the spread of the faith and directs its propagation through its inherent qualities and the good example of the Muslims. Do not be misled by the notion that in the beginning the Muslims were commanded to take up the sword. That sword was not taken up for the spread of the faith, but in self-defence against the enemies of Islām and for the

purpose of establishing peace and security. It was no part of the purpose of taking it up to have recourse to coercion in the matter of faith.

[*Sitārah Qaişariyyah, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 15, pp. 120-121*]

I do not know from where our opponents have gathered that Islām was spread by the sword. God has set forth clearly in the Holy Qur'ān:

لَا كَرْهَ فِي الدِّينِ¹¹⁴

That is: There is no compulsion in the religion of Islām.

Then who has prescribed the use of force for the spread of the faith, and what force was available for the purpose? Do those people who are converted by force set such an example of sincerity and faith that without any kind of wages or compensation two or three hundred of them issue forth to oppose a force of thousands; or when their number reaches a thousand they vanquish hundreds of thousands? Is it the characteristic of the forcibly converted ones that in the defence of the faith they should offer themselves to be slaughtered like sheep and should testify to the truth of Islām with the seal of their blood? Is it expected of them that they should be such lovers of Divine Unity that they should endure every hardship in their travels in the African desert and spread the message of Islām in those regions; or that they should similarly arrive in China, not as warriors but as dervishes and should so convey the message of Islām that millions of people of that country should become Muslims; or that they should arrive in India clad in the roughest stuff and should win a great part of *Āryāvart* to the allegiance of Islām; or should carry the credo:

¹¹⁴ Al-Baqarah, 2:257 [Publisher]

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ¹¹⁵

to the confines of Europe? Now say honestly whether these can be the achievements of those who are converted forcibly to Islām, so that they disbelieved in their hearts and professed Islām only by their tongues? Indeed not. These are the achievements of those whose hearts are filled with the light of faith wherein God alone dwells.

[Paighām-e-Şulḥ, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 468-469]

The Promised Messiah has come into the world so that he should repel the notion of taking up the sword in the name of religion, and that through his reasoning and arguments he should establish that Islām is a faith which does not at all need the help of the sword for the purpose of its propagation, but that the inherent qualities of its teaching and its verities, insights, reasons, proofs and the living support and signs of God Almighty and its inherent attractions are the factors that have throughout contributed to its progress and its propagation. Let all those who proclaim that Islām had been spread by the sword take note that their claim is false. Islām is not in need of any coercion for its propagation. Should anyone doubt this, let him come to me and stay with me for a while and observe for himself that Islām proves through reasoning and divine signs that it is a living faith. God Almighty now desires and has so determined that all such objections as have been raised against Islām by evil-minded people should be effectively repelled. Those who allege that Islām was spread by the sword will now be put to shame.

[Malfūzāt, vol. III, p. 176]

¹¹⁵ There is none worthy of worship except Allāh. [Publisher]

The Promised Messiah will not Fight Disbelievers with Sword

The commonly held doctrine professed by some of the divines that the Promised Messiah will descend from heaven and will fight the disbelievers and will not accept the poll tax and will offer only the choice of death or Islām, is utterly false. It is brimful of all types of error and mischief, and is utterly opposed to the Holy Qur'ān and is only an invention of the impostors.

[Nūr-ul-Ḥaq, Part 1, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 8, p. 67]

There is no compulsion in Islām. There are only three types of wars in Islām:

- (1) Those undertaken in self-defence.
- (2) Those undertaken as chastisement for aggression.
- (3) Those undertaken for the establishment of freedom of conscience, that is to say for breaking up the strength of those who inflicted death upon such as accepted Islām.

As Islām does not permit the use of force or coercion for the purpose of its propagation, it is altogether vain and absurd to wait for a bloody Mahdī or a bloody Messiah; for it is not possible that anyone should appear who should convert people to Islām by the sword contrary to the clear teaching of the Qur'ān.

[Masīḥ Hindustān Mein, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 15, p. 12]

It is worthy of reflection that if a person does not accept the true faith because he is not yet aware of its holy teaching and its inherent good qualities, then should he be immediately put to the sword? Indeed such a person deserves to be treated mercifully and should be informed gently and courteously of the truth and excellence and spiritual beneficence of the faith and not that his denial

should be repelled by the sword or the gun. Therefore, the commonly held doctrine of Jihād put forward by certain Muslim sects—and their teaching that the time is approaching when a fighting Mahdī will appear whose name will be Imām Muḥammad, and that Jesus will descend from heaven to join him and help him and that the two together will slaughter all the peoples who refuse to accept Islām—is totally opposed to morality. Is this not a doctrine which stultifies all the pure faculties of man and generates emotions like those of wild beasts? People who hold such doctrines have to behave hypocritically towards everyone else.

[Masīḥ Hindustān Mein, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 15, pp. 8-9]

The Promised Messiah was to Put an End To War

The doctrine of Jihād as understood and propagated by the Muslim divines of this age who are called *Maulavīs* is utterly incorrect. It can lead to nothing except that by their forceful preaching they would convert common people into wild beasts and would deprive them of all the good qualities of human beings; and so it has happened. I know for certain that the burden of the sins of those people who commit murders through ignorance on account of such preaching, and who are unaware of the reason why Islām had to fight battles in its early stages, lies on the necks of these *Maulavīs* who go on propagating secretly these dangerous doctrines which result in such grievous loss of life. When these *Maulavīs* call on government officials they bow down before them at such an angle as if they are ready to go into prostration; but when they are among their own ilk they persist in declaring that this country is the House of War (*Dār-ul-Ḥarb*) and that the employment of the sword for the purpose of

the propagation of the faith is a prescribed obligation. There are few of them who do not adhere to this doctrine. The large majority of them are so committed to this false doctrine which is utterly contrary to the Holy Qur'ān and the teaching of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) that they condemn anyone who differs with them on this score as the Antichrist (*Dajjāl*) and proclaim that he may be killed with impunity. I have been the subject of such condemnation since a long time....

They should remember that this doctrine of Jihād as conceived by them is not at all correct. Its first result is the sacrifice of human sympathy. Their notion that as Jihād was permitted in the early stages of Islām there is no reason why it should not be lawful now is utterly misguided. We have two answers to it. The first is that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) never raised his sword except against those who first raised it themselves and most mercilessly killed innocent and pious men, women and children. They were killed in such cruel manner the recital of which even today brings tears to our eyes. Secondly, even assuming that in the beginning of Islām such Jihād was obligatory, as is mistakenly conceived by these *Maulavīs*, yet in this age it no longer holds good inasmuch as it is written that when the Promised Messiah appears Jihād by the sword and all fighting for religion will come to an end as he will not take up the sword or any other earthly weapon. **His only instrument will be his supplications, and his only weapon will be his firm determination.** He will lay the foundation of peace and will gather the goat and the lion together. His age will be the age of peace and kindness and human sympathy. Why do these people not reflect

upon the fact that thirteen hundred years ago the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) had said concerning the Promised Messiah: He will put an end to war.

O Ye Muslim divines and Maulavīs, listen to me. I tell you truly this is not the time of fighting for the faith. Do not disobey the Holy Prophet, (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). The Promised Messiah, who was to come, has appeared and has directed: Henceforth desist from religious wars with the sword which caused bloodshed. To persist in bloodshed and not to desist from such sermons is not the way of Islām. He who accepts me will not only desist from such sermons but will hold this way as most vicious and likely to invite divine wrath....

Now that the Promised Messiah has come, it is the duty of every Muslim that he should refrain from having recourse to fighting for the propagation of the faith. Had I not come there might have been some excuse for this misunderstanding. But now that I have arrived and you have witnessed the day of promise, those who take up the sword on behalf of the faith have no excuse left which they can put forth before God Almighty. He who possesses eyes and can read the Holy Qur'ān and the *Aḥādīth* can realize that this kind of Jihād, which the ignorant ones insist upon in this age, is not authorized by Islām. It is an error which has spread among the Muslims in consequence of the upsurge of unlawful passions or the vain hope of winning paradise through such misguided action....

Ignorant *Maulavīs*, may God guide them, have grievously misled the common people and have told them that such action which is sheer wrong and cruelty and is opposed

to all moral values is the key to paradise. Can it be a good action to shoot down an utter stranger who is walking through the street on some errand and who has done us no harm? If this kind of thing is virtuous, wild animals possess more virtue than such men. Glory be to God, how righteous were those and how truly were they inspired by the spirit of the Prophets who, when they were commanded in Mecca not to resist evil though they might be cut to pieces, behaved like humble and weak suckling babies as if their hands and their arms possessed no power at all....

How grievous and shameful it is that an utter stranger who has done us no harm and who is occupied with some lawful errand should be shot down without any cause and his wife made a widow and his children made orphans and his dwelling turned into a house of mourning? Which *Ḥadīth* and which verse of the Holy Qur'ān authorises such an outrage? Can any *Maulavī* furnish an answer to this question? Ignorant people who have only heard the word Jihād make it an excuse for the fulfilment of their selfish desires.

[Government Angrezī Aur Jihād, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 17, pp. 7-13]

I have brought you a commandment which is that **Jihād with the sword has been ended but the Jihād of the purification of your spirits must continue to be waged**. I say this not on my own but in order to proclaim the design of God. Reflect on the *Ḥadīth* of Bukhārī wherein it is stated that the Promised Messiah:

يضع الحرب

would put an end to fighting for the faith. Accordingly I command those who have joined my ranks that they should discard all such notions. They should purify their

hearts and foster their mercy and should have sympathy for the afflicted. They should spread peace on the earth, for this would cause their faith to spread. They should not wonder how this would come about. As God Almighty has utilized the elements and all earthly means for the purpose of bringing about new inventions to serve human needs like mechanical locomotion, etc., in the same way He will put His angels to work for the fulfilment of spiritual needs through heavenly signs, without the intervention of human agencies and there will appear many flashes of light whereby the eyes of multitudes will be opened.

[Government Angrezī Aur Jihād, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 17, p. 15]

10

DIVINE DECREE AND DETERMINATION

It should be remembered that though everything has been determined by Divine decree, yet this does not exclude science and knowledge as everyone has to acknowledge that the use of appropriate medicines, through the grace and mercy of God Almighty, benefits the patient. In the same way everyone who is bestowed comprehension of the Divine has to acknowledge as the result of experience that **prayer has a relationship with acceptance**. This is a mystery which has been demonstrated through the **experience of millions of the righteous and our experience has demonstrated the hidden reality that our prayers have a magnetic quality which attracts the grace and mercy of God, though we may not be able to convince others of this verity through logical reasoning.**

[Ayyām-uş-Şulḥ, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 14, pp. 240-241]

It is not within the power of man to transcend the bounds of Divine decrees and scheme of things.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Part V, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 21, p. 3]

Man is subject to Divine decree. If a human design should not be in accord with the design of God, no amount of effort can succeed in putting it into effect; but when the time of the design of God arrives, that which had appeared most difficult becomes easily available.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Part V, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 21, p. 3]

Two Types of Divine Decrees

Divine decrees are of two types; one may be described as **suspended**, and the other as **absolute**. The operation of a **suspended** decree may be averted by the grace of God Almighty through **prayer and almsgiving**. The operation of an **absolute** decree cannot be averted through **prayer and almsgiving**, though God Almighty bestows some other benefit in return for them. In some cases God Almighty causes a delay in the operation of a decree. The knowledge of these two types of divine decrees can be gathered from the Holy Qur'ān.

[Malfūzāt, vol. I, pp. 157-158]

The Holy Qur'ān has set out certain matters for the establishment of the principle that God Almighty is One and is the source and goal of everything from which foolish critics have deduced the doctrine of compulsion. He is the *causa causans* and is the Provider of all means. This is the reason why God Almighty has in some cases described Himself as the Cause of all causes in the Holy Qur'ān, without mention of intervening means. A perusal of the Holy Qur'ān discloses that at certain places these means have also been clearly specified so that man should pay heed to them.

Besides, the Holy Qur'ān specifies the punishment of evil and lays down penalties. If there was to be an unalterable system of Divine decrees and determination and man was to be under absolute compulsion what justification was there for these punishments and penalties?

Prayer And Divine Determination are Juxtaposed

It should be remembered that, unlike the atheists, the Holy Qur'ān does not confine everything within the

system of physical causes, but seeks to lead mankind to belief in the pure Unity of God. Most people do not realize the true nature of prayer, nor do they comprehend the relationship between prayer and Divine determination. God Almighty opens the way for those who have recourse to prayer and does not reject their supplications. Prayer and Divine determination are juxtaposed to each other. God has appointed times for both. His Providence has directed:

أُدْعُونِي أَجْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ¹¹⁶

Call Me, I shall respond to you.

That is why I have always said that the God of the Muslims responds to their supplications; but the god who has not created a single particle or who died under the scourging of the Jews, how can he respond?

تو کار زمین را نگو ساختی که با آسمان نیز پرداختی¹¹⁷

It is not wise to attempt reconciliation between choice and compulsion on the basis of one's self-conceived and supposed logic and reasoning. This is a vain attempt. One must Honour Godhead and Providence duly and an attempt to comprehend the mysteries of Godhead is disrespectful.

الطريقة كلها ادب¹¹⁸

Two Aspects of Prayer

Divine decrees and determination have a close relation-

¹¹⁶ Al-Mu'min, 40:61 [Publisher]

¹¹⁷ You did not fare well in performing the tasks of this world;
By what right, then, do you seek to handle the heavens. [Publisher]

¹¹⁸ The way of the seeker is all respect. [Publisher]

ship with prayer. Prayer averts the operation of a suspended decree. Prayer is certainly effective against difficulties. Those who deny the effectiveness of Prayer are under a misconception. The Holy Qur'ān sets out two aspects of Prayer. In one aspect God Almighty enforces His own will and in the other aspect He responds to the prayer of a servant. In the verse:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ ¹¹⁹

God Almighty requires obedience to His will. The meaning is that man's response to an absolute Divine decree must be:

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ¹²⁰

The other time is of the upsurge of the waves of the grace and mercy of God Almighty; it is indicated in:

أَدْعُونِيْ أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ¹²¹

A believer should have knowledge of both these aspects. The Ṣūfīs say that a person's absolute dependence upon God does not become perfect without his being able to distinguish the proper place and occasion for supplication. It has been said that a Ṣūfī does not pray till he recognizes that it is time for prayer.

Sayyed 'Abd-ul-Qādir Jīlānī (may Allāh be pleased with him) has said that through prayer an unfortunate one is rendered fortunate. He has even gone so far as to affirm

¹¹⁹ 'And We will try you with something of fear and hunger.'—Al-Baqarah, 2:156 [Publisher]

¹²⁰ 'Surely, to Allāh we belong and to Him shall we return.'—Al-Baqarah, 2: 157 [Publisher]

¹²¹ 'Pray unto Me, I will answer your prayer.'—Al-Mu'min, 40:61 [Publisher]

that deeply hidden matters, which resemble an absolute decree, can also be averted by prayer.

In short it should always be remembered in connection with prayer that sometimes God Almighty requires obedience to His own will and at other times He grants the supplication of a servant of His. In other words He deals with His servant like a friend. The prayers of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) were accepted on a grand scale and corresponding to this he stood very high in bowing to the will of God and in accepting it cheerfully. He lost eleven children, but he never asked “Why?”

[Malfūzāt, vol. III, pp. 224-226]

It is the way of Allāh that when an action proceeds from man its effect is duly manifested by God Almighty. For instance, when we close all the doors of a room, this is our action and the result it entails, namely, that our room becomes dark is the effect of our action manifested by God Almighty. This is God’s eternal law. In the same way if we were to swallow poison in a fatal dose, this would doubtless be our action; our death following upon this action of ours would be God’s action in accord with His eternal law. Thus every action of ours is followed by a Divine action that is manifested after our action and is its necessary result. This system operates both in that which is manifest and also in that which is hidden. Every good or bad action of ours creates an effect which is manifested after our action. The meaning of the verse of the Holy Qur’ān:

122 خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ

¹²² ‘Allāh has set a seal on their hearts.’—Al-Baqarah, 2:8 [Publisher]

is that when a person does evil its effect is manifested by God Almighty on his heart and his countenance. The same is the meaning of the verse:

فَلَمَّا رَاغَوْا دَارًا رَأَى اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ¹²³

that is to say, when they turned away from the truth God Almighty turned their hearts away from being in accord with the truth and in the end, in consequence of their hostility, a change was brought about in them and they were so corrupted that the poison of their hostility overwhelmed their natural light.

[Kitāb-ul-Bariyyah, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 13, pp. 47-48]

Man will have Nothing but what He Strives for

You have raised the objection that the Holy Qur'ān shows that man acts under compulsion and is given no choice. You seem to have overlooked the verses which clearly indicate man's choice and his acquisition of good or evil; for instance:

وَأَنْ تَبْتَغُوا لَهُمْ ثَمْرًا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُسْلِمِينَ¹²⁴

This means that Man will have nothing but that which he strives for and striving is necessary for earning a reward.

Then is it said:

وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا مَا يَخْشَوْنَ¹²⁵

meaning that if God were to punish people for all that they do by their free choice no living creature would be left on the earth. Again it is said:

¹²³ Al-Şaff, 61:6 [Publisher]

¹²⁴ Al-Najm, 53:40 [Publisher]

¹²⁵ Fāţir, 35:46 [Publisher]

لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ¹²⁶

Each one shall have the benefit of the good he does and shall suffer the consequences of the ill he works.

It is also said:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ¹²⁷

Whoso acts righteously, it is for the good of his own self and whoso does evil bears the burden thereof.

Again it is said:

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا آصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ¹²⁸

How will it be when they are afflicted with a misfortune on account of that which their hands had wrought aforetime.

All these verses show that man has choice in his actions. In this connection Mr. ‘Abdullāh Ātham has set forth the verse:

يَقُولُونَ هَلْ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ¹²⁹

and argues from it that this proves compulsion. He is under a misunderstanding. In this verse the word *Amr* means administration and governance. This verse sets forth the thinking of those who had said: Had we any share in matters of governance, we would have so planned that the trouble that was encountered in the battle of Uḥud would have been avoided. In reply to them God Almighty said:

¹²⁶ Al-Baqarah, 2:287 [Publisher]

¹²⁷ Hā Mīm Sajdah, 41:47 [Publisher]

¹²⁸ Al-Nisā’, 4:63 [Publisher]

¹²⁹ ‘They say: Is there for us any part in the government of affairs?’—Āl-e-‘Imrān, 3:155 [Publisher]

قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ كُلَّهُ لِلَّهِ¹³⁰

Tell them all governance belongs to Allāh.

They were admonished to obey the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) in all circumstances. This verse has nothing to do with choice or compulsion. The reference is to the thinking of some persons that if they had been consulted they would have proposed something different. God Almighty admonished them that the matter was not one for consultation but was a Divine commandment.

It should be clearly understood that *Taqdīr* means only the determination of a measure; as Allāh the Glorious says:

وَ خَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا¹³¹

He has created everything and has determined its measure.

This does not show that man has been deprived of choice. Indeed choice is a part of that measure. God Almighty having taken the measure of human nature and human capacity called it *Taqdīr*, and as part of it He determined up to what degree man would have choice in his actions. It is a great mistake to interpret *Taqdīr* as meaning that man is under compulsion not to take advantage of the faculties bestowed upon him by God. This might be illustrated by drawing attention to the mechanism of a watch which cannot continue to work beyond the measure determined by its maker. In the same way a human being cannot achieve anything that is

¹³⁰ Āl-e-‘Imrān, 3:155 [Publisher]

¹³¹ Al-Furqān, 25:3 [Publisher]

beyond the faculties that are bestowed upon him, nor can he live beyond his allotted span of life.

God does Not Condemn People Without Cause

It is a grievous mistake to imagine that the Holy Qur'ān has adjudged some people as deserving of hell as a matter of compulsion and that they have been compulsorily subjected to the authority of Satan. On the contrary God Almighty had said in the Holy Qur'ān, addressing Satan:

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ¹³²

O Satan! you will have no authority over My true servants.

Behold how clearly does Allāh Almighty proclaim man's freedom. This single verse should be enough to satisfy a just minded person. However, the Gospel of Matthew tells a different tale. Matthew states that Satan took Jesus to tempt him. This would mean that Satan had so much authority that he led a holy Prophet by compulsion from place to place and directed him impertinently to prostrate himself before him. Again the devil took him to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the earth and their glory. See Matthew, 4:18.¹³³

Reflection would show that these verses illustrate that Satan possessed Divine powers. He took Jesus who was unwilling, to a high mountain by his own authority and exercised the power which belongs to God Almighty alone to show Jesus all the kingdoms of the earth.

¹³² Al-Hijr, 15:43 [Publisher]

¹³³ This seems to be an error in the first edition. The reference should read: Matthew 4:1-8. [Translator]

Your being convinced that the Holy Qur’ān teaches that some people have been compulsorily condemned to hell or have their hearts sealed merely shows that you have never studied the Qur’ān in a just manner. Consider what Allāh the Glorious has said:

لَا مَلَائِكَةَ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكَ وَ مِمَّنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ¹³⁴

Addressing Satan, Allāh says: “I will surely fill hell with thee and with those who follow thee from among them, all together.”

This shows clearly that God Almighty will not condemn people to hell without cause. He will so condemn only those who would have earned such condemnation through their misconduct.

It is also said:

يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا، وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ¹³⁵

He adjudges astray many through this world and guides aright many, but He adjudges astray only those who chose to go astray and are guilty of misdeeds.

This means that man is judged by God according to his conduct; as when a person opens the window of his room that faces the sun the light of the sun naturally falls on his face, but when he shuts the window he creates darkness in the room by his own action.

As God Almighty is the *Causa Causans*, He ascribes both these consequences to Himself, but He has repeatedly expounded in His Holy Word that the misguidance which a person conceives is the consequence of his own mis-

¹³⁴ Ṣād, 38:86 [Publisher]

¹³⁵ Al-Baqarah, 2:27 [Publisher]

conduct, God Almighty does not wrong anyone as is said:

فَلَمَّا رَاغُوا أَزَاغَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ¹³⁶

So when they deviated from the right course, Allāh made their hearts perverse.

At another place it is said:

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ «فَرَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا»¹³⁷

In their hearts was a disease, Allāh caused their disease to grow worse. That is to say God tried them and made their condition manifest.

Then it is said:

بَلْ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا بِكُفْرِهِمْ¹³⁸

Allāh set a seal on their hearts on account of their disbelief.

This objection of compulsion can, however, be raised against your scriptures. In Exodus, 4:21, God said to Moses:

I shall harden the heart of Pharaoh.

If his heart was hardened its consequence was that he was condemned to hell. See Exodus 7:3; Proverbs 16:4; Exodus 10:3 and Deuteronomy 29:4 “Yet the Lord has not given you an heart of perceive and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day”.

Is this not a clear instance of compulsion? Then see Psalms 148:60: “He appointed a decree that cannot be

¹³⁶ Al-Şaff, 61:6 [Publisher]

¹³⁷ Al-Baqarah, 2:11 [Publisher]

¹³⁸ Al-Nisā’, 4:156 [Publisher]

averted”; and Romans 9:18:¹³⁹ “Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?” All these references show that your own scriptures are open to the objection that you have raised against the Holy Qur’ān.

[Jang-e-Muqaddas, Rūḥānī Khazā’in, vol. 6, pp. 231-234]

¹³⁹ This seems to be a mistake in the first edition. The references should be Psalms 148:6 and Romans 9:20 respectively. [Translator]

11

RIGHTEOUSNESS

In the Holy Qur'ān more emphasis has been laid on virtue and righteousness than on any other commandment. The reason for this is that righteousness bestows the strength to resist all vice and urges progress towards all good. Righteousness is in all circumstances a charm that guarantees security and is a citadel for safeguarding against all harm.

A righteous person can avoid many vain and harmful contentions that often lead other people to ruin. They sow the seed of dissension among the people through their hasty actions and suspicions and lay themselves open to objection.

[Ayyām-uş-Şulḥ, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 14, p. 342]

Elements of Righteousness

There are many elements in righteousness. It is righteousness to avoid pride and self-esteem and to refrain from unlawful acquisition and ill manners. A person who displays courtesy and good manners converts his enemies into friends.

[Malfūzāt, vol. I, p. 81]

Blessed is the one who adopts righteousness in a time of success and prosperity and most unfortunate is one who does not turn to righteousness after stumbling.

[Malfūzāt, vol. I, p. 157]

The spiritual beauty of man is to walk along all the finer

ways of righteousness. They are the attractive features of spiritual beauty. It is obvious that to be mindful of the trusts of God Almighty, and to fulfil all the covenants of faith, and to employ all faculties and limbs both overt, like eyes and ears and hands and feet and others like them, and those that are covert, like the mind and other faculties and qualities, on their proper occasions and to restrain them from coming into action on improper occasions, and to be warned against the subtle attacks of vice and to be mindful of the rights of one's fellow beings, is the way of perfecting one's spiritual beauty. God Almighty has in the Holy Qur'ān designated righteousness as a raiment. *Libās-ut-taqwā*¹⁴⁰ is an expression of the Holy Qur'ān.¹⁴¹ This is an indication that spiritual beauty and spiritual ornament are achieved through righteousness. Righteousness means that one must be mindful even of the smallest details of the Divine trusts and covenants and also of all the trusts and covenants of one's fellow beings, as far as it may be possible. That is, one must try to fulfil, to the best of one's ability, all the requirements in their minutest details.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Part V, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 21, pp. 209-210]

True righteousness and ignorance cannot subsist together. True righteousness is accompanied by a light, as God the Glorious, has said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا
وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ The garment of righteousness. [Publisher]

¹⁴¹ Al-A'rāf, 7:27 [Publisher]

¹⁴² Al-Anfāl, 8:30 [Publisher]

وَيَجْعَلُ لَكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ¹⁴³

That is, O ye who believe, if you remain steadfast in righteousness and hold fast to it for the sake of Allāh, with firmness and perseverance, He will single you out from among your detractors with marked distinction. That is, you shall be blessed with a light which will accompany you wherever you go.

That is to say, that that light would illumine all their actions and words and faculties and senses. Their intellect would be illumined and there would be light in all that they utter. There would be light in their eyes and in their ears and in their tongues and in their speech and in all their movements. The ways along which they walk would be lit up. All their ways, the ways of their faculties and their senses will be filled with light, and they will walk altogether in light.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, pp. 177-178]

Righteousness is Essential for Heavenly Knowledge

There is a great distinction between the acquisition of worldly knowledge and knowledge of the Holy Qur'ān. **Righteousness** is not needed for the study of grammar, physics, philosophy, astronomy, medicine, etc. It is not necessary that a student of these subjects should observe *Ṣalāt* and the fast and should be mindful of Divine commandments and prohibitions and should subordinate his every action and word to Divine directions. Indeed it often happens that the seekers of such knowledge become atheistic and are involved in every kind of vice. Today the world presents a remarkable spectacle.

¹⁴³ Al-Ḥadīd, 57:29 [Publisher]

Though the people of Europe and America acquire high proficiency in worldly arts and sciences and daily make new inventions, their moral and spiritual condition is deplorable. We cannot even mention some of the scenes that are witnessed in the parks of London and the hotels of Paris and are published in the daily press.

On the other hand righteousness is an essential condition for heavenly learning and for acquiring knowledge of the mysteries of the Holy Qur'ān. For this purpose sincere repentance is needed. For the door of Qur'ānic knowledge is not opened until a seeker of it carries the burden of Divine commands with perfect humility and meekness and turns to Him humbly, trembling before His glory and His might. Without these he cannot obtain from the Holy Qur'ān the means of fostering those qualities and faculties which generate delight and comfort for the soul. The Holy Qur'ān is the Book of God and its knowledge is in the hand of God; thus righteousness is the ladder for the acquisition of such knowledge. Then how can it be possible that the faithless wicked who are evil-minded and are held prisoner by their earthly passions should achieve such knowledge? A Muslim who does not purify his soul is not bestowed knowledge of the Holy Qur'ān, however high may be his proficiency in grammar and literary subjects, and however much he might enjoy the esteem of the worldly.

At this time the attention of the world is centred upon worldly knowledge and the light of Western learning continues to astonish mankind with new inventions and manufactures. Unfortunately, the Muslims also have chosen to follow the West for the purpose of fostering their own welfare and they take pride in copying Europe and America. That is the attitude of the Muslims who

follow the new light. Those who are known as old-fashioned Muslims and deem themselves the guardians of the faith are caught in the niceties of points of grammar and in determining the correct manner of the pronunciation of *Ḍāllīn*. They pay no attention to the true meaning of the Holy Qur'ān, nor are they capable of doing so as they do not address themselves to the purification of their souls.

[Malfūzāt, vol. I, pp. 425-427]

Qualities of the Righteous

To become truly righteous it is necessary that a person abandoning utterly such outstanding vices as adultery, theft, trespass, hypocrisy, self-esteem, scorn of fellow beings, miserliness, should eschew all low morals and should make progress in high moral values. He should behave towards his fellow beings with politeness, courtesy and sympathy and should cultivate true fidelity and sincerity towards God Almighty. He should constantly seek occasions of beneficent service. He who combines all these qualities in himself is alone righteous. The possession of any one of these qualities would not entitle a person to be accounted righteous unless he possesses collectively all of them. It is only these concerning whom it is said:

لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ¹⁴⁴

What more would they need? God Almighty becomes their guardian as it is said:

وَهُوَ يَتَوَقَّى الصَّالِحِينَ¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ 'On them shall come no fear, nor shall they grieve.'—Al-A'rāf, 7:36 [Publisher]

¹⁴⁵ 'And He protects the righteous.'—Al-A'rāf, 7:197 [Publisher]

In another *Ḥadīth* it is stated that God Almighty becomes their hands with which they grasp, and becomes their eyes with which they see, and becomes their ears with which they hear and becomes their feet with which they walk.

In another *Ḥadīth* it is stated that God has proclaimed that he who bears enmity towards a friend of Mine should become ready to contend with Me.

Still another *Ḥadīth* declares that when anyone attacks a friend of God, He pounces upon him with the fierceness with which a tigress pounces upon one who seeks to deprive it of its young.

[*Malfūzāt*, vol. IV, pp. 400-401]

Urdū Couplets:

We have been granted righteousness by that Friend;
It is not from us; for it is a gift of God.

Strive hard if you are truthful and sincere;
So that you attain righteousness, which is the prerequisite to communion with the Beloved (*Liqā*).

This is the mirror which reflects the Creator;
This alone sharpens the sword of prayer.

The root of every virtue is the fear of God (*Ittiqā*);
If this root is intact, everything will remain intact.¹⁴⁶

This alone is the hallmark of the lofty status of saints;
What more do they have, except righteousness?

Fear Him O friends! He is the All-Seeing God;
If you ponder over it, even this world is the place of
reward and punishment.

¹⁴⁶ This line was revealed to the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) when he was composing these couplets. [Translator]

He granted me this reward because of righteousness
 Glory be to Him, Who put my enemies to shame.

What a wonderful gem is *Taqwā*!¹⁴⁷
 Blessed is he who practices *Taqwā*.

Listen! The essence of Islām is *Taqwā*!
 Love of God is the wine and *Taqwā* is the goblet.

Muslims! Live *Taqwā* in full;
 Where is faith, if one is deficient in *Taqwā*?

This wealth, O God, You have granted me;
 Glory be to Him, Who put my enemies to shame.

[Durr-e-Thamīn Urdū]

They alone are alive who are close to God;
 Being accepted, they are the darling and beloved of
 God.

Those who are far from *Taqwā* are far from God;
 They are perpetual prisoners of their pride, haughtiness
 and arrogance.

Friends! *Taqwā* means that you give up self-conceit;
 Give up the habit of pride, arrogance and miserliness.

Renounce the love of this transient abode;
 For that Beloved, give up the ways of luxury.

This way is the cursed way, give it up;
 Or forget about (attaining closeness to) the Exalted
 God.

Accept the life of hardship with utmost sincerity;
 So that angels of heaven may descend upon you.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Part. V, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 21, pp. 17-18]

¹⁴⁷ *Taqwā*: Fear of God or righteousness. [Publisher]

12

ARROGANCE

I tell you truly that on the Day of Judgement, next after association of anything with God, no vice shall rank as high as arrogance. This is a vice that humiliates a person in both worlds. Divine mercy rescues every believer in Divine Unity, except an arrogant one. Satan also claimed that he believed in the Unity of God but, as he was afflicted with arrogance and looked contemptuously upon Adam whom God loved and found fault with him. He was ruined and became accursed. Thus the first sin whereby one was ruined forever was arrogance.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, p. 598]

What is Arrogance?

I admonish my **Community** to shun arrogance as **arrogance** is hateful in the eyes of **God, the Lord of Glory**. You may not perhaps fully realize what is arrogance. Then listen to me as I speak under the direction of God.

Everyone who looks down upon a brother because he esteems himself **more learned**, or wiser, or more proficient than him is **arrogant**, inasmuch as he does not esteem God as the Fountainhead of all intelligence and knowledge and deems himself as something. Has God not the power to afflict him with lunacy and to bestow upon his brother, whom he accounts small, better intelligence and knowledge and higher proficiency than him? So **also he** who, out of a mistaken conception of his wealth, or status, or dignity, looks down upon his

brother, **is arrogant** because he forgets that his wealth, status and dignity were bestowed upon him by God. He is blind and does not realize that God has power to so afflict him that in a moment he might be reduced to the condition of the lowest of the low, and to bestow upon his brother whom he esteems low greater wealth than him. In the same way, he who takes pride in his physical health, or is conceited of his beauty, good looks, strength, or might and bestows a **scornful designation** on his brother making fun of him and proclaims his physical defects **is arrogant**, for he is unaware of God Who has power to afflict him with such physical defects as to render him worse than his brother and to bless the latter so that his faculties should not suffer decline or be stultified over a long period, for He has power to do all that He wills. Similarly, he who is neglectful of Prayer on account of his dependence upon his faculties **is arrogant** for he has not recognized the Fountainhead of all power and strength and relies upon himself. Therefore, dear ones! keep all these admonitions in mind lest you should be accounted arrogant in the estimation of God Almighty unknowingly.

He who out of pride corrects the pronunciation of a word by his brother partakes of arrogance. He who does not listen courteously to his brother and turns away from him **partakes of arrogance**. He who resents a brother sitting next to him partakes of arrogance. He who mocks and laughs at one who is occupied in Prayer partakes of arrogance. He who does not seek to render full obedience to a **Commissioned one and Messenger of God** partakes of arrogance. He who **does not pay full attention** to the directions of such a one and does not study his writings with care also partakes of arrogance. Try, therefore, that

you should not partake of arrogance in any respect so that you may escape ruin and you and yours may attain salvation. Lean towards God and love Him to the utmost degree possible and fear Him as much as anyone can be feared in this life. Be pure hearted and pure intentioned and meek and humble and free of all mischief so that you may **receive mercy**.

[Nuzūl-ul-Masīḥ, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 18, pp. 402-403]

Do not Idolize Me

It is not my way that I should look so fierce and awe-inspiring that people should fear me as they fear a wild beast. I hate to be idolized. I have come to abolish idol worship and not to become an idol myself so that people should worship me. God Almighty knows well that I do not prefer myself to others in the slightest degree. In my estimation there is no greater idol worshipper nor anyone more wicked than an arrogant one. Such a one worships no God, he only worships himself.

[Malfūzāt, vol. II, pp. 6-7]

Remember that arrogance is allied to falsehood. The worst falsehood is that which accompanies arrogance. That is why God, the Glorious, smashes the head of an arrogant one before all others.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 5, p. 599]

Forms of Arrogance and Means of Purification

It is easy for a person to discard the principal vices, but **some vices are so subtle and hidden** that one is not normally conscious of them, and even when one becomes conscious of them it is difficult to discard them. For instance, typhoid which is a severe illness and a high fever can be treated immediately with appropriate remedies,

but tuberculosis which works its mischief out of sight is very difficult of treatment. Such are these subtle and hidden vices which keep a person from achieving exalted ranks. They are moral vices which cause disruption in social life. Slight differences generate rancour, hatred, jealousy, hypocrisy and arrogance and a brother begins to look down upon a brother. If a person observes *Ṣalāt* properly for a few days and people praise him, he falls a victim to showing off, pride and self-esteem and loses that sincerity which is the true purpose of worship. If Allāh, the Glorious, bestows wealth, knowledge, high family status or honour on a person he begins to look down upon a brother who does not enjoy those advantages. If through obstinacy or enmity a person's relations with a brother are embittered he devotes himself day and night to finding fault with his brother or carries tales against him to someone in authority so that by winning the favour of the latter he might replace his brother in some office held by him, while he himself suffers from all those faults. Such are the subtle vices which are difficult to discard. Arrogance is one of them and is manifested in diverse forms. The divines suffer from it in respect of their knowledge. They are occupied all the time in finding fault with each other at the intellectual level so as to humiliate each other and to bring each other into contempt. It is very difficult to get rid of such subtle vices, but they are not tolerable under Divine law. It is not only the common people who are afflicted with them but also those who shun well known vices and are esteemed as divines and scholars and people of high degree. Deliverance from these subtle vices is like undergoing a sort of death. Until a person is delivered from the darkness of such vices he cannot achieve

complete purity of soul and cannot become worthy of those bounties and excellence that are bestowed by God Almighty on purification of the soul. Some people deem themselves as having been delivered from such moral vices, but when they are confronted with another person they are greatly roused and are not able to suppress their high notion of self-esteem and their arrogance and exhibit such a low quality of morals of which they themselves had no conception. It is at such times that it is known that they have found no deliverance from such vices and have not yet achieved any good, and that they are still far short of that purification of the soul, which is a characteristic of the righteous and is a sign of true excellence. This shows that **moral purification** is very **difficult** and cannot be achieved without the grace of Allāh, the Glorious. Such grace is also attained through the three means that have just been mentioned, namely, first, **striving and planning**; secondly, **Prayer and supplication**; and thirdly, **keeping company with the righteous**.

[Speeches, pp. 17-18]

Arrogance is an affliction that constantly affects man. Keep in mind that arrogance comes from Satan and converts an arrogant one into Satan. Until a person turns wholly away from the path of arrogance he is not enabled to accept the truth and does not become worthy of receiving Divine grace, inasmuch as arrogance bars his way. So shun every type of arrogance, whether generated by learning, wealth, status, caste, family or noble descent. These are the factors that give birth to arrogance. Until a person purifies himself of all such pride he cannot win Divine approval and become a chosen one of God. He is not bestowed such comprehension of the Divine as totally consumes the passions of self. Such pride is the

characteristic of Satan and is displeasing to God. Satan manifested such pride, conceived that he was better than Adam and claimed:

أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ¹⁴⁸

The result was that he was rejected and expelled from the presence of God.

[Speeches, p. 19]

Arrogance and mischief are evil. A slight mistake might destroy all the good achieved over a period of seventy long years. It is written of a holy man who dwelt in a mountain where no rain had fallen over a long period, that one day when rain fell over stones and rocks also, he felt that rain was needed by fields and gardens and that much of it which had fallen on stones and rocks had been wasted. It would have been of much greater benefit if it had fallen over cultivated fields. Thereupon God Almighty deprived him of all holiness. He became very sorrowful and sought help from another holy person and was told in the end that he had offended God because of his criticism.

[Malfūzāt, vol. VI, p. 57]

Arrogance is of many types. It sometimes emerges through the eye when a person looks contemptuously upon another deeming himself his superior. Sometimes it emerges through the tongue, or through the head, or through hands and feet. In short, there are many sources of arrogance and a believer should avoid all of them. He should take care that no one of his limbs should smell of arrogance or manifest it in any way.

¹⁴⁸ 'I am better than he. Thou hast created me of fire and him hast Thou created of clay.'—Şād, 38:77 [Publisher] .

The *Ṣūfis* have said that there are many types of low qualities inside a person, like evil spirits, and they continue to be expelled till the last of them is left which is arrogance. It can be expelled only by Divine grace, which is won through sincere striving and supplications.

Many persons deem themselves humble but suffer from some type of arrogance. Therefore, one must seek to avoid even the subtlest types of arrogance, which are generated sometimes by wealth, when a wealthy one deems others misers who cannot be his equals; sometimes arrogance is generated by family and caste, when a person deems himself of high caste and looks down upon others as of low caste....

Sometimes arrogance is generated by learning. A person makes a mistake in speaking and an arrogant one immediately seizes upon his mistake and shouts that he cannot utter a single word right. In short, there are diverse types of arrogance and all of them deprive a person of virtue and stand in the way of his beneficence towards his fellow beings. All of them must be shunned. But this calls for a type of death. So long as a person does not accept such a death Divine blessing does not descend upon him nor does God become responsible for him.

[*Malfūzāt*, vol. VI, pp. 401-403]

What is Islām? To die for the sake of God;
And forsake all desires of self for His pleasure.

Those who accepted death are the ones who are destined to live forever;
Life is not attained in this path except through the humble acceptance of death.

Brazenness and arrogance are the characteristics of Satan the accursed;

The true progeny of Adam are the humble.

O worm of this earth! Give up arrogance and pride;
For pride becomes the Glorious Lord alone.

Consider yourselves as worse than all;
Maybe this will help you enter the court of the Lord
God.

Give up pride and arrogance, because therein alone lies
righteousness;
Be humble as dust: therein lies the pleasure of the Lord.

The root of righteousness is humility for the sake of
God;
Virtue, which is the condition of faith, lies entirely in
Taqwā (righteousness).

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Part V, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 21, p. 18]

13

THINKING ILL OF OTHERS

The habit of suspiciousness and thinking ill of others is an affliction which makes a person blind and plunges him into the dark pit of ruin. It is this unfortunate trait which brought about the worship of a dead human being. It is the same trait which alienates people from the Divine attributes of creation, mercy, providence, etc., reducing God to a useless entity—God forbid. It would be no exaggeration to state that it is in consequence of this habit that the greater part, indeed the whole, of hell will be filled. Those who think ill of the Commissioned ones of God Almighty scorn His bounties and His grace.

[Malfūzāt, vol. 1, p. 100]

The habit of thinking ill is a great curse which consumes faith as quickly as blazing fire consumes tinder. God becomes the enemy of him who thinks ill of God's Messengers and He stands up to fight him. He entertains such jealousy on behalf of His chosen ones, as has no equal. When I was attacked in diverse ways, the same jealousy of God was roused on my behalf.

[Al-Waṣīyyat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 20, p. 317, footnote]

I tell you truly that the habit of thinking ill of others is a great affliction, which destroys a person's faith, flings him away from truth and rectitude, and turns friends into enemies. **In order to acquire the excellences of the truthful it is necessary that a person should altogether shun the habit of thinking ill of others, and should he happen to fall into that**

attitude concerning someone else he should seek forgiveness repeatedly and should supplicate God Almighty that he may be safeguarded against such sinfulness and the consequences that flow from it. This habit should not be underrated. **It is a dangerous disease** which destroys a person very quickly.

In short, **thinking ill of another ruins a person**. It is written that when those who are condemned to hell are brought face to face with it God Almighty would say to them: You had become guilty of thinking ill of God.

[Malfūzāt, vol. I, p. 372]

The mischief starts when a person indulges in false suspicions and doubts. If a person thinks well in every situation, he is bestowed the capacity to achieve good. A mistake at the very start makes it difficult to reach the goal. Thinking ill of another is a great vice which deprives a person of many opportunities of doing good and which goes on mounting till a person begins to think ill of God Almighty.

[Malfūzāt, vol. II, p. 107]

(Urdū Couplets)

Those who cultivate the habit of suspiciousness;
Deviate too far away from the path of righteousness.

Their tongue attacks recklessly;
In an instant, it earns the displeasure of the All-
Knowing Lord.

By uttering one word, they nullify all their good deeds;
Thereafter they continue to sow the seeds of mischief.

These countrymen of ours have fallen in such deep
sleep;
That they do not wake up though we tried to wake them
hundreds of times.

All their limbs have become atrophied, rendering them
so negligent;

All their power is concentrated in their sharp tongue.

Either they indulge in foul talk, or they think ill of others;

As for the rest, they are totally unaware of the plight of Islām.

Try not to think ill of a person even though you find
him wicked;

Be fearful of the wrath of the Lord of the world.

Perhaps your own eyes might make a mistake;

Perhaps he is not bad who looks bad to you.

Maybe it is the fault of your understanding;

Maybe it is a trial from the Forgiving Lord.

As a result you courted spiritual death on account of
your suspiciousness;

And incurred the wrath of the Holy God.

If you become so shameless in your audacity;

Don't you think the word *Ittiqā* would become meaningless?

Moses too suffered embarrassment because he doubted;

Read in the Holy Qur'ān¹⁴⁹ what Khidr did.

Between God and His servants, there are hundreds of
thousands of secrets;

Of which you know nothing, nor is their reality evident
to you.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Part V, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 21, pp. 18-19]

¹⁴⁹ The reference is to Al-Kahf, 18:66-83. [Translator]

14

PUNISHMENT IN THIS WORLD

It is the eternal way of God that until a disbeliever or a denier of truth becomes so bold and daring as to create the causes of his ruin with his own hands God Almighty does not destroy him by way of punishment. When the time of punishment approaches, He generates causes on account of which the decree of his destruction is recorded. This alone is the eternal law of the punishment from God and this is the way of God and unchangeable law laid down in the Book of God.

[Anwār-ul-Islām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in , vol. 9, p. 3]

The Holy Qur'ān and other Divine scriptures disclose that the ruin and destruction imposed in this life on people as punishment are not afflicted because those people follow a wrong doctrine, for instance, because they worship idols, or planets, or fire, or some other created things or person; inasmuch as accounting for religious errors is postponed till the Judgement Day and no one is punished in this life merely on account of doctrinal errors or disbelief. The punishment for such defaults is postponed till the **hereafter**. Indeed this world is a paradise for the disbelievers and it is mostly the **believers** who suffer pain and torment in this world.

الدُّنْيَا جَنَّةُ الْكَافِرِ وَسُجْنُ الْمُؤْمِنِ¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ This world is the paradise of the disbeliever and the prison of the believer. [Publisher]

Therefore, it is naturally asked that if this world is the paradise of the disbelievers, and indeed observation testifies that the disbelievers are richly endowed with wealth and the bounties of this world, and the Holy Qur'ān repeatedly announces that the disbelievers are endowed with every worldly bounty, then how is it that some disbelieving people were afflicted with torment in this world and God Almighty destroyed them with stones and storms and plagues?

Why some Disbelievers are Punished in this World

The answer is that these torments were not inflicted merely on account of disbelief, but because those people who were so afflicted and ruined had transgressed grievously in their denial of Divine Messengers and their mockery, jesting and persecution; and in the estimation of God Almighty, their mischief, wickedness, cruelty and persecution had reached extreme limits and thus they themselves created the causes of their ruin. Thereupon God's wrath was roused and they were destroyed through diverse types of chastisement. This shows that disbelief is not the cause of punishment in this world; its cause is extreme wickedness and arrogance. Such a one, even if he is a believer, when he transgresses the limits in wrongdoing, persecution and arrogance, and forgets altogether the **Majesty of God**, would draw upon himself Divine chastisement. On the other hand when a disbeliever is meek and is fearful, he would not be chastised in this world though he would be condemned to hell on account of his misguidance. This is the ancient and confirmed philosophy behind chastisement in this world and this is the way of Allāh to which all Divine books bear testimony. As the Glorious God says in the Holy

Qur'ān:

وَرَادًا آتَدْنَا أَنْ تُهْلِكَ قَرْيَةً أَمَرْنَا مُتْرَفِيهَا فَفَسَقُوا فِيهَا
فَحَقَّقْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلَ فَدَمَّرْنَا تدميراً¹⁵¹

When We decide to destroy the people of a township We warn those of its dwellers who indulge in luxurious living because they transgress the limits in wickedness. Thereupon, the Divine law in respect of them is fulfilled in that their wrongdoing arrives at its climax. Then We destroy them with a severe destruction. In another verse it is said:

وَمَا كُنَّا مُهْلِكِي الْقُرَىٰ إِلَّا وَأَهْلُهَا ظَالِمُونَ¹⁵²

We have never destroyed a habitation except when its people are determined upon wrongdoing.

It should be kept in mind that though association of anything with God is also not only a wrong but an enormity, yet in this context by wrongdoing is meant such **disobedience and misconduct** as transgress the limit. For mere association of others with God which is not accompanied by persecution, arrogance, disorder, attacks upon the preachers of other religions, plans for their killing, and such extreme sinfulness whereby the fear of God is totally excluded from the hearts, the punishment is promised in the hereafter. Chastisement in this life is inflicted only at the time of extreme transgression, as it is said in another verse:

وَلَقَدْ اسْتَهْزَأُ بِرُسُلِي مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فَاَمَلَيْتُ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

¹⁵¹ Banī Isrā'īl, 17:17 [Publisher]

¹⁵² Al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:60 [Publisher]

ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ¹⁵³

Messengers before thee were also subjected to ridicule, but We gave respite to the disbelievers who mocked, and when they reached the limits in their mockery, We seized them and people witnessed how Our chastisement overtook them.

Again it is said:

وَمَكْرُؤًا مَكَرًا وَ مَكْرَنَا مَكَرًا وَ هُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ¹⁵⁴

The disbelievers devised a plan for wiping out Islām, and We also devised a plan. That is to say, We let them go forward with their plans till they reached a stage of wrongdoing which, according to the way of Allāh, attracts His chastisement....

All these verses show that Divine chastisement is inflicted in this world only when a person transgresses the extreme limits in mischief, wrongdoing, arrogance, haughtiness and exaggeration. It does not happen that a disbeliever is inflicted with the lightning of Divine chastisement who is fearful in the extreme, or that a polytheist may be stoned who is terrified to death on account of his fear. God Almighty is Merciful and Compassionate to the highest degree. He seizes with punishment in this world only those who provide with their own hands the cause for such punishment.

[Anwār-ul-Islām, Rūhānī Khazā'in , vol. 9, pp. 14-16, footnote I]

How Wrongdoers are Punished

God Almighty deals with offenders in two ways, and offenders are of two types.

¹⁵³ Al-Ra' d, 13:33 [Publisher]

¹⁵⁴ Al-Naml, 27:51 [Publisher]

First, there are those offenders who do not transgress the limits, and though out of extreme bigotry they persist in their effort yet they do not carry their persecution to the extreme limit. These will be punished in the hereafter. God, the All-Knowing, does not seize them in this world inasmuch as their attitude is not one of severe hostility. For the punishment of sins the appointed day is the Day of Judgement.

Secondly, there are those offenders who transgress the limits in their wrongdoing and persecution and desire to rend the Messenger of God and the righteous like wild beasts and to wipe them out altogether, and to consume them like a blazing fire. With regard to such offenders who carry their wrath to the limit, the way of Allāh is that His wrath is roused against them and they are punished in this world in addition to their chastisement in the hereafter. In the idiom of the Qur'ān they are designated the *maghḍūbi-‘alaihim*¹⁵⁵.

[Toḥfah Golarviah, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 17, pp. 213-214]

It should be kept in mind that for being delivered from afflictions it is not necessary that people should become Muslims, inasmuch as the Day of Judgement is appointed for calling people to account for their religious errors. It is, however, necessary that people should refrain from every type of misconduct and should not revile the holy Prophets of God, nor oppress the poor, and should spend freely in charity and should ascribe no equal to God, neither stone, nor fire, nor man, nor water, nor sun, nor moon and should discard the ways of arrogance and mischief.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, p. 404]

¹⁵⁵ 'Those who have incurred displeasure.' [Publisher]

Muslims should remember that though according to God's knowledge a person's end is to be in disbelief, yet it has ever been the way of God that in consequence of such a one's humble and fearful supplications his punishment is postponed. That is why the *Ahl-e-Sunnah* hold that a Divine warning of punishment is subject to change, but a Divine promise of blessing is not so subject, as, for instance, the punishment of the people of Jonas though fixed for a definite date was remitted in consequence of their humble submission. The Bible and the Holy Qur'ān are agreed that on Pharaoh's promise that he would believe, his chastisement was repeatedly postponed, though God Almighty knew that he would die a disbeliever. What is the secret behind the fact that God's design of chastisement varied in certain cases, though such variation seems inconsistent with God's warning?

The answer is that chastisement is not an integral part of Divine Will. His four basic attributes are all expressive of His bounty and beneficence. These are the four names mentioned in the first three verses of *Sūrah Fātiḥah*, namely, *Rabb-ul-'Ālamīn*, *Raḥmān*, *Raḥīm*, and *Mālik-i-Yaum-id-Dīn*, that is, Master of the Day of Judgement.

All of these four attributes show the will of Allāh to grant nothing but favours to mankind. That is to say, to create and nourish which is called *Rubūbiyyat*, to provide out of His pure mercy without any action on man's part which is *Raḥmāniyyat*; to provide security for man against suffering and affliction in return for righteousness, fear of God and faith in Him which is *Raḥīmiyyat*; and to bestow upon His servants the abode of eternal bliss and tranquillity and happiness in consequence of righteous action like worship, fasting, *Ṣalāt*, sympathy for fellow beings, alms-giving and sacrifice, etc., which is known as

reward by the Master of the Day of Judgement. No one of these four attributes comprises a design which would harm man; they are all designed for his good. But in the case of a person who, through his misconduct and extravagant behaviour, puts himself outside the operation of these attributes, they begin to operate to his harm. For instance, *Rubūbiyyat* takes on the aspect of destruction and annihilation, and *Rahmāniyyat* is manifested in the shape of wrath and anger, and *Rahīmiyyat* is manifested in the shape of revenge and harshness, and the design of good recompense takes on the terrifying aspect of punishment and torment.

This change in the expressions of Divine attributes is brought about in consequence of a change in man's own condition. Thus punishment, and warning of punishment, are not comprised in the basic attributes of God, inasmuch as God's warning of punishment is not absolute so long as the person warned is alive and has the capacity to carry out a change in himself. Therefore, a change in respect of the promised chastisement is not a breach of promise. Every warning of chastisement is conditional though no condition may be expressly mentioned, except when the warning is expressed in absolute terms in which case it becomes an absolute decree and is not subject to change. This is a grand and valued principle relating to the comprehension of Divine attributes which is inherent in the *Sūrah Fātiḥah*.

[Anjām-e-Ātham, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 11, pp. 7-10 footnote]

Punishment Follows upon Misconduct

It is worthy of note that the Meccans had not merely rejected the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). Simple rejection based on naivety does not entail punishment in this life. But when a disbeliever

transgresses beyond the limits of humanity and good behaviour and has recourse to shamelessness and abuse and designs every kind of persecution and carries it to the limit, the jealousy of God Almighty is roused and He destroys the wrongdoer out of regard for His Messenger as He destroyed the people of Noah, and the people of Lot. Such chastisement is inflicted only on account of the persecution and cruelties to which God's Messengers and their followers are subjected. Mere rejection is not punished in this life. God has reserved another world for such punishment. Chastisement in this life follows upon such rejection as is accompanied with mockery, jesting and persecution.

If a person confines himself to the position that he is unable to accept as he has not yet fully understood the matter, such denial does not attract punishment because it results from simplicity and lack of understanding. I affirm truly that if the objection of the people of Noah had been presented in a decent manner God Almighty would not have seized them. People are punished on account of their misbehaviour. God Almighty has directed that those of the enemy who should come to listen to the Holy Qur'ān should be thereafter conveyed to their place of security. There is no compulsion or coercion in Islām, as it is said:

لَا كَرْهَ فِي الدِّينِ¹⁵⁶

But if anyone resorts to killing or conspiring to kill, or embarks upon mischief and persecution, he is bound to be chastised.

[Malfūzāt, vol. III, pp. 162-163]

¹⁵⁶ 'There should be no compulsion in religion.'—Al-Baqarah, 2:257
[Publisher]

Imposture is Punished in this World

The Holy Qur'ān repeatedly proclaims that God Almighty **does not spare one who fabricates a lie against Allāh**. He punishes such a one in this very life and destroys him; Allāh the Exalted refers to it in the verse:

قَدْ خَابَ مَن افْتَرَى ¹⁵⁷

That is, he who fabricates a lie shall perish.

At another place it is said:

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ ¹⁵⁸

Who is guilty of greater wrong than one who fabricates a lie against God or gives the lie to His signs?

It is thus clear that those who gave the lie to the word of God on the occasion of the advent of God's Prophets were not spared by God and were destroyed by diverse types of torments. Observe what was the end of the people of Noah and of 'Ād and Thamūd and the people of Lot and of Pharaoh and the Meccan enemies of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him).

Thus when those who rejected the truth were chastised in this world, how can he escape who fabricates a lie against Allāh and who is mentioned in the first place in the verse just cited. Would God treat the righteous and the false alike and is there no punishment in this life from God Almighty for impostors?

مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Tā Hā, 20: 62 [Publisher]

¹⁵⁸ Al-An'ām, 6:22 [Publisher]

¹⁵⁹ 'What is the matter with you? How judge ye!'—Al-Qalam, 68:37 [Publisher]

At another place God Almighty has said:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ¹⁶⁰
 وَإِنْ يَكْفُرْ بِكَ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَخَفُونَ خِيفَةَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ الَّذِي يَبْعَثُ
 مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ وَلَئِنْ يَكْفُرْ بِكَ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَخَفُونَ خِيفَةَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ الَّذِي يَبْعَثُ

If this Prophet is an impostor, he will perish because of his imposture, but if he is truthful, then it is a must that you too will taste some punishment, because the transgressors, whether they are guilty of imposture or rejection, shall receive no help from Allāh.

What could be more explicit than the fact that in the Holy Qur'ān God Almighty warns again and again that an impostor is bound to perish in this very world.

[Arba'in, No. 4, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 17, pp. 433-434]

Our opposing *Maulavīs* are well aware that God Almighty has expressed in the Holy Qur'ān His disgust of one who fabricates lies against God, so much so that He has said concerning the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) that if he had fabricated any lies against Him, He would have severed his large artery¹⁶¹.

In short, to claim as an impostor that a person is the recipient of revelation is so heinous a sin that it incurs not only the penalty of hell but according to the conclusive verdict of the Holy Qur'ān it is punished speedily in this life also. The Mighty and Jealous God never leaves an impostor in peace. His jealousy soon crushes him and destroys him.

If the hearts of these *Maulavīs* had the slightest shade of righteousness and were they aware in the least of the ways and practice of God Almighty, they would have

¹⁶⁰ Al-Mu'min, 40:29 [Publisher]

¹⁶¹ The reference is to Al-Ḥāqqah, 69:45-47. [Translator]

known that ever since the beginning of the world there has been no single instance in which an impostor had continued with his imposture for such a long period and had added to it daily but instead of being punished, greater and greater honour among people was bestowed upon him by God Almighty, with increasing acceptance by the people, and with his tongue serving as a fountain of verities and comprehensions. It is a pity that these hypocritical *Maulavīs* do not honour the commandments and warnings of God Almighty. Can they cite a single instance from the Holy Qur'ān or from the *Aḥādīth* of an ill-natured impostor who goes on fabricating lies against God and puts himself forward as one greatly loved by God; who presents his satanic compositions deliberately as Divine revelation and proclaims that it is the Divine command that people should follow him; who falsely claims that God has revealed to him that he is the chief of the believers in this age and who falsely claims that God has told him that He has appointed him the Promised Messiah who is sent to break the cross; who claims that God has told him that his standing with God is like the Unity of God and that the people are unaware of his close relationship with Him; while all the time God knows that he is an impostor and curses him and counts him among the rejected and the humiliated? Is it then the way of God Almighty to grant a respite extending over more than twenty years to such a lying and daring impostor?

Who can reconcile himself to the fact that the Holy One, the flame of Whose wrath has always consumed impostors like lightning, should grant respite to a false one over a period of which there has been no other instance in the whole world? God, the Glorious, has said:

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا¹⁶²

Who is guilty of greater wrong than one who fabricates lies against God? Without doubt, an impostor is under the curse of God and is soon destroyed.

It is enough proof for a righteous person that God has not destroyed me like an impostor and has bestowed numberless bounties on my body and my soul. **I was young when I claimed that I was a recipient of Divine revelation and now I am old** and more than twenty years have passed since I put forward my claim. Many of my friends and dear ones who were younger than me have died, but He has bestowed a long life on me and has been my Helper in every difficult situation. Are these the insignia of those who fabricate lies against God?

[Anjām-e-Ātham, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 11, pp. 49-51]

False Prophets are not Granted Respite

It is a Divine law that God does not grant respite to a false prophet. Such a one is soon seized and suffers his punishment. In view of this we shall honour and accept as true all those who claimed to be prophets at any time, whose claim was established and whose religion became widespread and was established and flourished over a long period. If we should discover mistakes in the scriptures of their religions or should observe the misconduct of their followers we should not attribute these defaults and shortcomings to the founders of those religions, inasmuch as the perversion of scriptures is possible and it is possible that mistakes of interpretation might find their way into the commentaries, but it is not

¹⁶² Al-An'ām, 6:22 [Publisher]

at all possible that a person should fabricate lies against God and should claim to be a prophet and should put forward his own compositions as the word of God falsely and yet God should grant him respite like the righteous and should bestow upon him wide acceptance by people.

[Toḥfah Qaiṣariyyah, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 12, p. 258]

Has an impostor ever been granted respite for the propagation of his lies as God Almighty grants to the true recipients of His revelation? Has God not affirmed that false claimants of revelation and impostors would be seized? The Torah affirms that a false prophet shall be slain and the Gospel sets out that an impostor would soon perish and his followers would be scattered. Is there a single instance that a false claimant of revelation should have been granted respite over a period which has been granted to me since the publication of my claim of being the recipient of Divine revelation? If there is any such instance then let it be put forward. I **claim** emphatically that there has been no single instance of it since the beginning of the world. **Is there anyone** who should fear God Almighty and derive benefit from this firm and conclusive reasoning? I do not claim that an idol worshipper or an atheist or a claimant of Godhood is not granted long life, because these errors and such misguidance would be punished in the hereafter. But I do affirm that he who falsely poses as the recipient of Divine revelation is soon seized and his life is cut short. The Torah, the Gospel and the Holy Qur'ān bear witness to this and so does reason. An opponent cannot set forth a single instance to the contrary from history.

[Ayyām-uṣ-Ṣulḥ, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 14, pp. 267-268]

15

THE SOUL

The Āryās believe that *Permeshwar* has created no soul and that all souls are eternal and uncreated. They also hold that man cannot attain eternal salvation, that after having been accommodated in the house of salvation for a period he is expelled therefrom and is returned once more to the earth. Both these doctrines are open to objection. The first one negatives the Unity of God Almighty, and indeed His very Godhood altogether. The second doctrine bears with undue harshness upon a faithful servant of God.

To explain it in detail, if all souls and all the particles of matter are deemed to be eternal and uncreated such a notion would generate many evils. For instance, in such a case no argument whatsoever can be advanced to establish the existence of God. If all souls and all particles are self-existing there would be no need for a creator merely for the purpose of bringing them together. An atheist can object that if everything is self-existing and uncreated what need is there for a *Permeshwar* for the mere purpose of putting them together.

Another evil that would be generated by such a doctrine would be that it would deprive God of His very Godhood. Those who have knowledge of psychology and of the properties of the souls well understand that the wonderful properties with which the souls are invested are not created merely by bringing them together with the

particles of matter. For instance, the souls possess a faculty whereby they can, through proper striving, gain knowledge of hidden things; so also they possess a faculty of reasoning by the exercise of which they can gain knowledge of intellectual matters; and they also possess the faculty of love by virtue of which they incline towards God. If all these faculties were to be deemed to exist without any creator this would be a grave affront to *Permeshwar*, as it would mean that the great and the high is self-existing and that the lowly and the inferior was left to be created by *Permeshwar*. It would have to be acknowledged that the self-existing wonderful faculties and qualities of the soul are far superior to the works of *Permeshwar*, so much so that *Permeshwar* himself is astonished at them. Thus this doctrine would seriously damage the Godhood of the god of the Āryās so that His existence would make no difference, and no argument would be available for upholding his existence. Moreover, He would cease to be the source of all grace. His function would only be a lowly one, and with regard to all the high wonderful performances of the souls it would have to be acknowledged that they are self-existent.

Every sensible person would realize that if such is the reality, then even if the existence of *Permeshwar* is acknowledged, he would be a weak and useless entity, the existence or non-existence of which would be equal, so much so that even if he were supposed to die it would not detract anything from the souls. Nor would any soul be bound to worship him as every soul can retort: ‘As you have not created me, nor is it you who have invested me with my faculties and powers and capacities, then by what right can you demand that I should worship you?’

Besides, as *Permeshwar* is not the creator of souls he cannot comprehend them and thus there would be a veil between *Permeshwar* and souls, and *Permeshwar* would not have full knowledge and full power over the unseen, and as he would not have full power His Godhood would be upset and he would cease to exist.

The Soul is Created out of Nothing by the Command of Allāh

It is obvious that full and perfect knowledge of something imports the power of fashioning that thing. That is why the philosophers have said that perfect knowledge becomes perfect action. So the question naturally arises, has *Permeshwar* full knowledge of the qualities and properties of souls? If he has full and perfect knowledge of all this, then how is it that despite such knowledge he is not able to create similar souls? This would mean not only that *Permeshwar* has not the power to create souls but also that he does not have full knowledge about them.

[Surmah Chashm Āryā, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 2, pp. 139-141]

The Vedās present God as Imperfect

The Vedās of the Āryās put forward a concept of God which is bound to repel a seeker after truth. The Āryās do not hold their *Permeshwar* as the source of his own kingdom but conceive that he has been given his kingdom by chance or good luck; that is to say, that by good luck he found a number of souls and particles and he compounded a world out of them. It is possible that there may be another store of souls and particles hidden somewhere of which *Permeshwar* has yet no knowledge. Is this a doctrine which is consistent with the Majesty, Power and Greatness of Allāh, the Glorious?

God Almighty is the Perfect Being, Who is the Source of all grace, the Fountainhead of all lights, the Sustainer of all things, Who comprises all excellence, is comprehensive of all good qualities, and is entirely free from all weaknesses, defects, and dependence upon anything else. Reflection would show that by subscribing to the doctrine that souls and bodies are uncreated and self-existent all perfect Divine attributes would be abolished and nothing would survive of Godhood.

A person of average intelligence can comprehend that the Unity of God Almighty means that His Being alone is the reality, and that everything else has proceeded from Him, subsists only through Him, and arrives at its perfection only by His grace. But alas! the theology of the Āryās teaches the contrary. Their books are full of their false claims that they themselves are also eternal and uncreated like *Permeshwar* and have a resemblance to him and are their own gods. They do not reflect that if they are eternal and self-existent and self-created, then resembling god in these respects, how did they agree to submit to him and who intervened to bring about this relationship between them?

Even a boy can comprehend that if souls and bodies are eternal and self-existent, and are their own gods, *Permeshwar* cannot claim that He is their Lord and Creator. If they have not come into existence by the hand of *Permeshwar* how can he be their lord and master? For instance, if a child were to drop full-fledged from the sky, or should be born automatically from the earth, no woman would be entitled to claim it as her child. Her child can only be the one who is born of her womb. Thus he alone belongs to God who is brought into being by Him, and he who does not come into being in that

manner can in no wise be His. No righteous and decent person takes possession of that which is not his, then how did the *Permeshwar* of the Āryās take possession of that to which he had no right? How hateful and inconsistent with truth is the doctrine which deprives the Lord and Master of the universe of His creation and bereaves Him of the true reality of Godhood.

[*Surmah Chashm Āryā, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 2, pp. 144-146]

Allāh can Create out of Nothing

Some Āryā Samājists seek to support the notion of the souls being uncreated and their own gods with the argument that if souls were not existent at one time and came into existence by being created by God Almighty, this would mean creation out of non-existence and creation out of nothing is so incomprehensible a phenomenon that no sensible person can accept it. I would point out that people afflicted with false and defective reason do not believe even in God Almighty Himself, but a person possessing sane reason who believes in God is bound to believe in all His attributes which are the basis of His Godhead. He who believes in the essential attributes of God Almighty, that He is All-Powerful Whose power is subject to no limitation, will not dare to seek to measure His Power with his own defective reason and will not impose any limitation upon the powers of the Infinite God. Moreover, when a wise person perceives that God Almighty is in His Being comprehensive of the greatest wonders and is exalted beyond imagination, Who sees without eyes, hears without ears, speaks without a tongue, and without the help of builders, labourers, carpenters, instruments of architecture, and stores of bricks and stones, etc., can create heaven and earth in one moment by His mere design and order, he

would have no hesitation in believing that such an All-Powerful God can create out of nothing. That is Godhood and that is why He is called Almighty, All-Powerful and Master of unlimited capacities.

If His works were to be dependent, like the works of man, upon means, resources, and time, then what would be His Godhood and how would it operate? Are not all His works beyond the reach of reason? Are not His wonders such that human reason falls short of them? Then what kind of stupidity is it to take exception to that which is the basis and reality of His Godhood.

What kind of *Permeshwar* would he be who should command that which he designs: ‘Be’, and nothing should happen. God is the name of that Possessor of wonderful powers Whose design accomplishes everything. When He commands that which He designs: ‘Be’, it comes into being at once by virtue of His perfect Power. It is a most subtle mystery that the **entire creation are the words of God**. When the Christians out of their stupidity began to affirm that Jesus was a word of God, that is to say his soul was a Divine word which had taken the shape of his soul, God Almighty affirmed the truth that there is no soul that is not the word of God and has not come into being by the mere command of God. This is indicated by:

¹⁶³ قُلِ الرُّؤُوسُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي

That the word of God became manifest in the shape of souls and other creation is a subtle Divine mystery which no human reason can penetrate. It has been revealed by

¹⁶³ ‘Say: The soul is by the command of my Lord.’—Banī Isrā’īl, 17:86 [Publisher]

the Divine Light of God's Holy Word. If it is not believed that God Almighty manifests souls and bodies by His word and command it would have to be acknowledged that unless souls and bodies become available from outside, *Permeshwar* can do nothing. But can *Permeshwar* be such a bankrupt and empty handed being, the whole of whose godhood is dependent upon a chance occurrence? If such is *Permeshwar* all hope is vain and it would be a source of danger to rely on him.

[Surmah Chashm Āryā, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 2, pp. 163-165]

The Holy Qur'an affirms that souls are not self-existent and uncreated. They are created through a special union between two kinds of seminal seeds, and in the case of the smaller insects through only one type of matter. This is the truth which is confirmed by observation and which brooks no contradiction. It is folly to deny perceptible realities. When we say that the soul comes into being out of nothing it does not mean that before its coming into being it was nothing. It means that there was no pre-existing matter out of which man could extract the soul by his own power, and that Divine power and wisdom alone produce the soul out of some matter. This is why when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) was asked: What is the soul?, he was commanded by God to respond that the soul has been created by the command of my Lord. The verse of the Holy Qur'an pertaining to it is:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي
 وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا¹⁶⁴

That is they enquire of thee what is soul and how is it

¹⁶⁴ Banī Isrā'īl, 17:86 [Publisher]

created? Tell them: The soul is created by the command of my Lord. That is, the creation of the soul is a mystery of creation of which you have little knowledge; meaning that your knowledge is confined only to the birth of the soul; as we observe that insects, etc., come into being under our observation from some matter.

The birth of the human soul takes place under a Divine law whereby when a framework is prepared gradually from the union of two seminal fluids. Then, as by the mixture of certain medicines a certain quality is generated in the compound which the elements thereof did not individually possess, in the same way a special quality is generated in the framework which is compounded of blood and sperm drops and it takes on the colour of a type of phosphorous. When the breeze of the Divine manifestation blows upon it under the command: 'Be', it suddenly flares up and spreads its effect into all parts of the framework. Thereby the embryo comes alive. This very thing which blazes up within the embryo by Divine manifestation is the soul and the same is the word of God. This process is described as the command of God because the faculty of the pregnant mother, which creates all the limbs of the embryo by the command of God and weaves its framework like the net of the spider, has no concern with the soul which is created by a special Divine manifestation. Though the phosphorous out of which the soul takes birth is produced by the framework, the spiritual spark which is called the soul cannot be born without the touch of the heavenly breeze. This is the true knowledge that the Holy Qur'ān has furnished to us. It is beyond the reach of the reason of the philosophers.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 158-160]

The Soul is the Creation of God

The whole basis of **salvation is the personal love of God Almighty**, which is the name of the love generated by God Almighty in the very nature of the human soul. If the soul is not the creation of *Permeshwar* how can it have natural love for him? When and by what means did *Permeshwar* place his love with his own hand in the nature of the soul? But that is not possible, for natural love means the love which is inherent in the nature of the soul and is not added afterwards. This is indicated in the Holy Qur’ān, where it is said:

أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ ¹⁶⁵

I enquired from the human souls, “Am I not your Lord?” and they responded: “Yes, indeed.”

This means that the human soul bears inherent testimony that God is its Creator. Thus the soul naturally loves its Creator as it has been created by Him.

This is also indicated in another verse where Allāh the Exalted says:

فَطَرَتِ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ¹⁶⁶

It is part of human nature for the soul to yearn for the One and Only God Who has no partner and not to content without communion with Him. In other words, God has invested the human soul with the yearning that it can find no comfort or serenity except in its meeting with God.

Thus if the human soul is invested with this desire it must

¹⁶⁵ Al-A‘rāf, 7:173 [Publisher]

¹⁶⁶ Al-Rūm, 30:31 [Publisher]

be acknowledged that the soul is the creation of God Who has invested it with this desire. It is a verity that the human soul is so invested, which proves that it is truly the creation of God.

[Chashma Masiḥī, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 20, pp. 363-364]

The Holy Qur'ān has set forth many conclusive reasons in support of the verity that souls are the creation of God. We set out briefly a few of them by way of illustration.

First: It is obvious that all souls are at all times subordinate to and subject to the command of God Almighty, and there is no other cause for such subordination except that they are the creation of God.

Second: It is also obvious that all souls are limited in their capacities and powers, as is proved by the diversity of the spiritual conditions and capacities of sections of mankind. This limitation must be imposed by a Limitor, which proves that souls are created.

Third: It needs no argument to establish that all souls are, for the purpose of their perfection and survival, dependent upon and in need of a Being Who should be Perfect, All-Powerful, All-Knowing and an Absolute Benefactor. This proves that they are created.

Fourth: A moment's reflection would show that our souls comprise briefly all the wisdom and the creative skill that are demonstrated in the heavenly and the earthly bodies. That is why the universe on account of its diverse elements is known as the macrocosm and man is called a microcosm. Thus when the universe, on account of its wonderful qualities, is accounted the work of a Wise Creator, how would that not be the creation of God which on account of its personal wonders is a reflection of the whole universe and comprises within itself the

wonderful qualities of all the units of the universe and illustrates the consummate wisdom of God Almighty?

That which is a manifestation of all the wonders of Divine attributes cannot be outside God's creation. Indeed it bears the seal of creation more than anything else and is a greater proof of the existence of the Creator. This is not only a theoretical proof of the soul being created but is a bright verity. Moreover, other things have no consciousness of their being created but souls are by their very nature conscious of having been created. Even the soul of a savage cannot reconcile itself to being self-existent. This is indicated by the verse which says that:

اَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ ؕ قَالُوا بَلٰى ¹⁶⁷

That is, I enquired of the souls "Am I not your Creator?" They responded: "Yes, indeed."

This dialogue indicates the natural relationship between the Creator and His creation, the proof of which is inherent in the nature of souls.

Fifth: As a child partakes somewhat of the features and character of his parents, in the same way souls, which have proceeded from the hand of God Almighty, partake somewhat of the character and qualities of their Creator. Though in cases in which the darkness and heedlessness of being created prevails over some souls the Divine colour appears somewhat faded, yet it cannot be denied that every soul possesses that colour to some degree. In some cases that colour appears unattractive on account of misuse, but that is not the fault of the colour, it is the fault of the use to which it is put. None of man's faculties

¹⁶⁷ Al-A'raf, 7:173 [Publisher]

or powers is evil. It is misuse that makes them appear evil. Every faculty employed on its proper occasion is wholly good and beneficent, and in truth all the faculties that are bestowed on man are a reflection of Divine powers. As a son exhibits some features of his father, in the same way our souls reflect the features and qualities of Divinity which are easily recognized by those who possess comprehension. As a son has natural love for his father, we, who are from God, have natural love for Him. If our souls had not a natural relationship with God those who seek Him would have had no means of reaching Him.

[Surmah Chashm Āryā, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 2, pp. 167-169]

In the Holy Qur'ān, God says:

أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ¹⁶⁸

I enquired of the souls “Am I not your Creator?” They responded: “Yes, indeed.”

This means that souls naturally affirm the existence of a Creator, though some people falling in the darkness of heedlessness and being influenced by wrong teachings become atheists or Āryās and deny their Creator contrary to their nature. It is obvious that everyone loves his parents, so much so that some children suffer death in consequence of the death of their mother. Then if souls are not God's creation who has invested them with natural love for God, how is it that when a person achieves full consciousness his heart is drawn to God and his bosom is flooded with the love of God? There must be some relationship between God and souls which

¹⁶⁸ Al-A'raf, 7:173 [Publisher]

makes them fall madly in love with God. They become so devoted to God that they are ready to sacrifice everything for His sake. It is truly a wonderful relationship which is far above one's relationship with father and mother.

If souls are self-existent, as is alleged by the Āryās, then how has this relationship been established and who has invested souls with the faculty of love for and devotion to God? This is worthy of reflection and is the key to true comprehension.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, p. 167]

As God has called man to Himself, He has invested him in advance with faculties suited to worship and love. These faculties that are bestowed by God hear His voice. As God desired that man should develop comprehension of God, He invested the human soul with the faculty of comprehension in advance, for if it had not been so man would have lacked comprehension of God. Whatever the human soul possesses is from God and is a reflection of Divine qualities. No one of those qualities is evil, their misuse makes them evil. Someone may object that man suffers from evil qualities like envy or rancour, etc., which cannot be bestowed by God. The truth is, as we have already stated, that all human qualities are a reflection of Divine qualities, as the human soul is from God, but excess or misuse gives them a repulsive appearance in men. For instance, envy is a repulsive quality whereby a person desires that another may be deprived of a bounty and it might be bestowed upon him, but at bottom envy means only that a man does not desire that another one should be his partner in any excellence that he has acquired. In its essence this is a Divine quality by virtue of which God is One without associate. The misuse of

this quality makes it repulsive; however, it is not evil for a person to wish to outstrip all others in virtue and to desire to achieve spiritual uniqueness.

[Nasīm-e-Da‘wat, Rūhānī Khazā’in, vol. 19, pp. 389-390]

A Soul Bereft of its Qualities is Dead

It may be said that if the soul is created it would follow that it is mortal in the sense that a condition in which something is bereft of its qualities may be described as death. When a medicine loses all its effect it may be described as dead. In certain circumstances the soul is bereft of its qualities and undergoes even greater changes than the body. At such times it can be said that it has died, inasmuch as when anything gives up all its essential qualities it is described as dead. That is why in the Holy Qur’ān only those human souls have been described as being alive after their departure from this life which retain those essential qualities which are the purpose of their creation, that is to say, perfect love of and perfect obedience to God Almighty which is the life of the soul. When a soul departs this life full of the love of God and having devoted itself to Him, it is alive and all other souls are dead. A soul bereaved of its qualities is dead. During sleep both the body and the soul die, that is to say, they are bereft of the qualities that they possess during wakefulness and suffer a sort of death, inasmuch as anything that is bereft of its qualities cannot be described as being alive. **Death does not only mean non-existence; being bereft of essential qualities is also a sort of death.** For instance, when a body dies its material still survives. In the same way the death of the soul means that it has been bereft of its qualities, as happens during sleep, when both the body and the soul

are bereft of the qualities that they possess during waking hours. For instance, the soul of a living person meets a dead person in a dream and does not know that that person had died. It forgets this life altogether as it sinks into sleep, and discarding its garment of life puts on a new garment forgetting all its knowledge and all its memories of the world except that much as God may keep alive. It suspends all its activities and truly arrives before God. All its movements and words and emotions pass under the control of God Almighty. It loses all choice and it cannot be said that anything that it does or says or hears in a dream is by its own choice. It exhibits all the signs of death. During sleep the soul suffers an even greater death than does the body. If people were to reflect upon their condition during sleep they would realize that if the soul had been exempt from death it would have continued to enjoy that exemption in sleep also. Our condition during sleep is a mirror for the purpose of our comprehension of our condition in death. He who seeks true comprehension of the soul should reflect deeply on his condition during sleep. Every mystery of death can be resolved through one's experiences during sleep. If you will reflect deeply on the mysteries of sleep and dreams and will contemplate how the soul suffers a sort of death during sleep when it is bereft of its knowledge and qualities, you will realize that death has a great resemblance to sleep. Thus it is not true that after its separation from the body the soul continues in the condition which it enjoyed in this life. Under God's command it suffers the same kind of death which it had experienced in sleep, only that condition is intenser than its condition in sleep and every one of its qualities is reduced to nothing. That is the death of the soul. Thereaf-

ter those alone are revived who used to work for life.

No soul possesses the capacity to continue alive on its own. Have you the capacity to control your qualities and circumstances and knowledge during sleep as you are capable of doing in your waking hours? As soon as you sink into sleep your soul undergoes a change and suffers a type of non-existence whereby God Almighty has said about the soul in the Holy Qur'an:

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا فَيُمْسِكُ
الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ
لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْتَبِرُونَ¹⁶⁹

(Part Number 24, Sūrah Al-Zumar)

This means that at the time of death the souls pass wholly under the control of God and lose all choice and self-consciousness. That is to say, they are deprived of the qualities of life and become as if they were non-existent. Such of them as do not die in fact, but pass into a condition resembling death in a state of sleep, also pass under the control of God Almighty and undergo a change in which they lose all worldly consciousness and feeling. Thus, both in death and during sleep, God takes possession of the soul in such manner that it loses all choice and consciousness which are the signs of life. Then such souls upon whom death has in fact been imposed are retained by God, so that they cannot return to the world, and He restores to the world those souls upon whom death is not imposed. In this phenomenon there are signs for those who reflect.

This verse shows that the soul undergoes death as well as

¹⁶⁹ Al-Zumar, 39:43 [Publisher]

the body. But the Holy Qur'ān indicates that the souls of the righteous are revived within a short period—some after three days, some after a week, and some after forty days—after death and are bestowed a second life of comfort and ease and delight. That is the life for the achievement of which the righteous servants of God approach Him with the utmost sincerity and put forth all their effort in order to emerge from the darkness of their egos and adopt a hard mode of life in the search of God's pleasure, so much so that this condition resembles death. As the verse cited above indicates, there is a death for the soul as there is for the body, though the hidden circumstances of that state do not become manifest in this dark world. Yet the state of dreams is an illustration of that state which resembles the state of death of the soul in this world. It is our experience that as soon as we sink into sleep all the qualities of our soul are upset and we forget our waking hours and our spiritual qualities, and all the knowledge that our soul possesses becomes non-existent. We experience such scenes in our dreams as show that our soul has lost all the qualities that it possessed in wakefulness and has become something very different. This condition resembles death and is indeed a sort of death. This shows conclusively that the death which is imposed upon the soul with the death of the body resembles the death which the soul experiences in sleep but is very much heavier.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 160-164]

The doctrine which the Qur'ān teaches is that as God has created the soul He also has power to make it non-existent, and that the human soul is bestowed immortality by the bounty and grace of God, and not on account of any inherent quality of its own. That is why those who

develop the utmost love for God and obey Him absolutely and prostrate themselves at His threshold in full sincerity and devotion are specially bestowed a perfect life; their natural senses are sharpened and their natures are invested with a light whereby they experience an extraordinary upsurge of spirituality and all the spiritual powers that they possessed in this world are vastly expanded after death. Moreover, on account of their God-given relationship with Him, they are exalted to heaven which exaltation in the idiom of the law of Islām is designated *rafa'a*. But those who do not believe, and have not a relationship with God, are not bestowed such life nor are they invested with these qualities. They are like the dead. Therefore, had God Almighty not been the Creator of souls He could not have exhibited this distinction between believer and non-believer through His powerful control.

[Chashma Masīhī, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 20, p. 372, footnote]

QUESTION: The Mirzā Ṣāḥib and all Muslims believe, and the Qur'ān affirms, that when Holy Prophet (Muḥammad^{saw}) was asked about the souls he could not tell them anything and received the revelation: "Tell them, the soul is God's command." Thus the Muslims could not have gathered anything from this reply, nor was even their guide enlightened about the soul. What response was furnished by God in the affirmation that the soul is a command of the Lord? Are not all other things also the command of the Lord?

ANSWER: How long shall I continue to correct your mistakes? From whom have you heard that the Muslims believe that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) was not bestowed by God Almighty any knowledge about the soul, and where have you read

in the Holy Qur'ān that he was unaware of anything concerning the soul? I realize that you have, on account of your defective intelligence, been misled in your interpretation of the following verse of the Holy Qur'ān:

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ، قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا¹⁷⁰

(Part Number 15, Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl)

(O Muḥammad) the disbelievers enquire of thee about the soul, as to how and from what it has been created. Tell them: The soul is by the command of my Lord and you O disbelievers have been bestowed but little knowledge about the soul and Divine mysteries.

You have on account of your lack of intelligence fallen into the error of thinking that it was the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) who was told that he had little knowledge about the soul. The context and the use of the plural pronoun make it clear that this admonition was addressed to the disbelievers....

The fact is that a company of the disbelievers enquired from the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) about the soul. This company of disbelievers was told that the soul is by the command of Allāh, that is to say, it is a word of Allāh or a reflection of it which, through the wisdom and power of God, manifests itself as the soul. It does not partake of Godhood but is created and is a servant of God. This is a subtle secret of Divine power of which you disbelievers have only a little perception, on account of which you are invited to have faith and to exercise your understanding....

The statement that the soul is by the command of the

¹⁷⁰ Banī Isrā'īl, 17:86 [Publisher]

Lord comprises a grand verity to which, in your haste, you have taken objection. The explanation of it is that the providence of God brings that which is non-existent into existence in two ways, and that which is brought into existence is designated differently according to the way whereby it is created. When God Almighty creates something out of non-existence such creation is called *Amr* (command) in the idiom of the Qur'ān, and that which is produced out of a previous form of existence is named *Khalq* (creation). In other words, the creation of an element out of non-existence is *Amr* and the production of a compound out of some previous form or shape is *Khalq*, as it is said in the Holy Qur'ān:

﴿أَمْ كَلِمَتُ الْخَلْقِ وَالْأَمْرُ﴾¹⁷¹

That is to say, the creation of elements out of non-existence and the manifestation of compounds both belong to God and elements and compounds are both God's creation.

Observe, therefore, how succinctly the Holy Qur'ān has expounded a high and excellent verity within a brief verse. In contrast, the more you reflect on the doctrine of the Vedās the more you will feel embarrassed.

[Surmah Chashm Āryā, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 2, pp. 171-177]

I tell you truly, without the least exaggeration, that the Holy Qur'ān has expounded the qualities, faculties, powers, capacities and other wonderful particulars of the soul in such a true, clear, fine and excellent manner, and has furnished proofs of these, that it constitutes a high and fine statement, so full of wisdom comprising perfect verities that if all the four Rishīs who compiled the Vedās

¹⁷¹ Al-A'rāf, 7:55 [Publisher]

were to be born again and were to exert their thinking and reflection to the utmost they would not be able to achieve that degree of vastness of knowledge and high insights even if they expired in the effort.

[Surmah Chashm Āryā, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 2, p. 234]

Qualities of the Soul

The Holy Qur'ān has made detailed mention of the many qualities, wonderful powers and capacities of souls of which we set out a few by way of illustration:

1. The faculty of eagerness to acquire knowledge and insight.
2. The faculty of acquiring knowledge.
3. The faculty of safeguarding knowledge that has been acquired.
4. The faculty of the love of God.
5. The faculty of deriving delight from a meeting with the Divine.
6. The faculty of seeing visions.
7. The faculty of influencing and being influenced.
8. The faculty of establishing relationship with bodies.
9. The faculty of acquiring divine qualities.
10. The faculty of receiving revelation.
11. The faculty of expansive and constricted moods.
12. The faculty of acquiring unlimited comprehension.
13. The faculty of taking on the colour of the manifestation of the Divine.
14. The faculty of reason whereby to distinguish between beauty and imperfection.
15. The faculty of receiving impressions and being influenced by them in contrast with the bodies to which

they are related.

16. The faculty of acknowledging the existence of the True Creator.
17. The faculty of manifesting new qualities in combination with bodies and their special shapes.
18. The faculty of mutual attraction which might be designated magnetic power.
19. The faculty of immortality.
20. The faculty of maintaining a special relationship with the particles of the departed body which is manifested to those who have experience of visions.

There are many other faculties of souls which are set out in detail in the Holy Qur'ān in a delightful and excellent manner.

[Surmah Chashm Āryā, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 2, pp. 245-247]

The Doctrine of Transmigration is False

There is no other doctrine as false as the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, inasmuch as its basis is false, its falsehood is established by observation; a sense of human purity condemns it; and it is the duty of every godly person to condemn it on account of its repudiation of Divine power.

Its basis is false as it is stated in the *Satyārath Prakāsh* that the soul falls like dew on some vegetable which is eaten by a woman and thus finds its way to the womb. But this involves that a soul falls in two pieces upon the earth of which, by some chance, the husband eats one and the wife eats the other; because, it is well settled that a child derives spiritual faculties and qualities from both parents and not only from one of them. Therefore, it is necessary that both should have partaken of the vegetable

upon which the soul had fallen and it is not enough that only one should have partaken of it. This necessitates the division of the soul which is false. Therefore, the basis of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls is false.

Observation demonstrates its falseness as there is a large diversity of souls and it is not possible that they should all have been brought into existence like the falling of the dew. For instance, we often observe that lice abound in the hair of some people. With what dew are these souls swallowed? Also, stores of wheat are infested with millions of insects. How do their souls descend like dew, and who swallows them? We also know that some people suffer from worms in their intestines or in their brains, and there are thousands of germs in a drop of water. By what kind of dew are they created? Experience shows that everything is infested with germs. Silk and wood and grain and fruits of different sorts are all liable to be infested with worms and insects. How are they produced?...

Imagine how offensive the doctrine of the transmigration of souls is from the point of view of decency! When a female infant is born, does she bring with her a list of relationships that she is the mother or grandmother or sister of such and such person and that she should avoid marriage with them?

This doctrine also seriously detracts from the omnipotence of the *Permeshwar*. God is All-Powerful and may if He so wills invest a piece of wood with life, as was the case, for instance, with the rod of Moses which was a piece of wood at one moment and became a serpent the next. If, however, souls are self-existent the *Permeshwar* of the Hindūs cannot maintain his status as God, inas-

much as he who exercises his godhood with the help of others would cease to be God sooner than later. The affirmation that the system of transmigration of souls, which has been in operation according to the Āryās for millions of years, results from the sins committed in a previous existence is proved to be crude, absurd and false in the light of natural sciences. It is obvious that there is a Divine system of the birth of souls which remains constant. For instance, millions of insects appear in the rainy season and flies abound in the summer. Then are we to assume that sinfulness abounds in these seasons so that large numbers of human beings are transmuted into flies and insects on account of the multiplicity of their sins? There are thousands of other reasons by virtue of which this doctrine must be held to be false.

[Nasīm-e-Da'wat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 19, pp. 441-444, footnote]

Birth of the Soul

It is absolutely true that the soul is a fine light which is developed inside the body and is nurtured in the womb. In the beginning it is hidden and imperceptible, and later it is made manifest; but from the very beginning its essence is present in the sperm. It is related to the sperm in a mysterious manner by the design and command and will of God. It is a bright and illumined quality of the sperm. It cannot be said that it is a part of the sperm as matter is part of matter, nor can it be said that it comes from outside, or falls upon the earth and gets mixed with the sperm. It is latent in the sperm as fire is latent in the flint. The Word of God does not mean that the soul descends from heaven as a separate entity, or falls upon the earth from the atmosphere and then by chance gets mixed with the sperm and enters the womb with it. There is no basis for such a notion. The law of nature rejects it.

[Islāmī Uṣūl kī Philosophy, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 10, pp. 322-323]

There is conclusive evidence that the male and female sperm have the capacity to generate the soul without its falling from heaven like the dew. When the two sperms unite the capacity is strengthened and grows till when the framework of the embryo is ready the soul is activated from the framework by the power of God Almighty. This is the creation of something from non-existence, because the soul is not anything material and yet it is generated from the same matter which grows into a framework after the union of the two sperms in the womb. It is not necessary that the soul should fall like dew on some vegetable and should be generated in this manner. The matter from which the soul is generated can be formed out of a piece of meat or fish, or from clay from the depths of the earth from which frogs and insects are generated. Undoubtedly it is a Divine mystery that He creates from the body something which has nothing of the body in it. It is clear that the soul does not fall from heaven but is a new creation which is produced from the compound sperms by the Power of God as Almighty Allāh says in the Holy Qur'ān:

ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ ۖ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ¹⁷²

That is to say, when the human framework is ready in the womb God completes it with a new creation, meaning the soul is created out of the matter from which the framework was prepared.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 123-124]

¹⁷² Al-Mu'minūn 23:15 [Publisher]

Body and Spirit are Continuously Renewed

It has been proved that in three years the human body is dissolved and a new body takes its place. It is a familiar spectacle that when a person becomes very weak from illness and becomes like a mere skeleton, on his return to health gradually the body is rebuilt. Thus all the time the particles of the body are being dissolved and replaced by new particles. Thus the body suffers death every moment and obtains new life. Like the body, the soul also dies every moment and is revived. The only difference is that the changes in the body are patent and can be observed, but as the soul is hidden its changes are also hidden and are endless. The Holy Qur'ān indicates that the changes of the soul are unlimited and will continue even in heaven. They will be indicative of progress and the souls will experience a continuous growth, each succeeding condition will be so far above the preceding condition that it would seem as if the preceding condition had died.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 167-168]

Body is the Mother of the Soul

Physical injuries disclose that there is a mysterious relationship between the soul and the body which is beyond the ken of man. A further proof of this relationship is that reflection shows that the body is the mother of the soul. The soul does not fall into the womb of a pregnant woman from above. It is a light that is inherent in the sperm which begins to shine forth with the development of the embryo. The Holy Word of God Almighty sets forth that the soul is generated by the framework which is prepared in the womb from the sperm, as He says in the Holy Qur'ān:

ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ، فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ¹⁷³

Then We invest the embryo which originated in the womb with a new birth, and thus give it yet another form which is known as the soul. So blessed is Allāh, and He is the Creator Who has no equal.

This process is a deep mystery which points to the real nature of the soul and indicates the strong relationship that subsists between the soul and the body.

[Islāmī Uṣūl kī Philosophy, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 10, p. 321]

Relationship of the Soul with Graves

QUESTION: What is the nature of the relationship between the soul and the grave?

ANSWER: Whatever has been said on this subject in the *Aḥādīth* of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) is entirely true. It is not for us to probe into its nature. All that we have to establish is that there is such a relationship and that it is not an impossibility.

It is illustrated by an instance in the law of nature. God Almighty has appointed different methods for the discovery of the **reality of things**. Some are perceived through the eye, others through the ear and some through a combination of the senses. There are many verities which can be perceived only by the heart.... Man is equipped with many faculties and each of them performs diverse functions in the service of man.

The ignorant philosopher seeks to decide everything on the basis of his defective reason, but this is a mistake. Historical events can be gathered only from history. The

¹⁷³ Al-Mu'minūn, 23:15 [Publisher]

natural qualities of things can only be determined through correct experience. Reason is a guide only in respect of inductive matters. Thus there are diverse methods of arriving at the reality. Man is misled when he depends only on one method for the determination of diverse matters. We have experience of it every day. The departure of the soul from the body, or the relationship of the soul with the body are matters which cannot be determined by reason. Had that been possible philosophers and thinkers would not have fallen into error. Thus the relationship of the soul with the grave is a verity, but it cannot be perceived by the physical eye. It can be perceived only through the **eye of vision**. It cannot be perceived by mere reason, for reason cannot determine even the existence of the soul. This matter is the subject of a thousand contentions and there are thousands of atheistic philosophers who deny the existence of the soul. Had it been a matter of pure reason there should have been no difference.

The function of the eye, for instance, is to see and we cannot expect that the eye of X should behold a white object and the eye of Y should determine the taste of that **white object**. Mere reason cannot determine for certain even the existence of the soul let alone its nature and its relationships. Philosophers consider the soul to be like a green piece of wood. To them the soul has no external or independent existence. Whatever we know about the soul and its relationships is gathered from the **spring of Prophethood**. Some philosophers have written something about it but their knowledge is borrowed from **that spring**. The fact that **the souls do have a relationship with the graves** should be viewed through the eye of visions which indicates that the soul has a relationship with that heap of

clay and that the greeting:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ الْقُبُورِ¹⁷⁴

is responded to. He who uses the faculties through which the condition of the graves can be viewed, can obtain knowledge of such relationship....

The faculty of seeing visions is needed for appreciating the relationship of souls with the graves. He who denies this is in error. A large number of Prophets and millions of the righteous bear witness to this relationship which cannot be denied, though the nature of that relationship may not be determined through reason. In short, spiritual sight finally settles all these matters. If the ear cannot see, the ear is not at fault because seeing is not its function. I can affirm from personal experience that the soul has a relationship with the grave and it is possible to hold converse with the dead.

The soul also has a relationship with heaven where it is assigned a station. This is an established **verity** which is testified to by the Hindū scriptures also. This is a generally admitted verity except in the case of those who deny the survival of the soul. It is the faculty of seeing visions that indicates the nature of that relationship.

[Malfūzāt, vol. I, pp. 287-290]

The soul is not something in space. The nature of its relationships cannot be determined. After death the soul has a relationship with the grave which is revealed to those who possess the faculty of seeing visions. They can see the dwellers of the graves sitting in their graves and can hold converse with them. This is established by true

¹⁷⁴ Peace be on you, O dwellers of the graves. [Publisher]

Aḥādīth. A well known *Ḥadīth* mentions *Ṣalāt* in a grave, it is also mentioned in the *Aḥādīth* that the dead can hear the sound of footsteps and respond to *Assalāmu ‘Alaikum*. They also have a relationship with heaven. There are different degrees of their heavenly exaltation. Some arrive at the first heaven, others reach the second or third heaven, but all righteous souls are exalted as is mentioned in true *Ḥadīth* and is also indicated by the verse:

لَا تُفْتَحُ لَهُمُ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ¹⁷⁵

but the nature of their relationship to heaven or to the graves cannot be determined.

[Al-Ḥaq, Mubāḥatha Delhī, Rūḥānī Khazā’in, vol. 4, p. 215]

¹⁷⁵ ‘(Those who reject Our Signs and turn away from them with disdain), the gates of the spiritual firmament will not be opened for them.’—Al-A‘rāf, 7:41 [Publisher]

16

RESURRECTION

Satan creates many doubts and the most dangerous doubt that arises in the mind of man and makes him a loser in this world and in the hereafter is with regard to the life after death. A great source of virtue and righteousness, in addition to other means and sources, is belief in the hereafter.

When a person regards the hereafter and all that concerns it as a mere tale or story, then it may be taken that he has been rejected and has lost both worlds. The fear of the hereafter makes a person anxious and afraid and drives him to the true fountain of understanding. True understanding cannot be achieved without the fear of God. Remember, therefore, that the arising of doubt concerning the hereafter puts faith in danger and makes a person's end uncertain.

[Malfūzāt, vol. I, pp. 53-54]

Three States of Existence

According to the Holy Qur'ān, there are three states of existence.

The first is the **world**, the name of which is the first creation and the house of earning. In this world a person earns good or ill. There is progress in good in the hereafter, but that is through the pure grace of God. It has nothing to do with a person's effort.

The second state of existence is called *Barzakh* (Purga-

tory). In Arabic idiom *Barzakh* is that which is situated between two things. As this state of existence lies between the first creation and the resurrection, it is called *Barzakh*. This expression has always been used for the intervening state. It thus is a great testimony in support of the existence of the intervening state....

Barzakh is the state when the temporary human formation is dissolved and the soul and the body are separated from each other....

Though this mortal body is separated from the soul after death, yet in the intervening state every soul is temporarily invested with a body so that it might experience the result of its actions. That body is not like the earthly body, but is prepared from light or darkness according to the actions of each person. It might be said that in that state a person's actions serve as his body. In the Word of God, this is mentioned several times and some bodies are described as bright and some as dark, which are prepared from the light or from the darkness of actions. This is a mystery but is not beyond reason. A perfect person can acquire a bright body in this very life, apart from his earthly body, and there are many illustrations of it in the state of visions. It is difficult to explain this to a person whose mind is not keen, but those who have some experience of the state of visions would not look upon a body which is prepared from actions with wonder or incredulity, but would appreciate this explanation.

This body which is created from actions becomes a source of the recompense of good and evil in the state of *Barzakh*. I have experience of this matter. I have often, in a state of complete wakefulness, met some dead persons in a vision and I have observed the bodies of some

wicked and misguided persons which were so dark as if they had been compounded of smoke. I am personally acquainted with this condition and I affirm emphatically that as God Almighty has said, everyone is bestowed a body after death, which is either bright or dark. It would be a mistake to seek to prove these fine truths through the agency of reason alone. It should be realized that as the eye cannot demonstrate the taste of something sweet and the tongue cannot see anything, in the same way, the **knowledge of the hereafter** which is gained through visions cannot be tested by reason. God Almighty has appointed separate means for the perception of that which is hidden. Then seek everything through its proper means and you will find it.

It should be remembered that in His Word God has described as dead those who are involved in vice and misguidance and has described the virtuous as alive. The means of life of those who are heedless of God, for instance, eating and drinking and following their passions, are cut off and they do not partake of spiritual sustenance. Thus they are truly dead and will be alive only to suffer punishment. Allāh the Glorious has pointed towards this mystery as He says:

مَنْ يَأْتِ رَبَّهُ مُجْرِمًا فَإِنَّ لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَىٰ¹⁷⁶

The portion of him who comes to his Lord a sinner is hell; he shall neither die therein nor live. But those who love God Almighty do not die on death as they carry their sustenance with them.

Barzakh is followed by a state of existence which is called **resurrection**. At that stage every soul, good or bad,

¹⁷⁶ Ṭā Hā, 20:75 [Publisher]

righteous or disobedient, will be granted a definite bodily form of its own. That day has been appointed for the perfect manifestation of God when every person shall become acquainted fully with the existence of his Lord and shall arrive at the extreme point of his recompense. No one need wonder how God will accomplish this for He has power and does whatever He wills, as He has said Himself:

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ حَصِيمٌ مُؤْتَمِرٌ
 وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رُومٌ
 قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ¹⁷⁷
 أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقَدِيرٍ عَلَىٰ أَن يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ
 بَلْ هُوَ الْخَلَّاقُ الْعَلِيمُ¹⁷⁸ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَن يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ
 فَيَكُونُ¹⁷⁸ فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ¹⁷⁸

[Islāmi Uṣūl kī Philosophy, Rūḥāni Khazā'in, vol. 10, pp. 402-407]

A New Body is Bestowed in the Grave

Islām sets forth the high philosophy that everyone is bestowed a kind of body in the grave which is necessary for experiencing delight and torment. We cannot say for creation of what material that new body is made, for this mortal body becomes dead and no one has observed it

¹⁷⁷ Does not man see that We have created him from a mere sperm-drop? Yet lo! He is an open quarreller! And he coins similitudes for Us and forgets his own creation. He says, 'Who can quicken the bones when they are decayed?' Say, 'He, Who created them the first time, will quicken them; and He knows every kind of creation full well.'—Yā Sīn, 36:78-80 [Publisher]

¹⁷⁸ Has not He Who created the heavens and the earth the power to create the like of them? Yea, and He is indeed the Supreme Creator, the All-Knowing. Verily His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, 'Be!', and it begins to be. So Holy is He, in Whose hand is the kingdom of all things. And to Him will you all be brought back.—Yā Sīn, 36:82-84 [Publisher]

coming alive in the grave. The earthly body is often cremated or is preserved in museums and is kept outside a grave for long periods. If this body were to come alive, people would observe it and yet the Holy Qur'ān affirms that a dead person comes alive. One has, therefore, to accept that a dead person is revived with a body which we cannot see. May be that that body is created from the imperceptible qualities of this body. After that body is bestowed, human faculties are revived as this second body is much finer than the first body. It experiences visions very widely and all the realities of the hereafter become visible to it as they are. Wrongdoers then suffer not only a physical torment, but also a torment of despair. Thus it is an agreed principle of Islām that the torment or comfort of the grave is also experienced through a body, and this is the demand of reason also inasmuch as experience has affirmed that the spiritual faculties of man do not manifest themselves without a body.

[Kitāb-ul-Bariyyah, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 13, pp. 70-71]

Nature of the Hereafter

The hereafter is a reflection of this world, and the consequences of faith and disbelief that appear spiritually in this world would be demonstrated physically in the hereafter. God, the Glorious, has said:

مَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ¹⁷⁹

He who is blind in this world shall be blind in the hereafter.

We should not be surprised at this and should reflect how

¹⁷⁹ Banī Isrā'īl 17:73 [Publisher]

spiritual matters are personified in a dream and the matter is even more surprising in a vision when spiritual matters take on physical shape before our eyes. Very often in complete wakefulness one meets those souls who have passed away from this world, and they appear in their original bodies wearing the clothes of this world and they talk and the holy ones out of them convey news about the future, by God's command, and those news are fulfilled in fact. Often in complete wakefulness a sweet drink or some fruit which is very delicious comes to hand in a vision. This humble one has experience of all this. I have personal experience that some delicious food or fruit or sweet drink comes into view and is put into one's mouth by a hidden hand and one enjoys its delicious taste while one continues to talk to other people and one's senses continue to work. Not that it is an illusion or baseless fantasy. Instead Allāh, Whose station is:

بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ¹⁸⁰

He demonstrates by way of example a kind of creation and birth in this very world.

This is testified to in every age by those who possess insight. Why should one wonder at the personified creation which will be seen in the hereafter when the scales of deeds would be beheld and the narrow bridge will be seen and many spiritual matters will take on physical forms? Is it beyond the power of Him Who has shown this system of personified creation in this world to those who possess insight to exhibit it in the hereafter also? These personifications have a relationship with the

¹⁸⁰ 'He knows every kind of creation full well.'—Yā Sīn, 36:80
[Publisher]

hereafter. When this personified creation is demonstrated to the purified people in this world, which is not a place of manifestation of complete cutting asunder, why should it not become visible in the hereafter which is a state of complete and perfect cutting asunder from the world.

It should be remembered that all those wonders of which a veiled one reads in the verses of the Holy Qur'ān, which relate to the hereafter, are disclosed in visions to a person possessing insight, in this very world. Those whose insight does not penetrate to the reality wonder at these statements and often objections arise in their minds with regard to them that all these matters appear to them opposed to truth and reason, such as the sitting of God Almighty on His Throne on the Day of Judgement, the standing of angels in rows, the weighing of deeds in scales, the crossing of the narrow bridge by people, the slaughtering of death like a sheep after the Judgement, the appearance of deeds like handsome or ugly people and the flowing of streams of milk and honey in paradise, etc.

[Malfūzāt, vol. III, pp. 61-62]

The condition of a person after death is nothing new. It is a clear representation of his life in this world. The condition of a person's beliefs and actions, righteous or unrighteous, is hidden inside him in this world and its poison or antidote influences him in a secret way. In the life after death all these will become manifest. One experiences a sample of it in dreams. In a dream, one observes the conditions which prevail at the time in one's body. When one is heading towards high fever, one beholds fire and flames of fire in one's dream and when one is about to suffer from influenza, one finds oneself in water in a dream. Whatever disorder one's body is ready

for is personified in one's dreams. The same is the case in the life after death. As a dream produces a change inside us and demonstrates our spiritual condition in a physical form, the same will happen in the life after death and our deeds and their consequences will be physically demonstrated and whatever we carry with us from this world in a hidden manner will all appear openly on our countenances on that day. As a person views diverse forms of images in a dream and never considers that they are images, but believes them to be real, the same will happen in the life after death. Through these images, God Almighty will demonstrate a new power. As His power is absolute, then, even if we do not talk of images, it will be true and absolutely correct to say that, by the grace of God, it is a new creation. God Almighty says:

كَلَّا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ ¹⁸¹

No one, who performs good deeds, knows what a variety of favours lie in store for him.

Thus God describes those bounties as hidden, no specimen of which is to be found in the world. It is obvious that the bounties of the world are not hidden from us and that we are well acquainted with milk and pomegranates and grapes and we always eat them. This shows that those bounties will be of a different type and will have nothing in common with these except the name. He who considers paradise as a collection of worldly bodies wholly misunderstands the Holy Qur'ān.

[Islāmī Uṣūl kī Philosophy, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 10, pp. 396-398]

¹⁸¹ Al-Sajdah, 32:18 [Publisher]

Three Qur'ānic Insights about the Hereafter

The Holy Qur'ān divides into three the conditions that one encounters after death and there are three Qur'ānic insights about the hereafter....

The first is that the Holy Qur'ān repeatedly states that the hereafter is nothing new but that all its spectacles are the reflections of this worldly life, as it is said:

وَكُلُّ إِنسَانٍ أَلَمْنَهُ لِمَ كُفِّرَتْ بَوَاقِهِمْ، وَتُخْرِجُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مِنْشُورًا¹⁸²

In this very world, the effect of every person's doings have We firmly fastened to his neck; and We shall display their hidden effects on the Day of Judgement and show them to him in the shape of an open book.

The word bird has been here used metaphorically for deeds. For every deed, good or bad, flies away like a bird; its labour or its delight disappears and only its foulness or fineness remains in the hearts.

It is a Qur'ānic principle that every action has its hidden impress. Every action of a person attracts Divine action corresponding to it which preserves the quality of that action and does not let it disappear. Its impress is inscribed upon the heart and the countenance and the eyes and the hands and feet. This is the hidden record of actions which will be made manifest in the life to come.

At another place it is said with regard to those who are admitted to paradise:

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ¹⁸³

That is to say: The light of faith which is bestowed in a

¹⁸² Banī Isrā'īl, 17:14 [Publisher]

¹⁸³ Al-Ḥadīd, 57:13 [Publisher]

hidden manner upon the believers will on that day be seen openly running before them and on their right hands.

At another place the wicked have been addressed:

أَلَيْسَ كَمَا تَرَكَتُمْ دُونَكُمْ مَا تَعْلَمُونَ ۚ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۚ ثُمَّ
 كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۚ كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ ۚ كَتَرْتُمْ الْجَائِمَ ۚ
 ثُمَّ كَتَرْتُمْ لَهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ ۚ ثُمَّ كَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ ۙ¹⁸⁴

The excessive desire of worldly possessions prevented you from seeking the hereafter till you reached the graves. Do not be enamoured of this world. You will soon come to know that it is wrong to fall in love with this world. I remind you that you will soon come to know that it is no use loving this world. If only you knew with certainty, you would surely see hell in this very life. Then in the world of *Barzakh* you will see it with the eyes of certainty. Then, at the time of resurrection, you will have to face full accountability, and that Divine chastisement will overtake you and you will come to know of the hell, not theoretically but practically.

[Islāmī Uṣūl kī Philosophy, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 10, pp. 400-402]

The second insight which the Holy Qur'ān has set forth with regard to the life after death is that in the hereafter all those matters that were spiritual in this world will be physically personified whether in the state of *Barzakh* or in the state of resurrection. One of the relevant verses is:

مَنْ كَانَ فِيْهِ هٰذِهِ اَعْمٰى فِهٖوَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ اَعْمٰى وَاَصْلٌ سَبِيْلًا¹⁸⁵

He who is blind in this life shall be blind in the hereafter.

¹⁸⁴ Al-Takāthur, 102:2-9 [Publisher]

¹⁸⁵ Banī Isrā'īl, 17:73 [Publisher]

This means that the spiritual blindness of this world will be felt physically in the other world.

At another place it is said:

خُذْهُ فَعَلُّوهُ ۝ ثُمَّ الْجَحِيمَ صَلُّوهُ ۝ ثُمَّ
 فِي سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوهُ ۝¹⁸⁶

Seize this denizen of hell and fetter him and burn him in hell-fire and bind him with a chain the length of which is seventy yards.

These verses show that the spiritual torment of this world will appear in physical form in the hereafter. The collar of worldly desires which had bent a person's head towards the earth will appear manifestly in the second life. In the same way the chain of worldly desires will be seen around the feet. The burning sensation of worldly desires will be seen as a fiercely flaming fire.

A disobedient person has inside of him a hell of worldly desires and feels the burning of that hell in his failures. When he is cast away from his mortal desires and is confronted with eternal despair, God Almighty will cause this despair to appear to him as physical fire. As He has said:

وَحِيلَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ¹⁸⁷

A curtain will be drawn between them and that which they desire.

This will be the root of the torment. The direction to bind him with a chain the length of which is seventy yards is an indication that a disobedient one often attains the age

¹⁸⁶ Al-Hāqqah, 69:31-33 [Publisher]

¹⁸⁷ Al-Saba', 34:55 [Publisher]

of seventy years. Very often he is granted seventy years of active life leaving out of account his childhood and his extreme old age. The miserable one passes these seventy years caught in the desires of this world and does not wish to be free of this chain. Thus God Almighty says that the seventy years that he passed in his devotion to the world will be personified in the hereafter as a chain, the length of which will be seventy yards, each yard corresponding to a year. It should be remembered that God Almighty imposes no distress from Himself upon a person, but confronts him with his evil deeds. Referring to His eternal law, God Almighty says at another place:

إِنظِرْفُوْا إِلَى ظِلِّ ذِي تَلْتِ شُعْبٍ ۚ لَا ظَلِيلٌ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنَ النَّهْبِ ۝¹⁸⁸

Proceed, O evil doers and misguided ones, towards a shelter which has three sections, neither affording shade nor protecting from the blaze.

In this verse by the three sections are meant the wild and the animal and the speculative faculties. These three faculties, of those who do not cast them into the moral mould and do not co-ordinate them, will be manifested on the Judgement Day as if they are three branches without leaves which can afford no protection from the blaze in which they will burn.

Again, referring to the same eternal way of His, Allāh the Exalted, says in favour of the inmates of Paradise:

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ¹⁸⁹

On that day, you will see that the light of the believing men and believing women that is hidden in this world,

¹⁸⁸ Al-Mursalāt, 77:31-32 [Publisher]

¹⁸⁹ Al-Ḥadīd, 57:13 [Publisher]

will be manifested running ahead of them and on their right hands.

In the Hereafter Spiritual Conditions will become Visible

He says in another verse:

يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ¹⁹⁰

On that day some faces will be darkened and some will be bright full of light.

At another place it is said:

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وَعَدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِنْ مَاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ
مِنْ لَبَنٍ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ خَمْرٍ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ وَأَنْهَارٌ
مِنْ عَسَلٍ مُصَفًّى¹⁹¹

The paradise promised to the righteous is like a garden in which flow rivers of water that never stagnate; and rivers of milk of which the taste changes not; and rivers of wine full of delight without any intoxication for those who drink; and rivers of honey which is so pure and unadulterated.

At this place it is clearly stated that paradise may be understood as having endless streams flowing with these things. The water of life which a person possessing insight drinks spiritually in this life will be present overtly in the life to come. The spiritual milk of which he drinks spiritually like a suckling babe in this world, will be seen openly in paradise. The wine of the love of God with which he was spiritually inebriated in the world will

¹⁹⁰ Āl-e-‘Imrān, 3:107 [Publisher]

¹⁹¹ Muḥammad, 47:16 [Publisher]

be made manifest in paradise in streams. The honey of the sweetness of faith which one possessed of insight swallowed spiritually in the world will be felt and observed in the shape of streams in paradise. Every dweller of paradise shall display a spiritual condition openly in his rivers and his gardens and on that day God Himself will emerge from behind the veils for the dwellers of paradise. In short, spiritual conditions will be no longer hidden but will become physically visible.

There will be Continuous Progress in Heaven

The third insight is that in the hereafter there will be unending progress. God Almighty has said:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَىٰ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَ بِأَيْمَانِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ
رَبَّنَا آتِنَا لَنَا نُورَنَا وَ اغْفِرْ لَنَا إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ¹⁹²

On the Day of Judgement, the light of those who are blessed with the light of faith in this world will run ahead of them and on their right. They will pray: Lord, perfect our light for us and forgive us, surely Thou hast power over all things.

Their supplication for the perfection of their light indicates that their progress will be unlimited. They will attain one perfection of light and will then behold another, and will consider their previous perfection as deficient and will supplicate for a second perfection, and when they attain that they will behold a third stage of perfection and seeing that they will belittle their previous excellence and will desire that stage of perfection. This desire for progress is indicated by the expression: Perfect our light for us.

¹⁹² Al-Taḥrīm, 66:9 [Publisher]

In this way, an endless system of progress will continue which will never suffer decline. They will not be expelled from paradise but will advance forward every day and will not move back. A question arises that having entered paradise, why should they seek forgiveness as their sins will have been forgiven? The answer is that the primary meaning of *maghfirat* is the suppression and covering up of an imperfect condition. Dwellers of paradise will desire to obtain perfection and to be sunk altogether in light. On beholding the second condition they will find their first condition defective and they will seek to have it suppressed. Then beholding a third perfection, they will desire with regard to their second condition that it should be suppressed and hidden. Thus they will desire unending *maghfirat*.

This is the same *Istighfār* which some ignorant ones make the basis of criticism of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) but it will now be clear that this desire for *Istighfār* is the pride of man. A person who is born of woman and does not make *Istighfār* his habit is an insect and not a man, is blind and not seeing and is foul and not pure.

[Islāmī Uṣūl kī Philosophy, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 10, pp. 408-413]

17

HEAVEN AND HELL

What is the object of religion? It is that having the certainty of faith in the existence and perfect attributes of God Almighty, man should attain release from the passions of self and should develop personal love for God. That is the paradise which will be manifested in diverse ways in the hereafter. To remain unaware of the True God and to keep away from Him and not to have true love for Him is the hell which will be manifested in diverse ways in the hereafter.

[Chashma Masīhī, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 20, p. 352]

The reality of heaven and hell that has been set forth by the Holy Qur'ān has not been set forth by any other book. It has indicated plainly that this system starts in this very life. It is said:

وَلِمَن خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٌ¹⁹³

For him who fears to stand before his Lord, there are two Gardens.

One Garden is obtained in this very world. The fear of God restrains a person from vice. To run after vice generates a restlessness and distress in the heart which itself is a fearful hell. He who fears God avoids vice and escapes the torment which is generated by the slavery of passion and he makes progress towards faithfulness and

¹⁹³ Al-Raḥmān, 55:47 [Publisher]

leaning towards God whereby he is bestowed a delight and joy and thus his heavenly life begins in this very world.

[Malfūzāt, vol. III, pp. 155-156]:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَؤُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ¹⁹⁴

That is, of the people there are those of such exalted spiritual station who surrender themselves to the pleasure of Allāh. They sell their lives and buy the pleasure of Allāh. These are the people who are the recipients of Divine mercy. Similarly, one who has attained the exalted spiritual station sacrifices himself in the path of God.

In this verse God Almighty says that it is the one who sells his soul in order to win the pleasure of God who finds deliverance from all suffering. Such a one gives proof by his devotion that he belongs to God and conceives himself to have been created for the obedience of the Creator and the service of His creatures. He performs all good actions that are related to every faculty with such eagerness and sincerity of heart as if he beholds the True Beloved in the mirror of his obedience, his will conforms to the will of God Almighty and all his delight is in obedience to Him and righteous action proceeds from him not by way of labour, but on account of its delight and attraction. The paradise that a spiritual person finds immediately and that which will be bestowed upon him in future are a reflection of this life which will be personified physically in the other world by the power of God.

¹⁹⁴ Al-Baqarah, 2:208 [Publisher]

Two Gardens for the Righteous

This is indicated in the following verses in which Allāh the Glorious says:

وَلِمَن خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٍ ¹⁹⁵

وَسَفُوفٍ رَّبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُورًا ¹⁹⁶

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِنْ كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُورًا ۝ عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا

عِبَادُ اللَّهِ يُفَجِّرُونَهَا تَفْجِيرًا ¹⁹⁷

يُشَقِّقُونَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا ۝ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا زَنْجَبِيلًا ۝ عَيْنًا فِيهَا تُسَمَّى سَلْسَبِيلًا ¹⁹⁸

إِنَّمَا آخِذُتْ بِهِنَّ أَلْوَافِقُ يُفَجِّرْنَ سَلْسِلًا ۝ وَغُلًّا ۝ وَسَجِيرًا ¹⁹⁹

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَى فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَى وَأَصْلٌ سَبِيلًا ²⁰⁰

He who fears God Almighty and stands in awe of His Greatness and Glory will have two Gardens, one in this world and the other in the hereafter.

Those who are devoted to God are given to drink of a beverage which purifies their hearts and thoughts and designs.

The virtuous shall drink of a beverage which is tempered with camphor out of a spring which they dig out themselves. The root of the word camphor that has been used in this context means suppressing and covering up. This is an indication that they have drunk of the cup of cutting asunder from the world and turning to God with such

¹⁹⁵ Al-Raḥmān, 55:47 [Publisher]

¹⁹⁶ Al-Dahr, 76:22 [Publisher]

¹⁹⁷ Al-Dahr, 76:6-7 [Publisher]

¹⁹⁸ Al-Dahr, 76:18-19 [Publisher]

¹⁹⁹ Al-Dahr, 76:5 [Publisher]

²⁰⁰ Banī Isrā'īl, 17:73 [Publisher]

sincerity that their love of the world has been cooled down. All emotions are generated by the ideas of the heart and when the heart withdraws far away from improper thoughts and has no concern with them, the emotions are subdued till they disappear altogether. In this verse God Almighty desires to convey that those who turn wholly to Him cast aside their passions and their hearts become cool to worldly activities and their emotions are covered up and suppressed as poisonous matter is suppressed by camphor.

Then Almighty Allāh says: After partaking of the camphor, they drink of a cup flavoured with ginger. The word for ginger in Arabic is composed of two roots which mean ascending a mountain. It should be known that after a person recovers from a poisonous disease, his health passes through two stages. The first is a condition when the poisonous matter is subdued and dangerous tendencies are corrected and poisonous conditions are left behind and the fatal storm that had arisen is banked down. But the limbs are still weak and the patient cannot carry out anything that requires strength and moves about like a person who is half dead. The second stage is when health returns and the body gains strength and by the restoration of strength the patient is encouraged to think that he can ascend a mountain and can run about with delight on the heights. With reference to this condition, God Almighty indicates that virtuous people drink of a cup which is tempered with ginger, that is to say, their spiritual condition arrives at full strength so that they can scale the heights and carry out difficult tasks and exhibit wonderful devotion in the cause of God Almighty.

This property of ginger, that it strengthens bodily heat and improves the digestion, and its Arabic name that has been used in the verse is adopted as an indication that it so strengthens a weak person and generates such heat in him as enables him to scale the heights. The purpose of these two verses which refer to camphor and ginger is to indicate that when a person moves away from passion towards virtue, his poisonous tendencies are suppressed and begin to decline as camphor suppresses poisonous matters. That is why it is found useful in cases of cholera and typhoid fever. When poisonous matters are suppressed and a weak health is gained, the next stage is that the patient is strengthened with a drink tempered with ginger. This drink is a manifestation of the beauty of God Almighty which constitutes a nourishment for the soul. When a person is strengthened by this manifestation he is able to ascend great heights and to perform such surprisingly hard tasks in the cause of God Almighty as cannot be performed unless the heart is inspired by the heat of love. To illustrate these two conditions God Almighty has here employed two Arabic words, one camphor which connotes suppression and the other ginger which connotes ascending the heights. These are two conditions that are encountered by the seekers in their progress.

Then the verses proceed that:

رَأَىٰ آعْتَدْنَا لِلْخَافِرِينَ سَلْسِلًا وَأَغْلَالًا وَسَعِيرًا²⁰¹

For those who are disinclined to accept the truth God has prepared chains and collars and a blazing fire.

The meaning of the verse is that those who do not seek God Almighty with a true heart suffer a reaction. They

²⁰¹ Al-Dahr, 76:5 [Publisher]

are so occupied with the world as if their feet are chained, and they are so much bent down in secular pursuits as if there are collars around their necks which do not permit them to raise their heads, and their hearts burn with worldly desires that they might acquire so much wealth or property or dominion over a region or victory over an enemy. Finding them unworthy and occupied with evil deeds God Almighty subjects them to these three handicaps. There is an indication here that when a person acts there is a corresponding action by God Almighty. For instance, when a person shuts all the windows of his room the corresponding action of God Almighty is that He makes the room dark. That which has been appointed as a necessary consequence under the Divine law of nature is the action of God Almighty, inasmuch as He is the Cause of causes. In the same way, when a person swallows a fatal dose of poison the reaction of God Almighty would be that he would die. In the same way, if a person acts carelessly so as to attract an infectious disease, the reaction of God Almighty would be that he would suffer from that disease. Thus, as in our physical life there is a necessary consequence of every action and that consequence is an action of God Almighty, the same is the case in spiritual matters. God Almighty makes these points very clear in the following two verses:

الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنَّا كَمَا هَدَيْنَاهُمْ سُبُلَنَا
فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ كَانُوا سَابِقِينَ

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ كَانُوا سَابِقِينَ

This means that those who seek God with full effort,

²⁰² Al-‘Ankabūt, 29:70, [Publisher]

²⁰³ Al-Şaff, 61:6, Publisher.)

their action is followed by Divine action that they are shown the path of God; those who deviate from the right course, their action is followed by Divine action that their hearts are perverted.

This is further illustrated in the verse:

مَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا²⁰⁴

He who is blind in this world shall be blind in the hereafter and even more astray.

This is an indication that the righteous behold God in this very world and thus the foundation of heavenly life is laid in this world and the blindness of the hereafter is generated by the foul and blind life of this world. Again it is said:

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ²⁰⁵

Those who believe and act righteously shall inherit the gardens beneath which rivers flow. In this verse God Almighty has described faith as a garden beneath which rivers flow.

It is here pointed out that the relationship which streams of water have with gardens is the relationship which subsists between faith and actions. As no garden can flourish without water, no faith can be a living faith without righteous action. If there is faith and there are no actions, that faith is vain, and if there are actions but there is no faith, those actions are mere show. The reality of the Islāmic paradise is that it is a reflection of the faith and actions in this life. It is not a new thing which will

²⁰⁴ Banī Isrā'īl, 17:73 [Publisher]

²⁰⁵ Al-Baqarah, 2:26 [Publisher]

be bestowed upon a person from outside. A person's paradise is generated from within himself and everyone's paradise are his faith and his righteous action, the delight of which begins in this life. The gardens of faith and actions and the streams that flow through them are seen in a hidden manner in this life, but in the hereafter they will be perceived overtly. The holy teaching of God Almighty tells us that the true and pure and firm and perfect faith in God and His attributes and His designs is a pleasant garden of fruit trees and righteous actions are the streams that irrigate that garden. This is indicated in the verse:

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَضْمَتْ أَغْلَاهَا ثَابِتٌ
 ٢٠٦ تَقْرَعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ۖ تُؤْتِي أَكْثَرَهَا حَلًّا حِينَ

That is, the word of faith which is free from all excess and defect and falsehood and vanity, and is perfect in every way, is like a tree that is free from every defect, its root is firm in the earth and its branches spread into heaven and it brings forth fruit at all times. At no time are its branches without fruit.

In this verse God Almighty has likened a word of faith to a tree that bears fruit at all times and has specified three signs of it.

The first is that its root, that is to say, its true meaning should be firm in the soil of man's heart. Nature and human conscience should have accepted its truth and reality.

The second sign is that its branches should spread into heaven, that is to say, it should be reasonable and should

²⁰⁶ Ibrāhīm, 14:25-26 [Publisher]

be in accord with the heavenly law of nature which is the action of God. The arguments in support of its correctness and truth should be deducible from the law of nature and should be so perfect as if they are in heaven and cannot be reached by any criticism.

The third sign is that its fruit should be eternal and unending. That is to say, its blessings and effects should be perceptible in every age and should not cease after any particular period.

It is then said:

مَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَيِّبَتٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَيْرَةٍ ابْتِغَاءً مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ بِمَا كَانَتْ مِنْ قَرَارٍ 207

The evil word resembles a tree which does not take root in the soil or, in other words, human nature does not accept it and in no way does it stabilize. It is not supported by reasonable arguments or by the law of nature or by human conscience and is like a mere tale or story.

As the Holy Qur'ān has referred to the good trees of faith as resembling grapes and pomegranates and other nice fruits, and has said that they will be personified like those fruits and resemble them, in the same way, it has called the evil tree of faithlessness in the hereafter by the name of *Zaqqūm*, as it is said:

أَذَلِكِ خَيْرٌ نُزُلًا أَمْ شَجَرَةُ الرَّقْوِمِ ۝ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهَا فِتْنَةً لِلظَّالِمِينَ ۝
 إِنَّمَا شَجَرَةُ الرَّقْوِمِ فِي آصْلِ الْجَحِيمِ ۝ طَلْعُهَا كَأَنَّهُ رِئُوسُ الشَّيْطَانِ ۝ 208
 إِنَّا شَجَرَتِ الرَّقْوِمِ ۝ طَعَامُ الْآثِمِ ۝ كَالْمُهْلِ يَغْلِي فِي الْبُطُونِ ۝
 كَغَلِيِّ الْجَحِيمِ ۝ ذُو قُرْبَىٰ لَكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ ۝ 209

207 Ibrāhīm, 14:27 [Publisher]

208 Al-Şāffāt, 37:63-66 [Publisher]

209 Al-Dukhān 44:44-47,50 [Publisher]

The wicked will be asked whether the gardens of paradise are better or the tree *Zaqqūm* which is a trial for wrong-doers. It is a tree that springs forth from the bottom of hell, that is to say, it is born of arrogance and self-esteem. Its fruit is like the heads of Satan which means that its eating would be fatal....

It is the food of those dwellers of hell who deliberately choose sin. Its eating is like swallowing molten copper which boils up in the belly like scalding water.

The one condemned to hell is asked to eat it and is reminded that if he had not been arrogant and had not turned away from the truth out of self-esteem, he would not have had to endure these torments:

رَأَيْتَكَ أَتَيْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ²¹⁰

Thus as God Almighty has likened the words of faith of this world to the trees of paradise, He has likened the words of faithlessness of this world to the tree of hell and has indicated that the root of heaven or hell begins from this world. At another place hell is referred to as the:

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَةُ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْآفِئَةِ²¹¹

That is to say: Hell is a fire the source of which is the wrath of God. It blazes forth from sin and first overcomes the heart.

This is an indication that at the root of this fire are the sorrows and desires and torments that seize the heart, inasmuch as spiritual torment begins with the heart and

²¹⁰ ‘Thou didst consider thyself the mighty, the honourable.’—Al-Dukhān, 44:50 [Publisher]

²¹¹ Al-Humazah, 104:7-8 [Publisher]

then comprises the whole body.

At another place it is said:

وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ²¹²

That is to say: The fuel of the fire of hell which keeps it blazing are first those men who turn aside from God and worship other things.

As it is said:

إِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ²¹³

You and those whom you worshipped falsely, who were called gods despite being human, will be cast into hell.

Secondly, the fuel of hell are the idols. The meaning is that if these things had not existed there would have been no hell. Thus in the holy word of God, heaven and hell are not like this physical world. The source of both of them are spiritual matters. It is true that in the other world they will appear as physical, but they will not belong to this physical world.

[Islāmī Uṣūl kī Philosophy, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 10, pp. 385-393]

The Torment and Comfort of the Grave is Perceived through the Body

To enter heaven it is necessary to have a body, but that body will not be compounded of physical elements inasmuch as the fruits of heaven will not be physical, but will be a new creation. Therefore, the body in heaven will also be a new creation which will be different from the original body. It is necessary that after death the believers should have a body. On the night of his ascen-

²¹² Al-Baqarah, 2:25 and Al-Taḥrīm, 66:7 [Publisher]

²¹³ Al-Anbiyā', 21:99 [Publisher]

sion, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) did not see only the souls of the other Prophets, but saw the bodies of all of them, and Jesus had not a body different from the others.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Part V, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 21, p. 387, footnote]

We have also exposed the error of the Christians in that they think that heaven will only be a spiritual experience. We have proved that the nature of man is such that his spiritual faculties **need a body** for their perfect and complete functioning. For instance, it is our observation that an injury inflicted upon a certain part of the brain destroys memory, and that an injury inflicted upon another part destroys the faculty of thinking, and that a disturbance occasioned to the nervous system affects several spiritual faculties. Such being the case that a minor disturbance of the body occasions a disturbance in the functioning of the soul, how can we expect that after a total separation from the body the soul would be able to maintain its integrity? Therefore, Islām teaches that everyone is bestowed a body in the grave which is needed for the perception of delight and torment. We cannot say from what material that body is prepared except that this mortal body becomes naught and no one observes that it is revived in the grave. Very often it is cremated or is preserved in a museum or is kept outside a grave for long periods. If it were a fact that it is revived, that would have been witnessed, yet it is proved from the Holy Qur'ān that a dead person is revived and we have, therefore, to accept that he is revived with another body which we are not able to see. Very probably that body is made out of the fine qualities of this body and along with it human faculties are revived. As that body is much finer than this body, the door of visions is opened widely to it

and the realities of the hereafter are seen as they are. The wrongdoers then suffer a torment of despair in addition to the physical torment. It is thus an agreed principle in Islām that the torment or comfort of the grave is perceived through a body. Reason also demands this as experience has established that the spiritual faculties of man do not manifest themselves without a body.

[Kitāb-ul-Bariyyah, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 13, pp. 70-71]

The Philosophy of Punishment in the Hereafter

There is a philosophy about punishment in the hereafter which is not set forth perfectly by any religion except Islām. God Almighty says in the Holy Qur'ān:

مَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا²¹⁴

He who is blind in this world shall be blind in the hereafter and even more astray.

This shows that a person takes with him from this world the eyes with which to behold God Almighty and the senses with which to perceive Him. He who does not acquire these senses in this life will not enjoy them in the hereafter. This is a mystery which is not understood by the common people. If its meaning is not that which we have set forth, then it is entirely wrong that those who are blind in this world shall be blind in the hereafter. The truth is that to recognize God Almighty without any error and to acquire a true understanding of His attributes in this world is the key to all comforts and delights of the future. This verse clearly indicates that we carry a torment with us from this world and that the blind existence and foul actions of this world will appear in the

²¹⁴ Banī Isrā'īl, 17:73 [Publisher]

form of the torment of hell in the other world and they will not be anything new. As by shutting the doors of a room a person deprives himself of light and of fresh life-giving air, or by swallowing a poison he puts an end to his life, in the same way, when he moves away from God and commits sin, he falls into a darkness and is involved in torment.

The meaning of *Junāh*, the Arabic word for sin, is to incline and to move away from the true centre. When a person moves away from God and withdraws from the light which descends upon the hearts from God, he is involved in a darkness which becomes a source of torment for him. Then he suffers the same type of torment of which type is his turning away. If he wishes to revert to the centre and transports himself to the spot where that light falls, he regains the light. As we observe in the world that we enjoy light in a room when we open its windows, in the same way, in the spiritual system to return to the true centre becomes the source of comfort and rescues from the suffering which had resulted from departing from the centre. This is called repentance. The darkness that is produced in this manner is called the misguidance of hell and to revert to the true centre which bestows comfort is called heaven. To move away from sin and to revert to virtue that would please God Almighty, becomes the atonement of the sin and wipes out its consequences. That is why God Almighty has said:

إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ²¹⁵

Good deeds wipe out evil deeds.

As vice contains the poison of destruction and good

²¹⁵ Hūd, 11:115 [Publisher]

contains the antidote of life, good alone is the means of overcoming the poison of vice. In other words, torment means the absence of comfort and salvation means the achievement of comfort and joy.

Torment is the Result of Man's Actions

Illness means the condition when the body does not function normally and health is the condition when all natural matters function in the proper way. The moving away of a hand or foot or any other limb from its proper position causes pain and if this condition persists for a time not only the affected limb becomes useless, but it begins to affect other limbs also. The same is the case with the soul. When a person moves away from God, Who is the True Source of his life, and departs from the religion of nature, he is involved in suffering and if his heart is not dead and retains its feeling, he feels the torment keenly. If this condition is not reformed, there is an apprehension that all spiritual faculties might gradually become useless and a severe torment might ensue. Thus no suffering comes from outside; all suffering is generated within a person. We do not deny that torment is God's action, but it is the consequence of man's actions as when a person swallows poison, God kills him. This is indicated by God, the Glorious, in the verses:

تَارَا لِلّٰهِ الْمَوْقِدَةُ ۝ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْاَفْئِدَةِ ۝²¹⁶

The torment of God is the fire that God kindles and its flame rises from the heart of man.

It is thus clear that the real seed of torment is the foulness of one's being which assumes the form of torment.

²¹⁶ Al-Humazah, 104:7-8 [Publisher]

Nature of the Blessings of Paradise

In the same way, the source of the comfort of heaven are a person's own actions. If he does not depart from the religion of nature and does not move away from the centre and, as a servant, he lies at the threshold of God and partakes of the lights of Godhead, then he is like the healthy limb which has not moved from its position and is performing the function for which God has created it and he suffers no pain and all is comfort.

A Person's Heaven is Generated within Him

In the Holy Qur'ān, He says:

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ²¹⁷

Convey to those who believe and act righteously the good news that for them are gardens beneath which rivers flow.

In this verse God Almighty has called faith a garden and righteous actions streams of water. This is the relationship between righteous actions and faith. As no garden can flourish and bring forth fruit without water, in the same way, no faith is helpful which is not accompanied by righteous action. So what is heaven? It is the embodiment of faith and righteous action. Like hell paradise too is nothing external. Indeed, a person's heaven is born within him.

Remember! The blessings that are bestowed there are nothing but the pious which is shaped in the world. True faith resembles a plant and righteous actions are like streams which irrigate that plant and maintain its green-

²¹⁷ Al-Baqarah, 2:26 [Publisher]

ness and glory. In this world they are perceived as if in a dream, but in the other world they will be felt and observed as realities. That is why it is said that when the dwellers of heaven are bestowed these bounties, they will say:

هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأُتُوا بِهِ مُتَشَابِهًا²¹⁸

This does not mean that we will be bestowed in heaven the milk, or honey, or grapes, or pomegranates, etc., that we consume here. They will be entirely different except in name. They are described physically but we are informed that they illumine the soul and create understanding of God. Their source is the soul and righteousness. It does not mean that in this world what we partake of milk, honey, grapes, pomegranates, etc., will also be provided in the hereafter. Not at all. Those things in their kind and condition will be totally different except those that have common names. Although all these blessings are exemplified in concrete terms, it has been pointed out at the same time that all these blessings illumine the soul and lead to the knowledge of Divine. Their source is soul and truth. ‘*What was given to us before*’, does not mean that they are material bounties of this world. No, absolutely not. What God means to say in this verse is that the believers who act righteously make with their own hands a heaven the fruit of which they will enjoy in the other world also. As they will have tasted that fruit spiritually in this world, they will recognize it in the other world and will exclaim: ‘These appear to be the same fruits and spiritual exaltations that we had enjoyed in the world’. In

²¹⁸ ‘This is what was given us before, and gifts mutually resembling shall be brought to them.’—Al-Baqarah, 2:26 [Publisher]

this manner those who worship God and possess spiritual insight will recognize them.

... there is a philosophy about heaven and hell which is as I have just set out. It should, however, not be forgotten that the punishments of this world are meant as a warning and a lesson and are part of a system of discipline. There is a relationship between statesmanship and mercy and these punishments are the reflection of that relationship. Human actions are preserved and recorded as sound is recorded in a gramophone. It is only a person who possesses insight who can draw pleasure and benefit from the contemplation of this system.

[Malfūzāt, vol. III, pp. 25-30]

Torment is something negative in nature. Absence of comfort is torment. Salvation is something positive in nature; that is, the recovery of comfort and prosperity is salvation. As darkness means absence of light, suffering means absence of well-being. Illness is the name of the condition when the body does not function properly and health is the name of the condition when all natural functions revert to normal. When the spiritual condition of a person moves away from the normal, this disturbance is called torment. When a limb like a hand or foot moves away from its proper position a pain is felt and the limb becomes unable to perform its allotted function and if it is neglected it gradually becomes useless or becomes infected and falls away. Very often there is apprehension of its neighbouring limbs being affected also. The pain that this limb generates does not come from outside but results naturally from its diseased condition. The same is the case with spiritual torment. When a person departs from the religion of nature and loses steadfastness, spiritual torment begins, though an ignorant, who is

steeped in heedlessness, may not feel it. In that condition the affected soul is disabled from performing spiritual service. If this condition lasts for a time the soul becomes useless and becomes dangerous for its neighbours. The torment with which it is afflicted does not come from outside, but is generated by its diseased condition. No doubt it is the act of God, but it is like the case when a person takes a fatal dose of arsenic, God Almighty kills him. Or when a person shuts all the windows of his room, God Almighty makes the room dark, or if a person were to cut off his tongue, God Almighty would deprive him of the power of speech. These are all the acts of God which follow upon the acts of man. In the same way, spiritual torment is the act of God Almighty which follows upon a person's own action. This is indicated in the verse:

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَةُ ۝ الَّتِي تَطَّلِمُ عَلَى الْأَفْعِدَىٰ ۝²¹⁹

Chastisement of God is a torment inflicted by God. Its first flame rises from the heart of man himself.

This means that the root of the torment is in the heart of man and that the impure thoughts of the heart are the fuel of this hell. As the seed of the torment is the foulness of one's being which becomes personified as torment, it follows that that which removes this torment is righteousness and purity.

[Kitāb-ul-Bariyyah, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 13, pp. 81-82]

The roots of torment are the mistaken beliefs and wrong actions of a person. They will be personified by the wrath of God in the form of fire. As striking a stone hard

²¹⁹ Al-Humazah, I04:7-8 [Publisher]

produces fire, in the same way, Divine wrath striking these false beliefs and wrong actions will produce flames of fire and that fire will consume the disbelievers and the wrong-doers. As you observe that the fire of lightning meets the inner fire of a person and the two consume him, in the same way, the fire of Divine wrath meeting the fire of false beliefs and wrong actions consumes a person. This is indicated by Allāh the Exalted in the Holy Qur'ān:

تَارًا لِلَّهِ الْمَوْقَدَةُ ۝ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأُجُودِ ۝²²⁰

What is hell? It is the fire of Allāh's wrath, which sets the hearts ablaze. That is, the hearts in which the embers of misconduct and false beliefs are still smouldering will feed the flames of their own fire with the fire of the Divine wrath and the two fires jointly reduce them to ashes just as lightening reduces a person to ashes.

[Majmū'a Ishtihārāt, vol. II, pp. 189-190]

QUESTION:²²¹ Let Mirzā Ṣāhib recall his own belief, according to which after death a person who attains salvation will dwell in a heavenly mansion where God has planted a garden and where handsome women are provided and streams of wine, etc., are running. In short, even after salvation, all worldly provisions will be present and nothing more. Even that which is prohibited here, like wine and multiplicity of women, will be provided there. This is not true. Those who attain salvation shall pass their time happily and independently.

²²⁰ Al-Humazah, 104:7-8 [Publisher]

²²¹ This extract is from the debate held in 1886 between the Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (the Promised Messiah), and Lāla Murlīdhar, an Āryā Samājist. [Publisher]

ANSWER: According to your principle those who attain salvation will be expelled from the house of salvation after a fixed period and their weeping and crying will attract no mercy and the order of their expulsion will be carried out with great harshness against their will and they will be thrown out of the house of salvation in great disgrace and humiliation. At that time will not that paradise become a hell or even worse for them? In this condition of compulsive misery where will be their independence and what happiness will they feel? You say that those who attain salvation will dwell in great joy and happiness. Can any perfect happiness be enjoyed in a place where one is faced with the prospect of expulsion and enduring misery for millions of years once more, and all the time one is eaten up with the anxiety that after a short while one would have to encounter countless humiliations and would have to pass through incarnations of insects and dogs and cats?

May God save us from your house of salvation. If such is *Permeshwar* and his house of salvation, then the unfortunate pious people will have only weeping here and weeping there.

Your objection that in the paradise of the Muslims worldly bounties will also be provided has no substance. On the contrary it should put you and your *Permeshwar* to great shame, inasmuch as the All-Powerful and Self-Sufficient God of the Muslims has out of His limitless treasures permanently and eternally bestowed everything in the hereafter on those who believe in the Holy Qur'ān and has bestowed upon them spiritual as well as physical bounties, inasmuch as He knew that His true worshippers do not obey Him and worship Him in this world only through their souls, but through their souls and their

bodies together.

Human perfection is not achieved through the soul alone but through a combination of the soul and the body. In order to provide perfect good fortune for those obedient to Him and to recompense them fully, He divided the delight of eternal salvation into two kinds. He bestowed upon them the delights of His Beloved vision and sent down upon them His other bounties like rain. In short, He did that which was worthy of the powers and greatness and limitless mercy of that All-Powerful One. As a contrast, your *Permeshwar* proved to be poor and bankrupt and could not lead you to any goal nor provide you with any permanent joy on account of his helplessness and indigence and powerlessness. Indeed he could do nothing for you. He could not bestow either spiritual or physical bounties upon you forever and left you frustrated and unsuccessful and deprived on both sides. He, for whom you were ready to die and to whom you were devoted, proved so unjust and uncomprehending and unaware that he attached no value to your spiritual and physical labours and esteemed your loving fidelity and devotion as paid labour, extending over a few days. Can one entertain increasing love for such a miserly, powerless and ignorant *Permeshwar* and can any heart turn to him with perfect sincerity? Certainly not. On the other hand, on realizing his lack of power and generosity and appreciation, the souls of his worshippers would be grieved and remorseful that they had laboured uselessly for the sake of such a *Permeshwar* and for the limited salvation that he promised....

The Nature of the Bounties of Heaven

As regards the objection how would wine become lawful

in heaven when it is unlawful in this life, the answer is the same that God Almighty has Himself given that the wine of heaven has no relationship with the evil-inciting wines of the world. God Almighty has said:

وَسَقْفُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُورًا ۝²²²
 إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِنْ كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُورًا ۝ عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا
 عِبَادُ اللَّهِ يُفَجِّرُونَهَا تَفْجِيرًا ۝²²³

This means that: God will give the dwellers of paradise to drink a wine that will purify them altogether.

The virtuous shall drink of a cup which will be tempered with camphor, that is to say, by drinking that wine their hearts will grow cold altogether to the love of that which is beside God. That wine is a spring from which the men of God start drinking in this very world. They cause it to flow easily in wide and broad streams.

In other words, through their loving labour all their hindrances are removed and the ups and downs of their humanness are levelled. They cut asunder wholly from the world and turn to God, and their understanding of the Divine is perfected. At another place it is said:

وَكَأْسٍ مِّن مَّوَدِينٍ ۝ لَا يَصَدَّعُونَ عَنْهَا وَلَا يُؤْذُونَ ۝²²⁴
 لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْثِيمًا ۝ إِذْ يَقُولُ سَلَامًا ۝²²⁵
 وَجُودًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهَا ۝ وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا تَاظِرَةٌ ۝²²⁶

²²² Al-Dahr, 76:22 [Publisher]

²²³ Al-Dahr, 76:6-7 [Publisher]

²²⁴ Al-Wāqī‘ah, 56:19-20 [Publisher]

²²⁵ Al-Wāqī‘ah, 56:26-27 [Publisher]

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَصْلَبُ سَبِيلًا²²⁷

The cups of purifying wine which will be like pure and limpid water will be offered to the dwellers of paradise. This wine will be free from all defects like headache, stupefaction and drunkenness.

They will not hear therein any vain, frivolous or sinful talk, but only the salutation: “Peace, peace” which is a sign of compassion, love and happiness will be heard on all sides.

On that day faces of the believers will be fresh and handsome. They will behold their Lord.

He who is blind in this world shall be blind in the hereafter and even more astray.

These verses show that the wine of paradise has no relationship or resemblance with the wines of this world. Indeed, in all its qualities it is opposed to these wines. Nowhere is it stated in the Holy Qur’ān that like the wines of the world it will be made from grapes or molasses or the bark of acacia or any other physical substance. It is repeatedly said that the essence of that wine is the love and understanding of the Divine which a believer takes with him from this world. It is a Divine mystery that that spiritual condition will appear like wine. To those who possess insight, this mystery is revealed in visions and wise people arrive at its reality through other signs.

²²⁶ Al-Qiyāmah, 75:23-24 [Publisher]

²²⁷ Banī Isrā’īl, 17:73 [Publisher]

The personification of spiritual matters in physical forms has been mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān at several places, as, for instance, that the glorification of God will be personified like fruit-bearing trees and good actions will appear as pure and clear streams.

[Surmah Chashm Āryā, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 2, pp. 150-157]

The Wrath of God has a Spiritual Philosophy

The Holy Qur'ān does not describe the wrath of God Almighty as it is described in the Vedās. Rather, the wrath described in the Holy Qur'ān has spiritual philosophy. For instance, regarding the nature of Divine punishment, the Holy Qur'ān says:

تَارُ الْمَوْتَدَةُ ۝ الَّتِي تَطْلِعُ عَلَى الْاَفْعِدَةِ ۝²²⁸

What is hell? It is the fire which sets the hearts ablaze.

It means that when a person develops corrupt ideas in his heart, which are opposed to the perfection for which man has been created, then as one who is hungry and thirsty dies from lack of food and water, in the same way, the one who is occupied with corrupt ideas and is deprived of God's love and of obedience to Him, which are like food and water, also dies. Thus according to the teaching of the Holy Qur'ān, a person himself prepares the means of his destruction and is not in any way forced by God. For instance, when a person shuts all the windows of his room and leaves none of them open, doubtless his room will become dark. The shutting of the windows is his action and making the room dark is God's action according to the law of nature. In the same way, when a person commits a sin God Almighty thereafter manifests His

²²⁸ Al-Humazah, 104:7-8 [Publisher]

action which becomes the punishment of the sin. Yet God does not shut the door of repentance, as when the occupant of a dark room opens a window God Almighty pours light into the room.

Thus according to the Holy Qur'ān, the wrath of God does not mean that He becomes angry by bringing about an undesirable change in His condition. When a person is angry, he falls into distress and feels a sort of pain and loses his happiness, but God is always happy and suffers no distress. His wrath means that as He is Holy, He does not desire that His servants should adopt ways of impurity and demands that impurity should be swept away. If a person persists in impurity, God, the Holy, deprives him of His grace which is the basis of life and joy and comfort and that condition becomes the source of torment for the disobedient one. This might be illustrated as the case of a garden which is irrigated by the water of a stream but when the owners of the garden give up obeying the owner of the stream, the latter dams up the water of the stream and deprives the garden of it so that it dries up.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 62-63]

Hell is Not Everlasting

It is unreasonable and is contrary to the perfect attributes of God, the Glorious, that once a person has been condemned to hell, only the Divine attributes of chastisement should be manifested in his case and the attributes of mercy and forgiveness should be suspended forever and should not come into operation. From what God Almighty has said in His Book, it appears that those condemned to hell shall dwell therein for a long period which is metaphorically described as forever, but then

the attribute of mercy will be manifested and, as is mentioned in a *Ḥadīth*, God will stretch forth His hand into hell and all those who fall into His grip will be taken out of hell. This *Ḥadīth* indicates that in the end all will attain salvation as the hand of God is unlimited and no one can be left out of it.

[Chashma Masīhī, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 20, p. 369]

He who Devotes His Life to the Cause of God is a Martyr

There are many verses of the Holy Qur'ān and many *Aḥādīth*, which show that the souls of people who are pure enter paradise as soon as they die. There are several *Aḥādīth* that mention that the martyrs will eat of the fruits of paradise. Almighty Allāh says:

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ²²⁹

Do not account those who are slain in the cause of Allāh as dead. Indeed, they are living in the presence of their Lord and are provided for.

Previous Books also support this. This proves that the souls of the pure will enter paradise. Now paradise will contain physical bounties of diverse types and fruits of many kinds and entry into paradise means that those bounties should be availed of. In such case the entry of the soul alone into paradise is meaningless and useless. Will the soul enter paradise and yet not be able to avail itself of its bounties? The verse:

وَادْخُلِيْ جَنَّتِيْ²³⁰

²²⁹ Āl-e-‘Imrān, 3:170 [Publisher]

²³⁰ ‘And enter thou My Garden.’—Al-Fajr, 89:31 [Publisher]

clearly shows that a believer is invested with a body after death. All great Muslim thinkers are agreed that pure believers are invested with a holy and bright body as soon as they die, through which they enjoy the bounties of paradise. To confine paradise at that stage to martyrs alone would amount to disbelief. Can a true believer commit such impertinence as to affirm that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) under whose grave paradise lies, is outside paradise, but those who acquired faith and righteousness through him and became martyrs are dwelling in paradise and are eating of its fruits? The truth is that he who devotes his life to the cause of God is a martyr and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) is the first of martyrs.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Part V, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 21, pp. 388-390]

An objection is raised that if every pure believer who is not burdened with sin enters paradise immediately on death, this would mean a rejection of resurrection and all its accompanying conditions, inasmuch as, according to the verse:

وَمَا هُمْ بِسَنَاءٍ بِمُخْرَجِينَ²³¹

their departing from paradise is not permissible. Thus, the whole system of resurrection and the events relating to the hereafter would be nullified.

The answer is that the Holy Qur'ān teaches that pure believers enter paradise immediately on death and also teaches that there will be resurrection of the body and the dead will be revived and we believe in both. The only difference is that the entry into paradise on death is a

²³¹ 'Nor shall they ever be ejected therefrom.'—Al-Ḥijr, 15:49
[Publisher]

general condition and the bodies that are bestowed on the believers immediately on death are imperfect. The day of the resurrection of the bodies is the day of the grand manifestation. On that day perfect bodies will be bestowed, but the connection of the dwellers of paradise with paradise will not be interrupted. From one aspect they will be in paradise, and from another aspect they will face God Almighty.

[Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Part V, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 21, p. 387, footnote]

Three Grades of Heaven and Hell

Heaven and hell have three grades. The **first grade**, which is imperfect, begins when a person departing from this world enters his grave. This grade has been metaphorically described in the *Aḥādīth* in several ways. One way is that for a righteous person a window is opened in the grave towards heaven through which he observes the splendour of heaven and enjoys its breezes. The size of this window corresponds to the grade of the faith or actions of the dead person. It is also recorded that those who leave the world in a condition in which they are wholly lost in God and who lay down their lives in the cause of the Beloved like the martyrs and *Ṣiddīqs*, who are even ahead of the martyrs, for them it is not merely a window that is opened into heaven, but they enter heaven with the whole of their beings and faculties. Nevertheless, they do not enjoy the delights of heaven to a perfect degree before the Day of Judgement.

In the same way, for the dead body of a wicked person a window is opened in the grave towards hell through which a consuming vapour arrives in the grave from hell and that wicked soul burns all the time in its flames. But for those who depart from the world in such condition

that, on account of their persistent disobedience, they are wholly lost in Satan and in obedience to him they cut asunder altogether from God, it is not only a window that is opened for them after their death towards hell, they are cast into hell with their whole being and all faculties, as God has said:

مِمَّا حَطَبْتُمْ لَهُمْ أُعْرِفُوا فَأَدْخَلُوا نَارًا²³²

Nevertheless, they are not subjected to the full torment of hell before the Day of Judgement.

There is a **second stage** of entry into heaven and hell which should be called the intermediate stage, which is attained after the resurrection, but before entry into the great heaven or the great hell. In this grade the faculties are sharpened and the manifestation of God's mercy or His wrath is observed in a perfect way, and the delights of heaven or the torments of hell are felt more strongly on account of the nearness of the great heaven or the great hell, as God the Glorious, has said:

وَأُزْلِقَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ۝ وَبُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِلْغَوِينَ ۝²³³
 وَجُودَةٌ يَوْمَ مَرْيَدٍ مُّسْفَرَةٌ ۝ ضَا حِكَةٌ مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ ۝ وَوَجُودَةٌ يَوْمَ مَرْيَدٍ عَلَيْهَا عَمْرَةٌ ۝
 تَرَاهُمْ قَائِمِينَ ۝ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكٰفِرَةُ الْفٰجِرَةُ ۝²³⁴

In this second grade also people are not equal. There are those of a high grade who are accompanied by heavenly

²³² 'Because of their sins they were drowned and made to enter Fire.'—Nūh, 71:26 [Publisher]

²³³ 'And Heaven shall be brought near to the righteous; and Hell shall be opened to those who have gone astray.'—Al-Shu'arā', 26:91-92 [Publisher]

²³⁴ 'On that day some faces will be bright, laughing, joyous! and some faces, on that day, will have dust upon them, darkness will cover them. Those are the ones that disbelieved and were wicked.'—'Abasa, 80:39-43 [Publisher]

lights. Allāh the Glorious refers to them in the verse:

نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَىٰ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ²³⁵

In the same way, there are great disbelievers in whose hearts a fire is kindled before they enter completely into hell, as Allāh the Glorious says:

تَارًا لِلَّهِ الْمُؤَقَّدَةُ ۝ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ ۝²³⁶

Above this second grade is a **third grade**, which is the last of the grades which people will enter after the Day of Judgement and will enjoy or suffer in a complete and perfect manner. In these three grades a person is in a type of heaven or hell, and in none of these grades is he excluded from heaven or hell. From one grade he progresses into another.

One of the ways of such progress is that, for instance, a person dies in a low condition of faith and action and a small hole is made for him towards heaven as his capacity for the manifestation of heaven is limited to that much. Thereafter, if he leaves behind righteous progeny, who supplicate earnestly for his forgiveness and for that purpose give alms to the poor or, if he had love for a man of God who supplicates earnestly for his forgiveness, or he has left behind him some project which is of public benefit, then by the blessing of these good actions that are carried on his behalf, the window that is opened for him towards heaven widens daily and this process is accelerated by the Divine pronouncement: *My mercy outruns My wrath*; till the window becomes a wide gate

²³⁵ ‘Their light will run before them and on their right hands.’—Al-Tahrīm, 66:9 [Publisher]

²³⁶ ‘It is Allāh’s kindled fire which leaps at hearts.’—Al-Humazah, 104:7-8 [Publisher]

and he enters heaven like the martyrs and *Ṣiddīqs*....

God Almighty has made so much provision for the widening of this window that it appears clear that His purpose is that if anyone travels towards Him with a particle of faith and action that particle will be constantly nurtured. If by any chance all sources of good that should reach a dead person from this world are unavailable, at least this source remains available that God Almighty has imperatively commanded all believers and pious people and martyrs and *Ṣiddīqs* that they should most sincerely supplicate for the forgiveness of those of their brethren who have passed on from this world. It is thus obvious that a supplication that is made by a host of believers will not be in vain, but will work daily to widen the window that was opened towards heaven for the sinful believers who had died. These supplications have so far widened numberless windows so that countless persons have entered paradise who were bestowed in the early days only a small window for the contemplation of heaven.

In this age some of the Muslims are under the misconception that only the martyrs will enter heaven immediately after death and that all other believers, including Prophets and Messengers, will remain outside heaven till the Day of Judgement and that only a window will be opened for them towards heaven. They have not considered that all Prophets and *Ṣiddīqs* are spiritually superior to martyrs and that being kept away from paradise is a type of torment which cannot be contemplated for those who have been forgiven. Can one concerning whom God Almighty has said:

رَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ²³⁷

remain behind the martyrs in good fortune and the achievement of his purpose? It is a pity that through their lack of intelligence, these people have reversed the law. They conceive that the first entrants into heaven will be the martyrs and that the turn of the Prophets and *Ṣiddīqs* would arrive after countless years. These people are guilty of great disrespect and can derive no benefit from vain excuses. Everyone can understand that those who are foremost in faith and action should be the first to enter heaven and not that they should only have a window opened for them like those who are weak of faith, and that the martyrs should have access to all the fruits of heaven as soon as they die. If entry into heaven depends upon perfect faith, perfect sincerity and perfect devotion, then there is no one who is ahead of the Prophets and *Ṣiddīqs*, whose whole life is so devoted to God Almighty that they are like the dead and yearn that they should be martyred in the cause of Allāh, and be revived and be martyred again, and be revived and be martyred again.

It is thus clear that there is such great provision for entry into heaven that almost all believers will enter it completely before the Day of Judgement and that the Day of Judgement will not expel them from heaven, but will bring it even nearer. From the illustration of the window, it should be realized how heaven is brought near to the grave. This does not mean that heaven is brought physically close to the grave. It is brought spiritually near. In this way, the dwellers of paradise will be spiritually present in the Day of Judgement and will also be in

²³⁷ ‘Some of them He exalted by degrees of rank.’—Al-Baqarah, 2:254 [Publisher]

paradise. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has said: Heaven is under my grave. This is worth reflecting upon.

[*Izāla-e-Auhām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 3, pp. 282-286]

18

THE PURPOSE OF CREATION

Though different people, on account of their short-sightedness or lack of courage, appoint various types of objectives for their lives and stop short at worldly purposes and desires, yet the purpose that God Almighty has specified in His Holy Word is:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ²³⁸

I have created jinn and men so that they should recognize and worship Me.

According to this verse the true purpose of human life is the worship and understanding of God Almighty and devotion to Him.

Only the Creator can Enjoin the Purpose of Life

It is obvious that it is not open to man that he should himself lay down the purpose of his life by his own authority inasmuch as man does not arrive in the world of his own will, nor will he depart from this world of his own will. He is a created being and He Who created him and bestowed upon him better and higher faculties than those bestowed upon other animates, has enjoined a purpose for his life. Whether anyone comprehends that purpose or not, without doubt the purpose of man's creation is the worship and understanding of God Almighty and to lose himself in Him.

²³⁸ Al-Dhāriyāt, 51:57 [Publisher]

[Islāmī Uṣūl kī Philosophy, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 10, p. 414]

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا
وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا²³⁹

This means that the Divine Trust, by which is meant the love of God and complete obedience to Him even in the face of hardship, was offered to the angels and the whole of creation and the mountains, all apparently full of strength, but they all refused to undertake it, being afraid of its grandeur. But man undertook it for he possessed two qualities, that he could force himself in the cause of God Almighty and could advance so far in love of Him as to forget altogether everything else.

[Taufīh-e-Marām, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 3, pp. 75-76]

The Three Objects of Life

The real purpose of all the external and internal limbs and faculties that have been bestowed on man is understanding and worship and love of God. That is why, despite a thousand occupations, man does not find his true well-being except in God Almighty. Having acquired great wealth, or achieved high office, or having become a great merchant, or having acquired governing authority, or become a great philosopher, he departs in the end from these worldly involvements with a sense of frustration. His heart rebukes him all the time about his deep concern with the world and his conscience never approves his wiles and deceits and wrongful actions. This problem can be appreciated in another way. The purpose of the creation of a thing is determined by its highest achievement beyond which its faculties cannot rise. For

²³⁹ Al-Aḥzāb, 33:73 [Publisher]

instance, the highest a bullock is capable of is ploughing, or irrigation, or transportation, and therefore these are the purpose of its life and it cannot rise above them. But when we take stock of man's faculties and powers to discover his highest capacity, we find that he is invested with the faculty of seeking after God so much so that he desires that he should become so devoted to God's love that he should have nothing of his own and that everything should become God's. He shares his natural needs like food and drink and rest with other animates, and in industry some animals are ahead of him; for instance, the bees produce such excellent honey from every type of flower that man has so far not been able to compete with them. It is clear, therefore, that the highest capacity of man is meeting with God Almighty and thus the true purpose of his life is that the window of his heart should open towards God.

How to Achieve the Purpose of Life

The question is how and through what means can man achieve this purpose?

First Means

Let it be clear that the principal means for achieving this purpose is the correct recognition of and faith in the True God. If this first step is wrongly taken and a person sets up a bird, or an animal, or any of the elements, or a human being as his god, it cannot be expected that his subsequent steps would be taken along the straight path. The True God helps His seekers; but that which is dead cannot help the dead. Allāh the Glorious has illustrated this point beautifully in this verse:

لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا كَبَاسِطٍ

كَقَيْمِهِ إِلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَسْبُلُوهُ فَآهُ وَمَا هُوَ بِمَارِيحِهِ وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ²⁴⁰

Worthy of worship alone is the same true God Who is Omnipotent. Those on whom they call for help beside Him, do not respond to them at all. Their case is like that of one who stretches forth his hands towards water and ask it to enter his mouth. But will it come do so? Not at all. Thus all the prayers of those who are not cognizant of the True God are futile.

Second Means

The second means of achieving the true purpose of life is to become aware of the perfect beauty of God Almighty, for beauty is something which naturally attracts the hearts and generates love. The beauty of God Almighty is His Unity and His Greatness and His other attributes, as the Holy Qur'an says:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْ ۝ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝
وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ²⁴¹

This means that, in His Being and His attributes and His Glory, God is One without associate. All are dependent upon Him and every particle derives its life from Him. He is the Source of grace for everything and receives no grace from anything. He is neither a son nor a father for none is equal to Him.

The Holy Qur'an repeatedly draws attention to God's perfection and greatness and points out that such God is the Besought of all hearts and not one who is dead or weak or lacks mercy or power.

²⁴⁰ Al-Ra'ad, 13:15 [Publisher]

²⁴¹ Al-Ikhlāṣ, 112:2-5 [Publisher]

Third Means

The third means of achieving the purpose of life is to become aware of the benevolence of God Almighty for love is generated by beauty and benevolence. The benevolent attributes of God Almighty are set forth briefly in the *Sūrah Fātiḥah*, where it is said:

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۝²⁴²

It is obvious that the perfection of benevolence consists in that God Almighty created His servants from nothing and thereafter His Providence was bestowed upon them and He became the support of everything, and all types of His mercy were manifested for His servants. His benevolence is without limit and beyond count as is repeatedly set forth in the Holy Qur'ān, as, for instance:

وَرَأَى تَعْدُ وَإِنَّمَا تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا²⁴³

If you try to number the bounties of Allāh, you will certainly not be able to count them.

Fourth Means

The fourth means of achieving the true purpose is Prayer, as is said:

أُدْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ²⁴⁴

You pray and I shall accept your prayer.

There is repeated urge towards Prayer, so that man should achieve his purpose not through his own power,

²⁴² 'All praise belongs to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds, The Gracious, the Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgement.'—*Al-Fātiḥah*, 1:2-4 [Publisher]

²⁴³ *Ibrāhīm*, 14:35 [Publisher]

²⁴⁴ *Al-Mu'min*, 40:61 [Publisher]

but through God's power.

Fifth Means

The fifth means of achieving the purpose of life is striving in the cause of Allāh with one's property and one's faculties and one's life and one's reason, as He says:

جَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ²⁴⁵

وَمَا رَزَقْتُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ²⁴⁶

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا ²⁴⁷

Dedicate in the path of Allāh your possessions, your lives, and your selves to their fullest capacity.

And devote to the Divine cause all that you have been granted by God including reason, knowledge, understanding and skill.

And those who strive after Us in every way, We guide them along the paths that lead to Us.

Sixth Means

The sixth means for achieving the purpose of life is steadfastness; that is to say, that a seeker should not become tired and should not be daunted by trials, as Allāh the Exalted says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
أَلَّا يَتَخَفُوا وَلَا يَتَحَزَّبُوا أَلَّا يَشْرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ○

²⁴⁵ Al-Tauba, 9:41 [Publisher]

²⁴⁶ Al-Baqarah, 2:4 [Publisher]

²⁴⁷ Al-‘Ankabūt, 29:70 [Publisher]

تَمَنَّوْا أَوْلِيَاءُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ²⁴⁸

On them who affirm: Our Lord is Allāh; and then remain steadfast, angels descend, re-assuring them: Fear not, nor grieve, and rejoice in the Garden that you were promised. We are your friends in this life and in the hereafter.

This is an indication that the pleasure of God Almighty is won through steadfastness. It is true that steadfastness is more than a miracle. Perfect steadfastness is that one should find oneself surrounded on all sides by calamities and one should find one's life and honour in danger and nothing comforting should be available, so much so, that God Almighty should stop—by way of trials—the comforting visions and dreams and revelation and should leave one in the midst of terrifying fears, but that at such a time, one should not abandon courage and should not step back like a coward and should not let one's fidelity be weakened. One's sincerity and loyalty should not be shaken, one should be pleased with the humiliation, one should be reconciled to death, one should not await the support of a friend, one should not seek glad tidings from God, because of one's delicate situation, and one should stand up straight despite helplessness and weakness and the lack of every comfort. One should stretch forth one's neck, saying: Whatever is to happen, let it happen; one should face courageously whatever has been determined and one should not be impatient nor complain till the trial is over. This is the steadfastness the reward of which is God. This is the quality by virtue of which the dust of Messengers, Prophets, *Ṣiddīqs* and martyrs is still so fragrant. This is indicated by the Glorious God in the

²⁴⁸ Ḥā Mīm Sajdah, 41:31-32 [Publisher]

prayer:

249 اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

meaning, O Allāh! show us the path of steadfastness by treading along which one wins Thy bounties and favours and Thou art pleased.

This is also indicated in another verse:

رَبَّنَا آفِرْغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَتَوَقَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ²⁵⁰

meaning, Lord: at this time of trial send down upon our hearts the comfort that should make us steadfast and do Thou so ordain that we should die in a state of submission to Thee;

At the time of trials and misfortune, God Almighty causes a light to descend upon the hearts of those who are dear to Him, being strengthened by which they face misfortunes calmly and, out of the sweetness of their faith, they kiss the chains that are put round their feet in His cause. When calamities descend upon a man of God and signs of death appear, he does not contend with his Lord that He might be safeguarded against them, inasmuch as to persist at such a time in supplications for security amounts to fighting God Almighty and is contrary to complete submission. A true lover advances forward at a time of calamity and holding life as nothing, and saying goodbye to love of it, submits himself completely to the will of his Lord and seeks only His pleasure. Concerning such people, God the Glorious says:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ Al-Fātiḥah, 1:6-7 [Publisher]

²⁵⁰ Al-A‘rāf, 7:127 [Publisher]

²⁵¹ Al-Baqarah, 2:208 [Publisher]

It means that the man of God dedicates his life in the path of God and, in return, earns the pleasure of Allāh. These are the people who receive the special mercy of Allāh.

In short, this indeed is the spirit of the steadfastness which we have described and which leads to the God. Let him who wills, grasp this point.

Seventh Means

The seventh means of achieving the purpose of life is keeping company with the righteous and to follow their example. One of the needs of the advent of Prophets is that man naturally seeks a perfect example, for it fosters eagerness and resolve. He who does not follow a good example becomes slothful and goes astray. This is indicated by Allāh the Glorious in the verses:

كُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ²⁵²
صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ²⁵³

Keep company with the righteous, and adopt the path of those on whom Allāh's favours have been bestowed before you.

Eighth Means

The eighth means of achieving the purpose of life are pure visions and dreams and revelation from God Almighty. To travel towards God is to tread upon a very delicate path which is attended by diverse types of calamities and sufferings. It is possible that a person may be overtaken by forgetfulness in pursuing this unfamiliar

²⁵² Al-Tauba, 9:119 [Publisher]

²⁵³ Al-Fātiḥah, 1:7 [Publisher]

path or may give up hope and should abandon further advance. Therefore, the mercy of God Almighty seeks to comfort him in his progress in this journey and strengthen his heart and to uphold his resolve and to increase his eagerness. Thus it is God's way that from time to time he comforts those who are voyaging along this path with His revelation and manifests to them that He is with them. Thus strengthened, they perform this journey with great eagerness. He has said:

لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ²⁵⁴

There are several other means for achieving the purpose of life which the Holy Qur'ān has set out, but considerations of space forbid us from setting them out here.

[Islāmī Uṣūl kī Philosophy, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 10, pp. 415-422]

Worship Benefits Man Himself

Question:²⁵⁵ God Almighty being Gracious and Benevolent, His direction that man should worship Him is for the benefit of man and not that it adds in any way to God's honour.

Answer: It is true that through the worship of God man's own welfare is intended, yet the *Rubūbiyyat* of God Almighty demands that by avoiding evil and devoting himself to His worship and obedience, man should achieve his good fortune. If man does not wish to follow that path His wrath is aroused not for His own sake, but

²⁵⁴ 'For them are glad tidings in the present life and also in the hereafter.'—Yūnus, 10:65 [Publisher]

²⁵⁵ This extract is from the debate held in 1886 between the Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (the Promised Messiah), and Lāla Murlīdhar, an Āryā Samājist. [Publisher]

for the sake of man and He subjects man to diverse types of warnings and admonitions. If man still does not take heed, he is consumed in the fire of rejection and of despair. It is not permissible that anyone should say to Him: Why do You bother about what would harm me or benefit me? Why do You admonish us and send revealed Books and punish us? If we worship You, it would be for our own good and if we do not worship You, we shall suffer loss. Why should You worry? Should anyone say that, and indeed if the whole world and all mankind were to supplicate Him that He should spare them His admonitions and commandments and revealed Books, and that they do not desire paradise, but would be content with this world and should be left forever to it, that they do not desire the great bounties of the hereafter, that He should not interfere with their actions and should abstain from planning rewards and punishments for them and should not concern Himself with their benefit or their loss, their supplication would not be granted even if they continued to submit it throughout their lives with crying and weeping. It is not enough that a person is free and worships God for his own benefit and that *Permeshwar* has no concern with it, but the Glory and Greatness of God demand that man should carry out the worship of God and should follow the ways of goodness. His Godhead naturally demands that the signs of servitude should be manifested before Him and His perfection demands that man should humble himself in His presence. That is the reason why in the end His chastisement overtakes the disobedient, the vicious and those who persist in wrong-doing. His Blessed Being has eternally possessed the power to award reward and impose punishment; otherwise, He would not occupy Himself

awarding good recompense to the virtuous and ill recompense to the vicious. Were it not for His attribute of awarding recompense, He would have kept silent and abstained altogether from bestowing recompense. Therefore, though it is true that the harm or benefit of man's actions reverts to him and the greatness and kingdom of God Almighty are neither increased nor decreased thereby, yet it is true and is a firm verity that His attribute of *Rubūbiyyat* demands that His servants should be firmly established in their position of His worshippers, and that if anyone should raise his head in the slightest degree out of arrogance, his head be immediately smashed. In short, there is a demand in God's Being for the manifestation of His Greatness, His Godhead, His Supremacy, His Glory and His Kingdom, and recompense and the requirement of obedience and servitude and worship are the consequences of that very demand. For the manifestation of His *Rubūbiyyat* and Godhead, He has created this variegated world. Had His Being been free from this desire of manifestation, why should He have addressed Himself to creation at all? Who had coerced Him that He should create the universe and by establishing a relationship between souls and bodies should make this world the manifestation of His wonderful powers? He must have possessed a power of determination that moved Him to the creation of the universe. There are indications in His Holy Word, the Qur'ān, which show that God Almighty created the universe so that He should be recognized through His attribute of creation, and after creation He showered His mercy and benevolence upon the world so that He should be recognized through His mercy and benevolence. In the same way, He instituted punishment and reward so that

His attributes of retribution and bounty might be recognized. After death, He will raise up mankind again so that He might be recognized as All-Powerful. His purpose in all His wonderful works is that He should be recognized. Thus, by the creation of the world and by the system of recompense, what is desired is the understanding of God, which is the essence of worship. This proves that God Almighty Himself demands that His creatures should attain His understanding, the perfect reality of which is known through worship. As a beautiful one on account of the perfection of his beauty desires to display it, so God Almighty, Who possesses to perfection the reality of beauty, desires that His excellence should be disclosed to people. This proves that God Almighty demands worship which is the basis and means of recognition from His servants and His supremacy attends to the destruction of one who opposes His desire and denies His worship and turns away from it. If you reflect over the world and observe carefully that which God Almighty has hitherto meted out to rebels and non-believers and that which He has always done to the faithless ones and the wrong-doers, you would realize that without doubt it is an established verity that God Almighty, by the demand of His Being, loves goodness and hates evil and is at enmity with it. He desires that people should discard vice and should adopt goodness, and though goodness or evil, which man practices, does not in any way interfere with God's kingdom, yet that is His demand. It is thus obvious that if God Almighty had not created the souls, He would have no right to demand from any soul why it did not render to Him that perfect worship that is due to one's Creator.

[Surmah Chashm Āryā, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 2, pp. 263-268]

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