

INVITATION
TO AHMADIYYAT



Invitation to Ahmadiyyat

English Translation of *Da'awatul-Amir*

by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad^{ra}, Khalifatul-Masih II

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Hadrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad
Khalifatul-Masih II^{ra}

About the Author

Ḥaḍrat al-Ḥāj Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad^{ra} (1889–1965), was the second Khalifah of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. He was the son of the Promised Messiah and his birth was the fulfilment of the Muṣleḥ Mau'ūd (Promised Reformer) prophecy. This prophecy was published by the Promised Messiah^{as} as a Sign of the truth of Islam in reply to a challenge put forth by the Aryā Samāj.

From his early youth, he was gifted with knowledge, both secular and religious, and a deep love for the Holy Quran. He was nineteen years old when the Promised Messiah^{as} passed away on 26 May 1908. The next day, on 27 May 1908, he pledged allegiance to Ḥaḍrat Hakeem Noor-ud-Deen, Khalifatul-Masīḥ I, the first Khalifah of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

He visited Egypt and Arabia in September 1912 during the course of which he performed the Hajj pilgrimage. In June 1913, he started a newspaper, titled *Al-Fazl*.

In 1914, at the age of 25, he was elected as Khalifatul-Masīḥ II. During his almost fifty-two years of *Khilāfat*, he led the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community on an international level, expanding the Movement to forty-six countries, and building dozens of hospitals and schools. He consolidated and formalized the system of

financial contributions of the Community, initiated the annual campaigns of *Tabrik-e-Jadid* in 1934, and *Waqf-e-Jadid* in 1957, greatly expanding the global missionary activity.

He was an active political figure, especially in India prior to its independence. He was also one of the founding members and the first president of the All-India Kashmir Committee set up for the establishment of the civil rights of Kashmiri Muslims.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad was an avid scholar and a prolific author, who spoke and wrote extensively in defence of Islam. A twenty-six volume compilation of his works called *Anwārul-‘Ulūm* contains over 800 writings and lectures (aside from thousands of sermons). His *Tafsīr-e-Kabīr*—the ten-volume commentary of the Holy Quran—is revered as a treasure trove to this very day. Likewise, he was an orator of unmatched eloquence, captivating his audiences for hours on end.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad^{ra} gave the Jamā‘at its current organizational and administrative structure, formally establishing the Majlis ash-Shura (Consultative Council). He established auxiliary organisations for men, women, and children. His many momentous achievements include the establishment of the Electoral College for the election of Khalīfatul-Masīḥ, and the establishment of the Community’s new headquarters in Rabwah, Pakistan, after the Partition of British India in 1947.

He passed away on 8 November 1965 in Rabwah, Pakistan, and was succeeded by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Nāṣir Ahmad as Khalīfatul-Masīḥ III^{rta}.

Foreword to the Present Edition

Since its inception, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been targeted by a barrage of misinformation campaigns. Today, we find websites, articles and social media posts littering the internet in an attempt to convince Muslims as well as non-Muslims that Ahmadi beliefs deviate from Islam. This is nothing new, for such slur and slander was hurled upon every Prophet and his community of followers.

False reports regarding the Community were fabricated as early as the late 1800s, festering into the first martyrdoms of Ahmadi Muslims at the hands of the then Afghan King, Habibullah Khan (1872 to 1919). In the early 1920s, misinformation again influenced the court of the Amir of Afghanistan, Amanullah Khan (1892 to 1960), who subsequently ordered the stoning to death of three Ahmadi Muslims for their faith in 1924. Upon learning of this brutal act, the second Khalifah of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad^{ra}, penned *Da'watul-Amīr* (*Invitation to Ahmadiyyat*) as a treatise addressed to the Amir of Afghanistan to eradicate any misconceptions regarding the beliefs of the Community. He articulated the Islamic foundation and legitimacy of the Ahmadiyya beliefs,

fortifying his position with references from the Holy Quran and the Hadith.

Wakālat Tabshīr Rabwah published the first English translation of this book in 1961 which was prepared by the late Qazi Muhammad Aslam. Since it was a fairly free translation, it was decided that a new translation of the book be prepared to better match the English translation with the original Urdu text. This new translation is prepared by Raja Ata-ul-Mannan. We would like to acknowledge the contribution of Dhulqarnain Bharwana and Hassan Khan for their help in finalising the book. Thanks are also due to Research Cell for gathering all the references used in this book which are being added in this new edition.

We pray that readers benefit from these improvements with the ultimate goal of understanding the true teachings of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

Al-Ḥāj Munir-ud-Din Shams
Additional Wakīlut-Taṣnīf, London, UK
February 2022

He it is Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the true faith that He may make it prevail over all other faiths. (Quran, 9:33; 48:29; 61:10)

Invitation To Ahmadiyyat

Being a statement of beliefs, a rationale of claims and an invitation, on behalf of the Ahmadiyya Movement for the propagation and rejuvenation of Islam

Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad
Khalīfatul-Masīḥ II^{ra}

ISLAM INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS LTD.

Part I—Preliminaries

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ¹
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ²
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ³

With the grace and mercy of God

هُوَ النَّاصِرُ⁴

*From: Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad,
Khalīfatul-Masīḥ and Imam of Jamā'at Ahmadiyya*

*To: His Majesty, Amir Amanullah Khan Bahadur, King
of Afghanistan and its Dependencies*

Peace and blessings of Allah be upon you!

The following pages have been addressed to Your Majesty in the form of a printed book in consideration of your noble status and as a service to the public at large. I do hope that you will take the trouble to read them despite the limited time at your disposal. You will thus have my own deepest gratitude and also be a recipient of Divine grace and approbation.

This epistle has a twofold purpose:

1. To convey to Your Majesty the message that has been sent by God to bring the world together under the banner of Islam.

2. To apprise Your Majesty of the beliefs and history of members of the Ahmadiyya Community who live under your dominion, so that if you are ever presented with a matter pertaining to them you will be able to make a decision on the basis of first-hand knowledge.

I would like to make it clear at the outset that the Ahmadiyya Community is not a new religion, rather it is a part of Islam. We consider it unacceptable to deviate from the teachings of Islam to the slightest degree. The new name 'Ahmadiyyat' does not mean that it is a new religion; its only purpose is to distinguish members of this Community from others who also call themselves Muslims.

Islam is a beautiful name that God Himself gave to the followers of the Holy Prophet ^{sas}. He so loved this name that He gave tidings of it through earlier Prophets. The Holy Quran says:

هُوَ سَمَّكُمْ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا

He (God) named you Muslims both before and in this Book.

We also read in the Bible:

Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.⁶

No name can be more blessed than the name which God Himself chose for His servants and which He invested with great significance by giving tidings of it through earlier Prophets. Could

anyone give up such a name? The name Islam is dearer to us than our lives, and we consider Islam to be the source of life eternal.

However, since different groups of Muslims have adopted different names reflecting their specific beliefs, it became necessary for us to adopt a name that would distinguish us from others. Considering the state of the current age, the name 'Ahmadi' seemed most appropriate, for this is the age for the propagation of the Message brought by the Holy Prophet^{sas} and for the spread of God's praise and glory. This being the time for the manifestation of the Holy Prophet's attribute of '*Ahmadīyyah*', there could not be a better name to distinguish us.

In short, we are Muslims to the core of our being. We believe everything that is obligatory for a Muslim to believe and reject all that a Muslim is obliged to reject. If, despite our sincere affirmations of the verities of Islam and adherence to Divine injunctions, anybody attributes unbelief, or *kufir*, to us and describes us as innovators or as people who subscribe to a new religion, such a person does an injustice to us and will be answerable to God for this. A person can only be held accountable for what he says, not for what he holds in his heart. Who, indeed, can say what is in a person's heart? If someone accuses another of saying one thing while believing in another, he in effect claims divinity, for God alone knows the innermost secrets of the heart. No one had greater insight than the Holy Prophet^{sas} but even he says regarding himself:

إِنَّكُمْ تَحْتَصِمُونَ إِلَيَّ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضَكُمْ أَنْ يَكُونَ أَلْحَنَ بِحُجَّتِهِ مِنْ بَعْضٍ
فَإِنْ قَضَيْتُ لِأَحَدٍ مِنْكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ حَقِّ أَخِيهِ فَإِنَّمَا أَقْضِعُ لَهُ قِطْعَةً مِنَ النَّارِ فَلَا يَأْخُذُ
مِنْهُ شَيْئًا⁷

There are amongst you those who bring their disputes to me. I am a man as much as you are; it is possible that some amongst you may espouse their cause better than others. Therefore, if I give to one what is due to another, I give to him a part of the Fire. It is best for him not to take it.

Likewise, we read in the Traditions that Usāma ibn Zayd was appointed by the Holy Prophet^{sas} as commander of a mission during which he confronted and overcame an unbeliever. As he was about to kill him, the unbeliever recited the *kalimah*, but Usāma killed him nonetheless. When the Holy Prophet^{sas} heard of this, he asked Usāma why he had killed the man after he had accepted Islam. Usāma said, ‘O Prophet of God, he only professed Islam out of fear.’ Thereupon the Holy Prophet^{sas} said, ‘Why, did you split his heart to see what was in it?’²⁸ That is to say, how could you know if he professed Islam out of fear or with sincerity, for no one can know what is in a person’s heart.

Thus, an edict can only be proclaimed upon what a person says, not on what he thinks, since only Allah is aware of his thoughts. Whoever condemns a person for what he thinks in his heart is a liar and will be held accountable before God.

When we of the Ahmadiyya Community call ourselves Muslims, nobody has the right to say that we only pretend to be Muslims while at heart we deny Islam, that we deny the Holy Prophet^{sas}, that we subscribe to a new *kalimah*, or that we have adopted a new *qiblah*. If it were permissible to attribute such beliefs to us, then we would be entitled to respond in kind and say that those who make such accusations are themselves pretending to be Muslims and that when they go back to their homes,

they—God forbid—curse Islam and the Holy Prophet^{sas}. We, however, cannot leave hold of the truth on account of anyone's antagonism, and so we will not say of anyone that he says one thing and believes another. Instead, in deference to the Shariah, we will only judge others based on what they affirm and acknowledge.

I will now proceed to enumerate the beliefs of our Community so that the reader can determine for himself if any of them are contrary to Islam:

1. We believe that God exists. To believe in His existence is an affirmation of the greatest truth; it is not mere conjecture or hypothesis.
2. We believe that God is One. He has no partner, either on earth or in heaven. All besides Him are His creations and are forever in need of His help and sustenance. He has no son, no daughter, no father, no mother, no wife, and no brother. He is Unique in His Oneness and in His Individuality.
3. We believe that God is Holy. He is free from all shortcomings. He encompasses all perfections. There is no imperfection to be found in Him and there is no perfection that is not His. His Power is unlimited. His Knowledge is without bounds. He encompasses all things and nothing encompasses Him. He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden. He is the Creator of the whole universe and the Master of all creation. His dominion has never failed in the past, nor is it failing at the moment, nor will it fail in the future. He is Living and free from death. He is Enduring and free from decline. All His actions are willed, not forced or constrained. He rules

the world today as ever before. His attributes are never held in abeyance. He forever manifests His power.

4. We believe that angels are one of God's creations. They follow the law laid down in the Quran:

يَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ⁹

They do what they are commanded.

God, in His perfect wisdom, created them for various purposes. Their existence is real and references to them are not merely metaphorical. They are dependent on God in the same way as human beings and all other creatures are. God is not dependent on them for the manifestation of His power. Had He so willed, He would have expressed His will without having created them, but His perfect wisdom willed their creation and so they came to be. Just as God is not dependent on the sun to illuminate the eyes or on bread to fill the bellies, so is He not dependent on angels to manifest His will.

5. We believe that God speaks to His chosen servants and reveals to them His will. Such Revelation is in the form of special words so that the person to whom it is revealed has no part in it. The recipient provides neither the meaning nor the words of the Revelation; both come from God. Only such Revelation provides true sustenance for man and only through it does he come into contact with God. Such Revelation is without parallel in its power and majesty. No human can create the like of it. It brings countless treasures of knowledge. It is like a mine:

the deeper you dig, the more precious are the gems you find. Indeed, it is far greater than a mine, for the treasure of a mine may be exhausted but the wisdom of Revelation cannot. Such Revelation is like a sea upon whose surface ambergris floats while the seabed is strewn with pearls; whoever looks upon its surface derives joy from its fragrance and whoever dives deep into it is blessed with treasures of knowledge and wisdom. Revelation is of many kinds. Sometimes it consists of laws and commandments, sometimes of teachings and exhortations. Sometimes it opens the doors to the unseen, sometimes it brings treasures of spiritual knowledge and wisdom. Sometimes God conveys His approval of his servant through it, but sometimes He makes His disapproval known. Sometimes He gladdens the hearts with His loving and gracious words, sometimes He draws attention towards obligations through warning and rebuke. Sometimes it teaches subtleties of high moral values, sometimes it gives knowledge of hidden sins. In short, we believe that God speaks to His servants, and that His Word varies according to the circumstances of different people, and it is revealed in diverse forms. We believe that, of all the Revelations that God has given to His servants, the Holy Quran is the most sublime, most noble, and most perfect. We believe that the Law revealed in the Holy Quran and the guidance it contains is for all times to come. No subsequent revelation can abrogate it.

6. Similarly, we believe that whenever the world becomes filled with darkness and people fall into sin and debauchery and it becomes difficult for them to escape the clutches of Satan

without Divine help, at such times, God, Out of His perfect compassion and mercy, sends some of His righteous and devoted servants to guide the world. He says:

وَإِنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ¹⁰

And there is no people to whom a Warner has not been sent.

These people, on account of their righteous and unblemished character, become guides for mankind, and God reveals His will to the world through them. Those who turn away from them are destined to perish and those who love them become beloved of God. The gates of Divine blessings are opened for them, they become recipients of Divine grace, they are appointed leaders for those who come after them, and they are destined for the good of both worlds.

We also believe that among all the Divine Messengers—who have helped to draw mankind out of the darkness of evil and into the light of righteousness and who were at different levels of spirituality—the Chief among them was the Holy Prophet^{sas}. God declared him to be the most honoured among the children of Adam and sent Him as a Messenger for all mankind. God revealed to him the perfect knowledge and helped him with such might and majesty that great and tyrannical rulers trembled in awe of him. He is the one for whose sake God declared the whole earth to be sacred as a mosque. A time came when his followers prostrated before the One and Only God in every part of the world and the earth was filled with justice and equity, whereas previously it had been full of

cruelty and injustice. We are certain that if the earlier Prophets had lived in the time of our Holy Prophet^{sas}, they would have no recourse but to obey and follow him. Truly does God say:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْتُكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ تَنْزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِمَّنْ لَمَّا
مَعَلَّمْتُمْ أَنْ تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكَانَتْ خِطَابًا ۝۱۱

And remember the time when Allah took a covenant from the people through the Prophets, saying: ‘Whatever I give you of the Book and Wisdom and then there comes to you a Messenger, fulfilling that which is with you, you shall believe in him and help him.’

The Holy Prophet^{sas} himself said: لَوْ كَانَ مُوسَى وَعِيسَى حَيِّينِ لَمَا وَسِعَهُمَا ¹² إِلَّا آتَانِي عَنْ i.e. if Moses and Jesus were alive today, they would have had to believe in me and follow me.

7. We also believe that God hears the prayers of His suppliants and helps them out of their difficulties. He is the Living God and His life is felt by man at all times and in every age. God is not like the scaffold we erect when digging a well, only to dismantle it after the well has been completed because it no longer serves any purpose and is only a hindrance. Instead, He is like the light without which all is dark and the spirit without which all is lifeless. If you separate Him from His creatures, they become lifeless bodies. It is not true that God created the world and then silently sat by. The fact is that He relates to His servants at all times, attends to them on account of their humility and modesty, and if they forget Him, reminds them

of His existence and proclaims to them through His chosen Messengers:

إِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ¹³

I am near. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me. So they should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right way.

8. We also believe that, from time to time, God implements His special decree in the world. It is not merely the law of nature or the physical law that comes from Him; He also manifests His special providence through which He demonstrates His power and majesty and makes us cognizant of His Omnipotence. Many, out of ignorance, deny these Divine decrees and refuse to accept anything other than the laws of nature, which they call the laws of Providence. These laws can be called laws of nature, but they cannot be called laws of Providence, for there are other laws apart from these through which God helps His chosen ones and destroys their enemies. Had there been no such laws, how could the weak and friendless Moses have triumphed over the mighty and tyrannical Pharaoh? How could Moses have succeeded despite his helplessness? How could Pharaoh have been ruined despite his power? If there were no such laws, how could it be that the whole of Arabia was intent on destroying the Holy Prophet^{sas} and yet God made him triumphant in every encounter and protected him from his enemies, until, along with ten thousand pious men, he finally returned to the same land that he had been forced to migrate from in the company of a single devoted follower? Can the

laws of nature account for such events? Nay, they only tell us that inferior power is vanquished when it confronts superior power and that the weak are destroyed at the hands of the strong.

9. We also believe that man will be raised after death and will be held to account for his deeds. Those who do good deeds will be rewarded and those who break God's commandments will be severely punished. Nothing can save man from being raised again. Even if his body is eaten by the birds of the air or beasts of the jungle, or the worms of the earth disintegrate his body and transform it into other matter, or if his very bones are burnt to ashes, he shall still be raised and have to answer before his Creator. Divine Omnipotence is not dependent on the presence of the body to resurrect someone, for God can recreate him from the smallest particle of the body or the subtlest part of the soul. This indeed is how it will be, for the bodies may be reduced to ashes but their minute particles do not perish. Nor can the soul that is housed in the body be destroyed without the will of God.
10. We believe that those who deny God and oppose his religion, unless He forgives them out of His perfect grace, will abide in a place that is called Hell, wherein they will suffer chastisement in the form of fire and extreme cold. The object will not be to cause suffering, rather it will be to reform them for the future. They will do nothing but wail and lament and regret until the Mercy of God, which encompasses all things, will encompass them and the following promise will be fulfilled:

يَأْتِينَ عَلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ زَمَانٌ لَّيْسَ فِيهَا أَحَدٌ وَ نَسِيمِ الصَّبَا تُحَرِّكُ أَبْوَابَهَا

A time will come when no one will be left in Hell, and the morning breeze will blow rattling its windows and doors.¹⁴

11. We believe that those who believe in God, His prophets, His angels and His books; who believe in His injunctions with all their heart and soul; who are meek and humble in their ways; who behave lowly even when they are great; who, being rich, live like the poor; who serve God's creatures; who sacrifice their comfort for the comfort of others; who abjure excesses and transgression and dishonesty; and who practice the higher morals and shun the baser ones, shall abide forever in a place that is called Paradise. Therein they will find peace and pleasure with no trace of pain or suffering. Therein shall man have God's approbation and be blessed with His vision and covered in the mantle of His grace. Indeed, he will come so close to God as to become His reflection. Divine attributes will become manifest in his being in all their perfection. All his low desires shall perish, his will shall become one with the will of God, and he shall become the manifestation of the Divine by attaining eternal life.

These are our beliefs and we don't know of any others that are essential for subscribing to Islam. These are the same beliefs that have been outlined by all the Muslim divines and we are in complete agreement with them in this regard.

What distinguishes Ahmadis from other Muslims

The reader might wonder that if we do indeed adhere to all the Islamic doctrines, then what is the difference between us and others, why do some clerics oppose us so vehemently and harbour such prejudice towards us, and why do they issue Fatwas declaring us to be heretics? I will here outline the objections levelled against us, on whose basis we are said to be outside the pale of Islam.

The first objection of our opponents is that we believe Jesus of Nazareth to have died a natural death, and they allege that, in so doing, we insult the Messiah, deny the Holy Quran, and reject the verdict of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. While it is true that we believe Jesus to have died, it is wrong to say that we denigrate him in any way, or deny the Holy Quran, or reject the verdict of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. In fact, the more we reflect upon the matter, the more convinced we become that these accusations do not arise from our belief that the Messiah is dead; in fact, they would only arise if we believed that he was still alive.

We are Muslims and, as Muslims, our first concern is to uphold the glory of God and the honour of His Prophet. We believe in all the Prophets but our love and our zeal are naturally aroused to a greater extent for that Prophet^{sas} who bore tremendous hardship for our sake; who took upon himself a heavy burden in order to lighten our loads; who, when he saw us perishing, grieved for us to the extent of almost bringing death upon himself; who, to bring us peace, gave up his own comfort; and who, in order to

raise us, lowered himself. His days were spent worrying about our betterment and his nights standing in prayer until his feet would swell. Being sinless himself, he prayed to protect us from sin and to save us from torment. He supplicated with such anguish that his prayer-mat would become wet with tears, and such was the agony in his heart that his chest heaved like a boiling pot.

He drew unto us the Mercy of God, absorbed His pleasure for our sake, enclosed us in the mantle of His Grace, and covered our shoulders with the cloak of His Compassion. He sought for us the paths that lead to God and the means of becoming one with Him. He facilitated the path for us as no other Prophet had ever done for his people.

These edicts of heresy and infidelity are preferable to us than to believe that the Messiah of Nazareth is equal to God (Who is our Creator, Nourisher, Sustainer, Guardian, Provider, and Bestower of knowledge and guidance) and to believe that, just as God is alive in heaven without the need for food or drink, so is the Messiah of Nazareth residing in heaven without any human need. We honour the Messiah but only because he is a Prophet of God. We love him but only because he loved God and God loved him. Our relationship with him is derived from our relationship with God. How then can we dishonour God for his sake and forget His favours upon us? How can we allow the Christian missionaries, who are the enemies of Islam and the *Qur'an*, to ask, 'Look, isn't the one who sits alive in heaven, God? Had he been a human, he would surely have died like other humans.' How can we, with our own tongues, attack God's Oneness, and how can we, with our own hands, harm His religion? The *maulawīs* and religious scholars of this age can tell us whatever they want and

treat us as they like, they may hang us or stone us to death, but we can never abandon God for the sake of the Messiah. We would rather die a thousand times than utter the blasphemous words that the Messiah sits alongside God in heaven—the same Messiah whom the Christians call the ‘Son of God’ and thereby denigrate the One and All-Sustaining God. Had we lacked knowledge, we might have said such a thing, but now that our eyes have been opened by one sent by God and he has shown us the true import of God’s Oneness, Majesty, Power and Glory, we can never abandon God for the sake of a human being, no matter what the consequences. Were we to do so, we would fear for our fate, because all honour comes from God. When we have clearly seen that to believe Jesus to be alive is to insult God, we cannot regard this belief as true. Nor do we understand how believing that Jesus is dead would be an insult to him. Greater Prophets than him died and their death did not detract from their status, why then would Jesus be insulted by his death? If it ever came to the point where we had no choice but to choose between denigrating the Messiah or denigrating God, we will never accept any belief that would be derogatory of God. Also, we are certain that Jesus himself, who truly loved God, would never have accepted anything that elevated his own status while at the same time undermining the truth of God’s Oneness.

لَنْ يَسْتَنْكِفَ الْمَسِيحُ أَنْ يَكُونَ عَبْدًا لِلَّهِ وَلَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ^{15 ط}

Surely, the Messiah will never disdain to be a servant of Allah, nor will the angels near unto God.

We are bound by the Word of God, wherein Jesus says:

وَ كُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ ۗ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتُ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ وَأَنْتَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ¹⁶

And I was a witness over them as long as I remained among them, but since You caused me to die, You have been the Watcher over them; and You are Witness over all things.

God quotes Jesus as saying that Christians became corrupt after his death, and that while he had lived among them, they and their beliefs had remained uncorrupted. Reading this in the Quran, how can we think that Jesus is not dead but is alive in Heaven? We also read in the Holy Quran:

يُجِيبُنِي إِلَىٰ مَتَوَقِّعِكَ وَ رَافِعَكَ إِلَيَّ وَ مُطَهِّرَكَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَ جَاعِلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوكَ فَوْقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ¹⁷

O Jesus, I will cause you to die and will exalt you to Myself, and will clear you from the charges of those who disbelieve, and will place those who follow you above those who disbelieve, until the Day of Resurrection.

How can we ignore this verse that tells us that the ascension or exaltation took place only after the Messiah's death? Those who claim to be more eloquent than God could say that the words 'exalt you to Myself' should have preceded the words 'cause you to die'. We, however, know God to be most eloquent and beyond error. How can we, being mere creatures, find faults in God's Word, and, being ignorant, try to put words in the mouth of the All-Knowing? These people tell us to accept that there is an error in the Word of God, but how can we do so when we see nothing but ruin in such a belief? How can we, while we have eyes, fall into

a pit? How can we, while we have hands, not remove the cup of poison that is held to our lips?

Next to God, we love the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas}. Considering that God has given him a status higher than all the Prophets, and that no human being, be he a Prophet or non-Prophet, has given us or done for us even a fraction of what the Holy Prophet^{sas} has done, we cannot hold anyone in greater reverence than him. It is impossible for us to understand how we can believe that the Messiah of Nazareth is alive in Heaven while Muhammad, our Holy Prophet^{sas}, lies buried in the earth, and at the same time to hold the conviction that the Holy Prophet's status is higher than that of the Messiah. How can it be that Jesus, whom God raised to heaven on the slightest sign of danger, is inferior, while the Holy Prophet^{sas}, whom He did not even raise as far the stars when he was relentlessly pursued by his enemies, is superior? If the Messiah was indeed in heaven while our Lord and Master was buried in the earth, there could be no greater humiliation for us and we could not hold our heads up before the Christians. This, however, is not the case. God could never treat His beloved Prophet in this way. He is the Lord of lords, He would never have called the Holy Prophet^{sas} 'the Chief of all the children of Adam' and yet loved the Messiah more and been more mindful of his tribulations. God shook a whole world in order to establish the honour of the Holy Prophet^{sas} and humiliated anyone who sought to humiliate him, how then could He have tarnished His Prophet's honour and given his enemies reason for taunt and ridicule? The mere thought that Muhammad is buried in the earth while the Messiah of Nazareth is alive in heaven sends a shiver through my body and I can barely breathe.

All at once, my heart cries out that God would never do this! He loved the Holy Prophet^{sas} more than anybody else, he would never have allowed him to die and be buried in the ground while the Messiah lived in heaven. If there ever was anyone who deserved to live and to be ascended to heaven, it was our Nobel Prophet; if he is dead, then all Prophets are dead. Being cognizant of the great status of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, how can we accept that he climbed the Mount of Thaur by stepping on the shoulders of Abū Bakr^{ra} on the day of his migration and God did not send an angel to help him, whereas when the Jews came to arrest the Messiah, God at once caused him to ascend and stationed him in the fourth heaven? Likewise, how can we accept that when the enemy found the Holy Prophet^{sas} among a handful of Companions during the battle of Uhud, God did not raise him to heaven even for a little while, nor did He create someone resembling him whose teeth could be broken instead of his. Instead, He allowed the enemy to attack him, so that he fell unconscious and the enemy claimed triumphantly that they had killed Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah (God forbid!). In the case of the Messiah, on the other hand, it is alleged that God did not want him to undergo any suffering, and that as soon as the enemy resolved to attack him, God raised him to heaven and caused an enemy of the Messiah to resemble him so that he ended up being put on the cross instead of the Messiah. This we can never accept.

We wonder what has come over these people that they claim to love the Holy Prophet^{sas} and yet undermine his status. Nor do they stop at this, for they torment and issue verdicts of apostasy against anyone who, forced by his love for the Holy Prophet^{sas}, refuses to give anyone else superiority over him. Is it heresy to

uphold the honour of the Holy Prophet^{sas}? Is it infidelity to affirm the Holy Prophet's true status? Do you think the love for the Holy Prophet^{sas} amounts to apostasy? If this is heresy, if this is infidelity, if this is apostasy, then, God is our witness, we would a thousand times prefer such heresy to people's faith, and such infidelity to people's belief, and such apostasy to people's perseverance. In unison with our master, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah^{as}, do we affirm:

بعد از خدا بعشق محمدؐ محرمم گر کفر ایں بود بخدا سخت کافر
*After the love of God, I am inebriated with the love of
 Muhammad^{sas}.*

If this is kufr, then, by God, I am the most hardened kāfir.¹⁸

We must all die one day and present ourselves before God. Since it is Him we have to ultimately answer to, why should we fear mere mortals? What harm can they do to us? We fear only God and only Him do we love. And, after Him, our hearts are filled with love and reverence for the Holy Prophet^{sas}. If we have to sacrifice all honour and all relationships and all the comforts of the world for his sake, we can easily bear to do so, but never ever shall we tolerate any disrespect towards him. We do not denigrate any of the Prophets, but, being witness to the spiritual power, knowledge and wisdom of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, and his closeness to God, we can never accept for a moment that God loved some other Prophet more than him. If we entertained such a thought, no one would be more deserving of punishment than us. When the people of Arabia demanded of the Holy Prophet^{sas}:

أَوْ تَرْفَعُنِي فِي السَّمَاءِ ۗ وَكُنْ تُؤْمِنُ بِرُفْعِيكَ حَتَّىٰ تُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْنَا كِتَابًا نَقْرُؤُهُ ۗ¹⁹

[We will never believe you until] you ascend up into heaven; and we will not believe in your ascension until you send down to us a book that we can read.

God told the Holy Prophet^{sas} to respond: ‘Holy is my Lord! I am not but a man sent as a Messenger.’ Yet, these people would have us believe that God raised the Messiah to heaven! When it comes to the Holy Prophet^{sas}, we are told that a human being cannot ascend to heaven, and when it comes to the Messiah, he is said to have been needlessly raised to heaven. Are we to conclude that the Messiah was not mortal but Divine? (Heaven forbid!) Or are we to conclude that the Messiah was superior to the Holy Prophet^{sas} and more beloved of God? When it is as evident as the midday sun that the Holy Prophet^{sas} is superior to all Prophets and Messengers, it is unacceptable to think that he died and was buried in the earth while the Messiah was lifted to heaven and has lived there for thousands of years.

Nor is it just a question of the Holy Prophet’s honour, it is indeed a question of the truth of his claim. The Holy Prophet^{sas} says: ‘If Moses and Jesus had been alive, they would have had to believe in me and follow me.’ If we are to suppose that Jesus is alive, this statement of the Holy Prophet^{sas} would have to be considered false, because he is categorically giving the news of the demise of both Moses and Jesus. After hearing this testimony of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, no one who considers himself to be his follower can hold on to the belief that Jesus is still alive. Were he alive, this would put into doubt the Holy Prophet’s claim and his knowledge, for he has categorically declared Jesus to be among the dead.

The Holy Prophet^{sas} is also reported to have said to Ḥaḍrat Fatimah^{ra} during his final illness:

إِنَّ جِبْرِئِلَ كَانَ يُعَا رِضْنِي الْقُرْآنَ فِي كُلِّ عَامٍ مَرَّةً وَائَهُ عَارِضَنِي بِالْقُرْآنِ الْعَامَ
مَرَّتَيْنِ وَأَخْبَرَنِي أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ نَبِيٌّ إِلَّا عَاشَ نِصْفَ الدَّيِّ قَبْلَهُ وَأَخْبَرَنِي أَنَّ عِيسَى ابْنَ
مَرْيَمَ عَاشَ عَشْرِينَ وَمِائَةً سَنَةً وَ لَا أَرَانِي إِلَّا ذَاهِبًا عَلَى رَأْسِ السَّنَيْنِ²⁰

Once every year, Gabriel recited the Quran to me. This year he recited it twice. He also told me that every succeeding prophet has lived to half the age of his predecessor. He told me that Jesus, son of Mary, lived to a hundred and twenty years. Therefore, I think, I may live to about sixty years.

The source of this statement is Divine revelation. The Holy Prophet^{sas} is not saying anything on his own; he is citing Gabriel as having told him that Jesus lived to the age of 120. This belies the belief that he was raised alive to heaven at the age of 32 or 33, for, in that case, he would be 600 years old by the time of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, and, consequently, the Holy Prophet^{sas} should have lived to the age of 300. The fact that the Holy Prophet^{sas} died at 63 and he was told through revelation that Jesus died at the age of 120 shows that the belief that Jesus is alive and sitting in heaven is contrary to the teachings of the Holy Prophet^{sas} and to Divine revelation. This being so, how can we listen to these people and believe that the Messiah is still alive and, thereby, forsake the Holy Prophet^{sas}?

It is said sarcastically asked, how come that this truth has only become known to our Community, whereas all the great scholars remained ignorant of it for 1300 years? It is unfortunate that

the critics confine their vision to people of a specific mindset and call it consensus. They do not realize that Companions of the Holy Prophet^{sas} were the first and foremost scholars of Islam and that they were unanimously agreed upon our point of view. How could it be possible that those ardent lovers of the Holy Prophet^{sas} would accept a creed that was derogatory to the status of the Holy Prophet^{sas}? Not only are they in agreement with us but the very first formal consensus they arrived at was to the effect that Jesus was dead.

It is recorded in books of Hadith and in historical literature that the demise of the Holy Prophet^{sas} had a deep impact on the Companions and left them stricken with grief. Some could barely speak, some didn't have the strength to stand, some lost their senses for a time, and some were so eaten away with sorrow that they passed away within a few days. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} was so grief-stricken that he refused to believe that the Holy Prophet^{sas} had passed away. He unsheathed his sword and declared that anyone who said such a thing would lose his head. He said that the Holy Prophet^{sas} had only been called for 40 days, as Moses had been, and that he would soon return to kill and crucify the hypocrites and all those who had said derogatory things about him. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} was so passionate and insistent in his claim that no one dared contradict him. Many even started to believe that this was true and that the Holy Prophet^{sas} was in fact not dead. Signs of relief started to appear on their faces and those who had been disconsolate now started to lift up their heads. Seeing this, some insightful Companions promptly sent a messenger to Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} (who had gone to a village near Medina with the permission of the Holy Prophet^{sas} when his condition had seemed

to improve). The messenger had just set off when he saw Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} and could not restrain his tears. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} understood what had happened and asked, ‘Has the Prophet^{sas} passed away?’ The messenger said, ‘Umar^{ra} says that he will sever the head of anyone who says that the Prophet is dead.’ Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} proceeded to the Holy Prophet’s house and lifted the sheet that covered his blessed body and confirmed that he had indeed passed away. The sorrow of separation from his beloved brought tears to his eyes. He bent down and kissed the Prophet’s brow and said:

By God, He will not make you suffer two deaths. With your death, the world has suffered a loss that it did not suffer with the death of any other Prophet. You need no praises, and mourning cannot lessen the pangs of separation from you. If it was in our power to avert your death, we would all willingly have given our lives to do so.

He then replaced the sheet and proceeded to the place where Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} was speaking to the Companions. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} asked Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} to stop for a moment but he did not listen to him and continued talking. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} then moved to one side and started addressing the Companions and told them that the Holy Prophet^{sas} had passed away. Hearing this, the Companions started to gather around Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra}. Finally, Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} was compelled to stop and to listen to Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} who recited the verses:

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ ۖ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ ۗ أَفَأَبْرَأُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُفْخِرُوا بِكَرْبِهِمْ لَقَدْ أُفْخِرُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ لَوْلَا رَحْمَةُ رَبِّكَ لَأَبْرَأُوا ۗ كَذَلِكَ لِيُذَكِّرَ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَرْجِعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ فَاعِلٌ ۚ
٢١ أَعْقَابِكُمْ

And Muhammad is only a Messenger. Verily, all Messengers have passed away before him. If then he die or be slain, will you turn back on your heels?

إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ ۚ

Surely you will die, and surely they too will die.

He then went on to say:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ مَنْ كَانَ يُعْبُدُ مُحَمَّدًا فَإِنَّ مُحَمَّدًا قَدْ مَاتَ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُعْبُدُ اللَّهَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ فَاعِلٌ ۚ
٢٣ حَىٰ لَا يَمُوتُ

O ye men, whoever amongst you worshipped Muhammad^{sas}, let him know that Muhammad^{sas} is dead, and whoever amongst you worshipped Allah, let him know that Allah is Living, there is no death for Him.

When he had read the verse and confirmed that the Holy Prophet^{sas} had passed away, the truth dawned upon the Companions and tears gushed from their eyes. Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} later said that it seemed to him as if the verses had only just been revealed, and upon hearing them his legs couldn’t support him and he fell down with the intensity of sorrow.²⁴

This episode proves three important points:

(1) It proves that the first consensus arrived at by the Companions after the demise of the Holy Prophet^{sas} was that all Prophets before him had passed away. If any of the Companions had any doubts about it, they would surely have stood up at that

moment and told Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} that his interpretation of the verses was incorrect. They would have said that since Jesus had been alive in heaven for the last 600 years, it was wrong to say that all past Prophets were dead. They would also have asked why, if some of those past Prophets were still alive, could the Holy Prophet^{sas} not have remained alive as well.

(2) It proves that the Companions' belief that all earlier Prophets had died was not just a matter of opinion, rather they considered it to have been derived from the Quran. If this were not so, any of the Companions could have stood up and said that, even though it was true that all the Prophets had died, the verses he had recited did not support this view. The fact that Abū Bakr^{ra} recited the verse 'Verily, all Messengers have passed away before him,' and concluded from it that all the past Prophets were dead, and the fact that the Companions not only did not deny this but got solace from it and went about the town reciting it shows that they were all in agreement with Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr's interpretation of the verse.

(3) It proves that, whether or not the Companions believed in the death of other Prophets, they certainly did not believe that Jesus was still alive. It is evident from all authentic Traditions that when Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} was threatening to kill anyone who said that the Holy Prophet^{sas} was dead, he cited the example of Moses who had gone up the mountain for 40 days, but he never spoke of Jesus having ascended to heaven. If the Companions had believed that Jesus was alive in Heaven, would Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} or his like-minded Companions not have cited that example? The fact that they cited only the example of Moses and not of Jesus proves that they did not believe Jesus to be alive.

Aside from the consensus of the Companions, the family

of the Holy Prophet^{sas} were also in agreement about Jesus having passed away. In the third volume of *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sā'd*, Imam Hasan^{ra}, recounting the events relating to the death of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī^{ra}, is reported as saying:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ فُيِّضَ اللَّيْلَةَ رَجُلٌ لَمْ يَسْبِقْهُ الْأَوْلُونَ وَلَا يَدْرِكُهُ الْأَخْرُونَ قَدْ كَانَ رَسُولُ
اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَبْعَثُ الْمَبْعُوثَ فَيَكْتَتِفُهُ جِبْرَائِيلُ عَنْ يَمِينِهِ وَمِيكَائِيلُ
عَنْ شِمَالِهِ فَلَا يَنْتَبِئُ حَتَّى يَفْتَحَ اللَّهُ لَهُ وَمَا تَرَكَ إِلَّا سَبْعَ مِائَةِ دِرْهَمٍ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَشْتَرِيَ
بِهَا حَادِمًا وَلَقَدْ فُيِّضَ فِي اللَّيْلَةِ الَّتِي عُرِجَ فِيهَا بِرُوحِ عِيسَى بْنِ مَرْيَمَ لَيْلَةَ سَبْعِ
وَعِشْرِينَ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ²⁵

O people, the man who has died today was in many respects unparalleled among his predecessors or successors. When the Holy Prophet^{sas} sent him to battle, he had Gabriel on his right and Michael on his left, so that he never returned from a battle without being victorious. He only left 77 Dirham as a bequest with which he intended to buy a slave. He died during the twenty-seventh night of the month of Ramadan, the same night that the spirit of Jesus was raised to Heaven.

This citation shows that, according to the family of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, Jesus had passed away. If this was not so, why would Imam Hasan^{ra} say that Ḥaḍrat 'Alī^{ra} died the same night that Jesus' spirit was raised to Heaven?

As well as the Companions of the Holy Prophet^{sas} and his family, renowned Muslim scholars who came after them must also have believed that Jesus was dead, for they were devoted to the Holy Quran, the sayings of the Holy Prophet^{sas} and his Companions, and the opinions of the Holy Prophet's family. However, since

they did not deem it as an important matter, their opinions in this regard have not been preserved in historical records. Nonetheless, everything we know about them confirms that they believed that Jesus had died. It is recorded in *Majma' Bihār* that, according to Imam Mālik, Jesus had passed away.²⁶

In short, the Holy Quran, Hadith, the consensus among the Companions and the family of the Holy Prophet^{ṣas}, and the sayings of Muslim divines, all testify to the fact that Jesus is dead. It is, therefore, wrong to say that by believing in his death we dishonour him or deny the Holy Quran and Hadith. We do not dishonour Jesus, rather, through this belief, we uphold the Oneness of God, safeguard the honour of the Holy Prophet^{ṣas}, and serve the cause of Jesus himself, for he would never have wanted to be given a status that would undermine the Oneness of God, abet idolatry, and dishonour the Chief of Prophets^{ṣas}.

Dear reader, you can decide for yourself whether our opponents are correct in their criticism; whether they have the right to be outraged or it is we who have the right to be offended because they have set up a man as equal to God, have denigrated our Holy Prophet^{ṣas}, and, while claiming to be Muslims, have attacked Islam as the enemy would.

The second objection against us is that, contrary to the belief of other Muslims, we believe a follower of this ummah to be the Promised Messiah^{as} even though it is written in Hadith that the Messiah will descend from heaven.

It is quite true that we regard the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Community, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, Gurdaspur, Punjab, India, as the Promised Messiah and Mahdi^{as}; however, when it has been established on the basis of the Holy

Quran and Hadith and logic that the Messiah has passed away, how can this belief be contrary to the Quran and Hadith? When the death of the Messiah is established by the Holy Quran and there is even a Hadith in which the Holy Prophet^{sas} gives tiding of the coming of someone called Ibn Maryam, this clearly shows that the one whose advent has been promised will be an individual from within this ummah, and not the self-same Jesus of Nazareth who passed away.

They also argue that even if the death of the Messiah is established in the light of the Holy Quran and Hadith, we should still believe in his second coming because some Traditions give the tiding of the return of Ibn Maryam. Is God not powerful enough, they ask, to resurrect the Messiah and send him back for the reformation of the world? They thereby imply that we are denying God's Omnipotence. The truth is quite to the contrary. It is not because we deny God's Omnipotence but because we affirm God's Omnipotence that we believe that God will not resurrect the Messiah of Nazareth and send him back to the world, and that He has instead sent an individual from this very ummah as the Promised Messiah^{as}. We do not believe that anyone who carefully ponders over this matter will accept that resurrecting the Messiah and sending him back to the world is a sign of God's Omnipotence. Even in this world, we see that an affluent person does not have an old garment turned for new use. It is the poor and needy who have their old garments turned and altered to be used again and again. Since when has God become so constrained that, when His servants require direction and guidance, He has to resurrect and bring back a dead Prophet from the past? The fact is that, in order to reform a people, He chooses someone from among themselves

to bring about their reformation. There is not a single instance, from the time of Adam down to the Holy Prophet^{sas}, whereby God resurrected and returned an old Prophet for the guidance of mankind. This could only happen if it were accepted that God no longer has the power to cleanse and purify the people of this age, which is impossible. It is equally impossible that a dead Prophet should be taken out of Paradise and brought back for the reformation of the world. God is All-Powerful. If, after the Messiah, He could create a man like the Holy Prophet^{sas}, it is surely not beyond his capacity to create someone like the Messiah or even better than him in this age.

We, therefore, reject the concept of the Messiah's return to the world, not because we think that God does not have the power to bring this about but because we believe God has the power to choose and ordain any of His servants to bring lost souls back to the right path. Those who think that He cannot do this and has no choice but to bring back a past Prophet at a time of need are mistaken.

The concept of the second coming of the old Messiah does not only put a question mark on God's omnipotence, but it also casts doubt on the spiritual power of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. To say that the Messiah will return to the world for a second time means that God would be constrained to bring back an old Prophet because there would be no one among the followers of the Holy Prophet^{sas} with the capacity to bring about a transformation. This would be in contrast to past Prophets for whose followers God sent Reformers from among themselves. If we were to accept this notion, we would be no less of an enemy to the Holy Prophet^{sas} than are the Christians and Jews who question his spiritual

status. When a candle is lit, it can light other candles; it is only a dead candle that cannot light another. Therefore, if there comes a time when the ummah of the Holy Prophet^{sas} has gone so far astray that no one from within it can stand up for its reformation, it would mean that the Holy Prophet's spiritual influence has come to an end—God forbid! Every Muslim knows that, for as long as God wished the Mosaic dispensation to continue, there appeared within it people who followed in the footsteps of Moses and undertook the task of reformation. However, as soon as He desired to bring that dispensation to an end, He ceased sending Prophets from among the followers of Moses and instead sent a Prophet from among the progeny of Ishmael. Thus, if there were to appear an Israelite Prophet after the Holy Prophet^{sas}, it would mean that God wants to put an end to the dispensation of the Holy Prophet^{sas} and start a new one—God forbid! It would also mean that the Holy Prophet's spiritual power has become so weak that it can no longer inspire even a single one of his followers to receive spiritual light from him and bring guidance to his people.

It is a pity that while people express such indignation when their own honour is at stake and do not tolerate any defect being attributed to their own selves, they so daringly attribute every kind of flaw to the Holy Prophet^{sas}. What is the use of love that is limited to verbal professions and finds no echo in the heart? Of what avail is the passion that fails in the demonstration? If they really loved the Holy Prophet^{sas}, they wouldn't for a moment tolerate the idea that an ancient Israelite Prophet will come to reform his ummah. Does any self-respecting person beg from another while he himself has adequate provisions, or call another for help while he is himself able and strong? The same mullahs who teach that

the Messiah of Nazareth will come to save the Holy Prophet's ummah from its tribulations are so conscious of their own honour and self-esteem that even when they are losing in a debate they consider it derogatory to admit defeat by asking help from another. In fact, if someone volunteers to help them out, instead of being grateful to him, they feel hurt and say, 'Am I ignorant that you are putting words in my mouth!' But when it comes to the Holy Prophet^{sas}, they so easily say that a Prophet from another dispensation will be called to help him and that his own spiritual power cannot accomplish what is required. Alas! Are their hearts dead or have they lost all their senses? Do they reserve all honour for themselves and leave nothing for God and His Prophet? Is all their fury spent on their own enemies and none is left for those who attack God and His Prophet?

We are asked why we deny the return of an old Israelite prophet. The fact is that we do not have a choice in this matter. We cannot change our hearts and wipe off all traces of our love for the Holy Prophet^{sas} whose honour is dearest to us. Not for a moment can we believe that the Holy Prophet^{sas} should be beholden to someone else. Nor for a minute can we bear to think that, on the Day of Resurrection, when all of mankind will be assembled in the presence of God and the deeds of each one will be read out, the Holy Prophet^{sas} would stand burdened by the debt he owed to the Israelite Messiah, and angels would relate how, when the Holy Prophet's spiritual power started to wane, it was the Israelite Messiah who had done him a favour by coming out of Paradise and returning to the world to reform his people and saving them from annihilation. We cannot even contemplate such a thought. We would rather have our tongues torn out than

attribute such a denigrating proposition to the Holy Prophet^{sas}. We would rather lose our hands than write such words about him^{sas}. The Holy Prophet^{sas} is the beloved of God and his spiritual power can never wane. He is the Seal of the Prophets and his spiritual grace and munificence can never fail. He can never be indebted to anyone, while all other Prophets are indebted to him. There is not a Prophet who made deniers of the Holy Prophet^{sas} believe in him, but there are millions to whom the Holy Prophet^{sas} has testified regarding the truth of all the other Prophets. There are said to be about eighty million Muslims in India. Some came from other lands but the rest are all indigenous and were not even aware of the names of any Prophets. Then, after accepting the Holy Prophet^{sas}, they came to believe in Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and many others prophets (peace be on them). If they had not become Muslims, they would still be hostile to those Prophets and see them as impostors, just as their Hindu brothers do even to this day. The same is true of the people of Afghanistan, China and Iran, who never believed in Moses or Jesus and it was the Holy Prophet^{sas} who apprised them of the truth of these Prophets. The Holy Prophet^{sas} has thus done all those Prophets a favour by revealing their truth to mankind. He himself is indebted to no one, and may the day never dawn when his spiritual power declines and someone from another dispensation is required to reform his ummah. The fact is that whenever there is a need for the reformation of this ummah, God chooses people from among the followers of the Holy Prophet who, having received and learned everything from him, reform those who have been corrupted and bring back to the right path those who have gone astray. Their mission is the mission of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, for the pupil cannot

be separate from his teacher and the disciple cannot be distinct from his Prophet. They are indebted to his munificence and their hearts and minds are inebriated with the wine of his love. To say that an ancient Prophet will come after him would be an insult to the Holy Prophet^{sas} and contrary to the status which Allah has granted him, as He says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ²⁷

Allah does not take away a blessing after having bestowed it on a people unless some vice develops among them.

Now, by accepting this belief, one has to either accept that there has been some change in the status of the Holy Prophet^{sas} (God forbid), or that God has broken His promise. Both these notions are heretical, as one amounts to the denial of God and the other to the denial of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. This is why we find these beliefs so unacceptable. We believe that the Messiah whose advent had been promised was to appear from within this ummah and that it is in God's power to elect whomsoever He pleases for any status.

It is evident from the sayings of the Holy Prophet^{sas} that the Promised Messiah^{as} would appear from within this ummah. The Holy Prophet^{sas} says: ²⁸ لَا الْمَهْدِيَّ إِلَّا عَيْسَىٰ meaning, there is no Mahdi except 'Īsā, and then, ²⁹ كَيْفَ أَنْتُمْ إِذَا نَزَلَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ فِيكُمْ وَإِمَامُكُمْ مِنْكُمْ meaning, how will you be when the Son of Mary descends amongst you and your imam is among you.

Looking at these two Traditions together, it becomes perfectly clear that the Messiah himself would be the Mahdi, and that he would be the Imam of this ummah from within this ummah and not an outsider. It is incorrect to think that the Messiah and the

Mahdi are separate individuals because it contradicts the words, ‘There is no Mahdi except Īsā.’ A believer ought to carefully look at the saying of his Master and remove any apparent discrepancies through deliberation. The Holy Prophet^{sas} says that the Mahdi would appear before the Messiah and then the Messiah would join the Mahdi and his followers in prayer. However, on the other hand, he also says that the Messiah himself will be the Mahdi. Are we now to reject these seemingly contradictory sayings or is it our duty to ponder them and see if there is a way to reconcile them? Even with the least bit of deliberation, one can realize that the only way to reconcile the two statements is to consider the words ‘There is no Mahdi except ‘Isa’ as clarification for the other statement which seems to indicate that the Messiah and Mahdi are two separate individuals. ‘There is no Mahdi except ‘Isa’ makes it clear that the aforementioned statement is metaphorical. It only means that an individual from the Holy Prophet’s ummah would be appointed for the reformation of the world but he would initially not be given the status of Prophet; later on, however, the prophecy about the advent of the Messiah would also be fulfilled in his person and he would claim to be Īsā. The Hadith, therefore, speaks of the manifestation of the two spiritual stations. He would initially come with the claim of general reformation and only later claim Messiah-hood. Such metaphors are common in prophecies, without them they can be impossible to understand.

If these Traditions are not interpreted in this way, then we are left with one of two alternatives, both being extremely perilous. The first is to say that the Hadith ‘There is no Mahdi except ‘Isa’ is not true. The second is to posit that the Hadith does not mean that the Messiah and the Mahdi are the same person, rather it

only highlights the difference between the spiritual stations of the two, whereby ‘Īsā is the true Mahdi and Mahdi himself is nothing compared with him. This is just as one might say, ‘There is no scholar, except Tom,’ which does not mean that there are no other scholars, rather it means that Tom is far superior to others. Both these interpretations have dire implications. On the one hand, it is dangerous to declare a Hadith to be false without any reason, especially if the Hadith is accompanied by testimony. On the other hand, to say that the Mahdi will have no status as compared to the Messiah contradicts the Hadith wherein he has been called the Imam while the Messiah is described as his follower. The only acceptable interpretation, then, is that this Hadith gives the tiding of a single individual being raised from among the followers of the Holy Prophet^{sas} who would first claim to be a Reformer and then claim to be the Promised Messiah^{as}. These Traditions can have no other meaning.

The fact is that people have been misled by the word ‘*nuzūl*’ [descent] that appears in Hadith and have been led to believe that the old Messiah will physically descend from heaven. This is not the meaning of *nuzūl* in this context. The word *nuzūl* in Arabic applies to the coming of something of great import, or to a great revolution that is a manifestation of Divine grace or Divine wrath. For instance, Allah says in the Holy Quran:

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ³⁰

Then Allah *sent down* His peace upon His messenger.

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ أَمْنًا نُبُؤًا³¹

Then, after the sorrow, He *sent down* peace on you—a slumber that overcame a party of you.

وَ أَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ ثَمَنِيَّةً أزواجاً³²

And He has *sent down* for you eight head of cattle in pairs.

قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُؤَارِي سَوَاتِنَكُمْ وَرِيشًا^١ وَ لِبَاسَ التَّقْوَى ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ^٢ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ³³

We have indeed *sent down* to you raiment to cover your shame, and to be an elegant dress; but the raiment of righteousness—that is the best. That is one of the Signs of Allah, that they may remember.

أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّاءَ وَ السَّلْوَى³⁴

And [We] *sent down* on you *Manna* and *Salwa*.

وَ أَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَ مَنَافِعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَ لِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ^١ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ³⁵

And We *sent down* iron, wherein is material for violent warfare and many benefits for mankind, and that Allah may distinguish those who help Him and His Messengers without having seen Him. Surely, Allah is Powerful, Mighty.

وَ لَوْ بَسَطَ اللَّهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهِ لَبَغَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَ لَكِنْ نُنزِّلُ بَقْدَرًا مَّا يَشَاءُ^١ إِنَّكَ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ³⁶

And if Allah should enlarge the provision for His servants, they would rebel in the earth; but He *sends down*

according to a proper measure as He pleases. Indeed, He is All-Aware and All-Seeing with regard to His servants.

It is no secret that peace is a quality of the mind, sleep is a function of the brain, and that animals, garments, crops, birds, iron, and all such things are products of the earth. No one has either seen them descend from heaven, nor is such a concept derived from the Quran or Hadith. On the contrary, God clearly says in the Holy Quran:

وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سَوَاءً
لِلنَّاسِ يَدِينُونَ ۝³⁷

He placed therein firm mountains rising above its surface, and blessed it with abundance, and provided therein its foods in proper measure in four ages—alike for all seekers.

In other words, Allah says that even though this subject involves great scientific and subtleties—some of which have become apparent in this age and others will become apparent in the future and newer questions will continue to be raised—He has still described them in such a way as will satisfy people of all ages with their own level of knowledge and understanding.

It thus becomes clear from the Holy Quran that all the things for which the word *nuzūl* has been used did not literally descend from heaven but were created on earth. In the same way, when the word *nuzūl* is used with respect to the coming of the Messiah, it is meant to highlight the spiritual significance of the event and does not mean that he will actually come down from the skies. The word *nuzūl* has also been used for the coming of the Holy

Prophet^{sas} himself and all the interpreters agree that it is meant to signify his high status. They have no choice but to do so because they know that the Holy Prophet^{sas} was born in a respectable household of the Quraish in Mecca and his father's name was Abdullah and his mother was Amina. Here is the verse wherein the *nuzūl* of the Holy Prophet^{sas} is described:

قَدْ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكُمْ ذِكْرًا ۖ رَسُولًا يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ لِيُخْرِجَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ۗ³⁸

Allah has indeed *sent down* to you a Reminder—a Messenger, who recites unto you the clear Signs of Allah, that he may bring those who believe and do good deeds out of every kind of darkness into light.

It is strange that the word *nuzūl* is used with respect to both the Holy Prophet^{sas} and the Messiah and yet for each of them it is interpreted in a different way. If the Holy Prophet^{sas} was born on this earth and the word *nuzūl* has been used to describe his coming, then what is the difficulty in applying the same meaning to the *nuzūl of the Messiah*?

The third difficulty that is raised with regard to the second coming of the Messiah is that the one who is supposed to come has been named in Hadith as 'Īsā ibn Maryam, which seems to mean that the self-same Jesus, son of Mary, will come back a second time. The critics do not consider that in their own poetic verses they frequently use the name 'Īsā as a metaphor for certain people; why then do they find it so strange if the Holy Quran does the same? They also constantly use the name Hātīm al-Ṭā'ī as a metaphor for a generous person, Ṭūsī for a person with a philosophical bent of

mind, and Rāḍī for someone who possesses the faculty of dialectical reasoning, but when it comes to the name Ibn Maryam they start having doubts. If applying such names to people does not mean that they actually belong to the Ṭā'ī clan, or are residents of Ṭūs, how then is it inferred from the use of the name Ibn Maryam that the one who is to come will be the same Jesus, son of Mary, Prophet of God, who passed away 1900 years ago? What is more, the names Ḥātim, Ṭūsī, and Rāḍī in themselves have no meaning that can be employed as a metaphor, whereas Maryam is a name used by the Holy Quran to describe a spiritual state. Allah says:

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَاتٍ قُرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَ
 نَجِّنِي مِنَ قُرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝ وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتْ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَدَتْ
 فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُنْتُم مِّنَ الْقَائِمِينَ ۝³⁹

And Allah sets forth for those who believe the example of the wife of Pharaoh when she said, 'My Lord! build for me a house with You in the Garden; and deliver me from Pharaoh and his work, and deliver me from the wrongdoing people;' And the example of Mary, the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her private parts—so We breathed into him of Our Spirit—and she fulfilled in her person the words of her Lord and His Books and was one of the obedient.

Now, when God gives the name 'Maryam' to a certain spiritual state of a believer and then describes someone who will come in the future as 'Ibn Maryam', does it not follow that this person will progress from the state of 'Maryam' until he reaches the state of 'Ibn Maryam'? That is to say, while his earlier life would be pure

and chaste like that of Maryam, the latter part of his life would be akin to that of ‘Īsā—sustained by the Holy Spirit and spent in the task of reformation and in the service of the truth.

It would seem that the Muslim scholars of this age have made it unlawful upon themselves to reflect on the meanings of the Holy Quran and to receive from it gems of knowledge and wisdom. Had they only looked at the knowledge that past divine scholars acquired through their study of the Holy Quran and the lives of the Prophets and then recorded in their books, they would not have been so grossly misled. Ḥaḍrat Sheikh Shahāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī writes in his book *Awāriful-Ma‘ārif* that, aside from physical birth, there is also a metaphorical birth, and in support of this he cites none other than Ḥaḍrat ‘Īsā himself. He says:

يَصِيرُ الْمُرِيدُ جُزْئَ الشَّيْخِ كَمَا إِنَّ الْوَلَدَ جُزْئُ الْوَالِدِ فِي الْوِلَادَةِ الطَّبَعِيَّةِ وَتَصِيرُ هَذِهِ
الْوِلَادَةُ أَيْضًا وِلَادَةً مَعْنَوِيَّةً كَمَا وَرَدَ عَنْ عَيْسَى صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ لَنْ يَلِيحَ مَلَكُوتُ
السَّمَاءِ مَنْ لَمْ يُؤَلَدْ مَرَّتَيْنِ فَبِالْوِلَادَةِ الْأُولَى يَصِيرُ لَهُ إِزْتِبَاطٌ بِعَالَمِ الْمَلِكِ وَبِهَذِهِ الْوِلَادَةِ
يَصِيرُ لَهُ إِزْتِبَاطٌ بِالْمَلَكُوتِ.⁴⁰

The disciple is part of the master, even as in physical birth the son is part of the father. Such a metaphorical birth takes place when, as described by Ḥaḍrat ‘Īsā, ‘No one can enter the Kingdom of Heaven unless he is born twice.’ The first of these births is the natural birth of this world, but the second birth has to do with the spiritual realm. Allah also says, ‘And thus did We show Abraham the Kingdom of the Heaven and the earth that he might be rightly guided and that he might be of those who have certainty of faith.’

This quotation shows that, according to Sheikh Shahāb al-Dīn Suhrawardi, every human being has to experience a metaphorical birth, and in support of this view he cites a verse of the Holy Quran and a saying of the Messiah. If such metaphorical birth is essential for spiritual progress, why should it be considered impossible in the case of the Promised Messiah^{as}?

In short, the belief that the first Messiah should come to life and return to the world is contrary to God's majesty and His Word, as it is to the dignity of the Holy Prophet^{sas} and his teachings. All the premises upon which this belief is based are a result of a lack of thought and deliberation. The fact is that a follower of this very ummah was supposed to come in the likeness of the Messiah, and he has indeed come. Many lost souls have been guided through him and have found the right path.

The fourth major objection raised against us is that we believe that the institution of Revelation and Prophethood continues after the Holy Prophet^{sas}. This objection is either born of a lack of deliberation or of sheer bigotry and prejudice. The truth is that we do not care so much for the form as for the content. We prefer to believe whatever helps to glorify God and His Prophet^{sas}. We cannot even for a moment believe in the coming of anyone who supersedes the Holy Prophet^{sas}; who gives the world a new *Kalimah* and a new *Qiblah* and a new Shariah, or alters any part of the teachings of the Holy Quran; who weans people away from obedience to the Holy Prophet^{sas} and asks them to obey him instead; or who comes from outside the circle of the Holy Prophet's servants and devotees, or attains even a part of his spiritual status without owing it to the Holy Prophet^{sas}. The coming of such a one, in our

view, would be the end of Islam because it would mean that the promises made by God to the Holy Prophet^{sas} are untrue.

At the same time, we can never accept anything that portrays the image of the Holy Prophet^{sas} as someone who put a stop to all Divine blessings; who, instead of helping in the progress of the world, became a hindrance to it; who, rather than leading people towards God, placed barriers in His path—God forbid! Just as the first belief amounts to destroying Islam, so does the second one constitute an outrageous attack on the person of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. We neither accept such beliefs nor tolerate them. It is our conviction that the Holy Prophet^{sas} was sent as a mercy for mankind. We are certain that everyone who has eyes can see that, with his coming, he did not deprive the world of heavenly blessings but multiplied them. If these blessings had previously been like a stream, they now flow forth like a mighty river. This is because, prior to his coming, knowledge had not been completed, and spiritual wisdom cannot be attained without full knowledge. Knowledge has now reached its culmination and the Holy Quran has encompassed everything that was lacking in past scriptures. Through the blessing of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, people have attained far greater Divine knowledge and can now attain higher spiritual stations than the followers of past Prophets. If we do not believe this, then how can we say that the Holy Prophet^{sas} is superior to other Prophets? For this reason, we deny any prophethood that is attained independently of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, and this is why we deny the concept of the coming of the Messiah of Nazareth after our Holy Prophet^{sas}. We can, however, not deny the prophethood that glorifies the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

The only kind of prophethood that can put an end to the

previous prophethood is that which brings a new law and is independent of the previous Prophet. However, the prophethood that is attained through the blessings of and obedience to the past Prophet, and whose objective is to propagate his message and to glorify him, will not be considered derogatory of him; it will instead serve to glorify him. Such prophethood is indeed sanctioned by the Holy Quran and it stands to reason that it can be attained by the people of this ummah, otherwise they would have no superiority over the followers of other Prophets.

The Holy Prophet^{sas} has said that there were many among the followers of Moses who attained the status of *muhaddath* [a spiritual rank lower than that of a prophet].⁴¹ Therefore, if the spiritual influence of the Holy Prophet^{sas} can only raise a person to the level of *muhaddath*, then what superiority does he have over other prophets and why is he called ‘the noblest of the children of Adam’ and ‘the Chief of Prophets’? In order for the Holy Prophet^{sas} to be considered the Best of all Prophets, he has to possess a quality above and beyond that of past Prophets. This distinctive quality, in our view, is that whereas earlier prophets could raise their followers only to the status of *muhaddath*, the followers of the Holy Prophet^{sas} can rise higher and even attain the status of Prophets. This is the miracle of the Holy Prophet’s spiritual influence that fills a believer’s heart with love and reverence for him.

If the advent of the Holy Prophet^{sas} put an end to the attainment of this kind of prophethood, then his advent would only be a bane of mankind and the Holy Quran would serve no purpose. Such a belief would imply that whereas before the advent of the Holy Prophet^{sas} people could attain great spiritual stations, they

can no longer do so after his coming. It will also imply that while past scriptures were useful in helping people attain the station of prophethood (i.e., through them man could reach the state where God could choose him as a Prophet), the same cannot be said of the Holy Quran. If this were true, the hearts of true believers would bleed and their spirits would be dampened. They would have thought that, with the coming into the world of ‘the Mercy unto all mankind’ and ‘the Chief of all Prophets’, new paths to spiritual progress would open up for them and they would draw even closer to the Lord of the Worlds, but, alas, he only came to close the doors that were already open—God forbid! No true believer can for a moment entertain such a thought about the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

No one who loves the Holy Prophet^{sas} can believe such a thing. God is our witness that the Holy Prophet^{sas} was a shoreless ocean of grace and a limitless sky of spiritual progress. He never did close the doors to grace, rather he opened them wide. The difference between him and the earlier Prophets is that while the followers of earlier Prophets could only reach the rank of *muhaddath* and required additional guidance to reach the status of Prophet, under the Holy Prophet’s tutelage a person can attain the status of prophethood and yet remain his follower. No matter how far he progresses, he still remains the Holy Prophet’s disciple. The exaltation of his spiritual status does not free him from the discipleship of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Instead, to the extent of exaltation, he becomes ever more indebted to the Holy Prophet^{sas}, for it was through him that he was able to attain a status that others could not reach. In respect of nearness to God, the Holy Prophet^{sas} has

reached a point that no mortal has ever reached and he continues to rise higher and higher, as does his ummah.

The status of the Holy Prophet^{sas} described above compels us to believe that this form of prophethood should always continue, for in its continuation lies the honour of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, not otherwise. Everyone knows that a great teacher is one who has outstanding students and a great king is one who has great rulers among his subjects. If a teacher produces poor students, he will not be considered a great teacher. If the subjects of a king are lowly people, no one will call him a great king. In the same way, the Holy Prophet^{sas} is considered the greatest of all Prophets because his followers can attain the status of prophethood and yet remain his followers.

This erroneous belief that Muslims have adopted in this age—I say ‘in this age’ because the following great divines of the past speak to the contrary: Ḥaḍrat Moḥi-ud-Dīn Ibn al-‘Arabī, Ḥaḍrat Mullāh ‘Alī Qārī and ‘Allāma Ibn Qayyim, the Mathnawī of Maulāna Rūmī, and the letters of Ḥaḍrat Sheikh Ahmad of Sirhind—is born of the misconception that a Prophet can only be one who brings a new law, or abrogates some parts of the previous law, or is free from obedience to the earlier Prophet. The fact is that these are not prerequisites for a Prophet. A Prophet could possess just one of these characteristics or even none of them. For example, he may neither bring a new book, nor abrogate any part of the previous law, nor be granted prophethood directly, and yet be a Prophet. Prophethood is a special spiritual station of nearness to God. Whoever attains this station is charged with the duty of reforming the world, drawing people towards God, reviving and rejuvenating dead souls, conveying to people whatever Divine

Word is revealed to him for their guidance, creating a community of people who devote their lives for the propagation of truth, and reforming their hearts and deeds through his example.

In short, the denial of the coming of a Prophet stems from a misunderstanding of the concept of prophethood; otherwise, this kind of prophethood serves only to raise the status of the Holy Prophet^{sas} rather than lower it.

It is said that the Holy Quran puts an end to the appearance of any Prophet after the Holy Prophet^{sas} because it says:

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ⁴²

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and *Khātamun-Nabiyyīn*.

It is concluded from this that Prophets cannot come anymore. If these people opened the Holy Quran and looked at the verse carefully, they would find that God uses the word *khātam* with a *fathah*, not with a *kasrah*. *Khātam* means ‘to seal’, not ‘to end’. A seal is used to validate and certify. Hence this verse would mean that the Holy Prophet^{sas} is the Seal of the Prophets. Imam Bukhārī in his book *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* interprets *Khātamun-Nabiyyīn* as ‘the Seal of the Prophets’ and cites Traditions that speak of a mark on the Holy Prophet’s body called ‘the seal of prophecy’.⁴³

If only people pondered over the Holy Quran, they would not have been thus misled. If they looked at the context, they would find that in the previous verse it is said that Muhammad is not the father of any of your males, and then, with the conjunction *lākin* (but), the words *Khātamun-Nabiyyīn* are used. It is evident that

the word *lākin* (but) is employed to clarify the previous statement. Every Muslim knows that the doubt arises because of the verse:

إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ⁴⁴

Surely, it is your enemy who is without issue (not you).

Whereas in the former verse Allah says that the Holy Prophet^{sas} would not have male offspring. To remove this apparent discrepancy, the Holy Quran uses the conjunction ‘but’ and says that even though he is not the father of any men among you, he cannot be said to be ‘without issue’, for he is the Prophet of Allah and shall have a spiritual progeny in countless numbers. It goes further and says that not only is he the spiritual father of countless believers, he is also the Seal of Prophets, so that, henceforth, only through his validation would anyone be able to attain the status of prophethood. He will thus be the father, not just of men, but of Prophets. In this wise, the verse doesn’t close the door to the aforementioned kind of prophethood but renders it wide open. The verse, however, does close the door to any prophethood that brings a new Shariah or is received directly without the intermediary of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, for that would be a denial of the Holy Prophet’s spiritual fatherhood.

It is also said that since the Holy Prophet^{sas} said, ‘I am the last of the Prophets,’⁴⁵ and, ‘There is no prophet after me,’⁴⁶ it follows from this that no Prophet can come after him. It is unfortunate that while these people focus on the words ‘last of Prophets’, they do not look at the words, ‘And my mosque is the last of mosques,’⁴⁷ that follow in the same Hadith recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim*. If the words, ‘I am the last of the Prophets,’ mean that no kind of

Prophet can come after him, then the words, ‘My mosque is the last of mosques,’ must also mean that no mosque can be built after the Prophet’s Mosque. The very people who use the words, ‘I am the last of the Prophets,’ to deny the appearance of any kind of Prophet are not only continuing to build mosques but are building them in such numbers that in some cities they lie deserted. In certain places, mosques are barely twenty meters apart. If no further Prophet can appear on account of the words, ‘I am the last of the Prophets,’ then why are newer mosques being built in the presence of ‘My mosque is the last of mosques’?

In answer to this, it is said that the mosques being built today are also the Holy Prophet’s mosques, for they are used to worship in the same way as was intended by the Holy Prophet^{sas}, and that by thus reflecting the same intent they do not negate the word *ākhir* (last). We agree with this. In the same vein, we would say that Prophets can continue to come in spite of ‘I am the last of the Prophets,’ but only such Prophets as are reflections of the Holy Prophet^{sas} and who, instead of bringing a new law, subscribe to his Shariah and spread his teachings and attain everything through his munificence. The coming of such Prophets would not contradict the Holy Prophet’s status of being the last Prophet^{sas}, just as building new mosques does not negate the fact that the Holy Prophet’s mosque is the last mosque.

Similarly, ‘There is no prophet after me,’ does not mean that no Prophet can come after the Holy Prophet^{sas}. It only means that no Prophet can come who would abrogate his Shariah. This is because what comes ‘after’ can only come when the first has come to an end. Therefore, a Prophet who comes in support of the Holy Prophet^{sas} cannot be said to have come ‘after’ him, rather he is

within the circle of the prophethood of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. He would only be said to have come ‘after’ if he were to abrogate any part of the Holy Prophet’s teaching. The wise try to ponder over the underlying meaning of words. Perhaps it was for fear of people being deceived in this matter that Ḥaḍrat ‘Āyeshah^{ra} said:

قُولُوا إِنَّهُ خَاتَمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَلَا تَقُولُوا لَنْبِيٍّ بَعْدَهُ⁴⁸

Do say that he [the Holy Prophet^{sas}] is the Seal of all Prophets, but do not say that there is no Prophet after him.

If Ḥaḍrat ‘Āyeshah^{ra} believed that no Prophet could ever come after the Holy Prophet^{sas}, then why did she stop people from saying that ‘there is no prophet after him’? And if her point of view was not correct, then why did the Companions not contradict her? The fact that she stopped them from saying that ‘there is no prophet after him’ clearly shows that it is possible for Prophets come after the Holy Prophet^{sas}, but none that would bring a new Shariah or be independent of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. The fact that the Companions did not contradict her shows that they agreed with her viewpoint.

Alas for those who do not ponder over the Holy Quran and are not only misled but also mislead others. Alas for those who get angry with those who refuse to be misled and declare them to be heretics and apostates. A believer remains undaunted by what they say, for he only fears the wrath of God. What is the worst a man can do to another? Kill him? A believer is not afraid of death, for death is his meeting with God. If they only reflected over the Holy Quran, they would find it to be a limitless treasure and an unending resource catering to all human needs. It contains such

a wide range of teachings about spiritual advancement that not even a tiny fraction of it is to be found in earlier scriptures. If people had any idea of the value of the Holy Quran, they would not be content with the little knowledge they have gleaned but would strive to find paths that lead to God's nearness. Had they known the value of reforming their souls instead of making mere verbal claims, they would not be content with superficial knowledge but would seek to establish a true relationship with God. If this desire was born in their hearts, they would surely want to seek out the paths that the Holy Quran has opened for man's spiritual progress. They would then know that they had previously been happy with the kernel and had wanted to get intoxicated by putting their lips to an empty cup.

Why is it that they recite *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* and yet never have the desire to attain the bounties that have been promised therein? Fifty times, day and night, they pray, 'Show us the straight path, the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your blessings', and yet they never ask what are the blessings that they seek. Had they even once offered the five-time daily prayer with its proper understanding, they would become curious about the meaning of 'Show us the straight path, the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your blessings upon', and then their minds would automatically be drawn to these verses of *Sūrah an-Nisā'*:

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُوا مَا يُوعَظُونَ بِهِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَتَابُعًا ۖ وَإِذَا آلَاؤُنَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ
 أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۖ وَتَهْدِيهِمْ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ۖ وَمَنْ يَطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ
 أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ ۗ وَحَسُنَ أُولَٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا ۗ
 ذَٰلِكَ الْفَضْلُ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ عَظِيمًا ۗ⁴⁹

And if they had done what they are exhorted to do, it would surely have been better for them and conducive to greater strength. And then We would have surely given them a great reward from Ourselves. And We would surely have guided them on the right path. And whoso obeys Allah and this Messenger of His shall be among those on whom Allah has bestowed His blessings, namely, the Prophets, the Truthful, the Martyrs, and the Righteous. And excellent companions are these. This grace is from Allah, and sufficient is Allah, the All-Knowing.

It is evident from these verses that being shown the path of those who are rewarded by God means to join the company of Prophets, *Ṣiddiqīn*, *Shuhadā*, and *Ṣāliḥīn*. Thus, when God has taught us this prayer through His Prophet—a prayer we repeat about forty times every day and in which we ask to be shown the right path, which God Himself has interpreted as the path of the Prophets, the *Ṣiddiqīn*, the *Shuhadā*, and the *Ṣāliḥīn*—how is it then possible that the door to every kind of prophethood should be closed for this ummah? Would not such a thought be ridiculous? And yet God cannot teach what is ridiculous. It is not possible that He should, on the one hand, exhort us to pray for our inclusion among the Prophets, *Ṣiddiqīn*, *Shuhadā*, *Ṣāliḥīn*, and, on the other, tell us that the reward of prophethood is forever disallowed for the followers of the Holy Prophet^{sas}—God forbid! God is pure and free from all faults. If He had in fact put an end to these rewards, He would never have taught us to pray for guidance to the path of those who are so rewarded by Him, nor would He

explain this to mean that by following the Holy Prophet^{sas} one can join the company of the Prophets.

It is said that the verse of *Sūrah an-Nisā'* contains the word *ma'a* (lit. 'with') and not *min* (lit. 'of' or 'from'), therefore, the prayer only entails the possibility of a believer being 'with' Prophets but not 'of' them. Those who make this assertion forget that the verse does not only speak of Prophets but also of *Ṣiddiqīn*, *Shuhadā*, *Ṣāliḥīn*. Hence, if the word *ma'a* (lit. 'with') is interpreted in this way, it would mean that there would also be no *Ṣiddiqīn*, *Shuhadā*, *Ṣāliḥīn* in this ummah and that some people from this ummah would merely be 'with' *Ṣiddiqīn*, *Shuhadā*, *Ṣāliḥīn*. There will be no *Ṣiddiqīn* (truthful people), rather some of them will be placed in the company of *Ṣiddiqīn*. There will be no *Ṣāliḥīn* (righteous people) rather some of them will be placed in the company of *Ṣāliḥīn*. There will be no *Shuhadā* (martyrs or those who testify to the truth with their very lives), rather some of them will be placed in the company of *Shuhadā*.

In other words, all people belonging to this ummah will be barred from all the stations of piety and virtue and will only be included in the reward of those of past dispensations who had attained such stations. Can a true Muslim accept this? Can there be anything more derogatory to Islam and the Holy Prophet^{sas} than to imagine that no righteous people can be born into this ummah and that there can only be some who are kept in the company of the righteous ones of the past? Thus, if an attempt is made to close the door to prophethood by stressing the word *ma'a*, the doors to Truthfulness, Martyrdom and Righteousness will also have to be closed.

The truth, however, is that the word *ma'a* doesn't only mean sharing the same time and place, it also means the sharing of status. Allah says:

إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّارِكَ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ ۚ وَكُنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا ۗ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَ
 أَصْلَحُوا وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِاللَّهِ وَأَخْلَصُوا دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِي اللَّهُ
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۝⁵⁰

The hypocrites shall surely be in the lowest depth of the Fire; and you shall find no helper for them, except those who repent and amend and hold fast to Allah and are sincere in their obedience to Allah. These are among the believers. And Allah will soon bestow a great reward upon the believers.

In this verse, those who repent, and do good deeds, and are devoted to God, and are sincere in their obedience, are described as those who will be *ma'a* (with) the believers. If 'being with the believers' is taken literally, it would mean that, despite possessing all the virtuous qualities, they will still not attain the status of believers but will only be 'with' the believers. This is evidently wrong. The fact is that the word *ma'a* also denotes the sharing of status and it is in this sense that it is used in the verse in question.

It is also evident from many other verses of the Holy Quran that the door to prophethood remains open for this ummah, provided that it is a reflection of the Holy Prophet's prophethood, and serves to spread his word, and remains subservient and obedient to him. In *Sūrah al-A'rāf*, speaking about the Holy Prophet^{sas} and his ummah, Allah says:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا
 بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ○ وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ ۖ فَإِذَا جَاءَ
 أَجَلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْجِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِرُونَ ○ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ إِذَا يَأْتَيْتَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُنْكُمْ يُقِصُّ
 عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي فَتَمِنَ عَلَيْهَا وَأَصْلَحْ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ○⁵¹

Say, ‘My Lord has only forbidden foul deeds, whether open or secret, and sin and wrongful transgression, and that you associate with Allah that for which He has sent down no authority, and that you say of Allah that of which you have no knowledge.’ And for every people there is a term, and when their term is come, they cannot remain behind a single moment, nor can they get ahead of it. O children of Adam! if Messengers come to you from among yourselves, rehearsing My Signs unto you, then whoso shall fear God and do good deeds, on them shall come no fear nor shall they grieve.

It is evident from these verses that Prophets will continue to appear from amongst this ummah, for, in speaking of the ummah of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, Allah says that if Prophets come to you, you must accept them, otherwise, you will suffer torment. It is futile to point to the word ‘if’ and say that it makes the whole thing conditional and uncertain because the same word was used at the time of Adam’s expulsion from paradise. However, even if it is considered to be conditional, it does not close the door to prophethood, for it would be against Divine wisdom to speak of the possibility of something that He has completely forbidden.

Besides evidence from the Holy Quran, the Traditions also support the view that the door to prophethood has not been completely shut. This is why the Holy Prophet^{sas} has repeatedly

described the coming of the Messiah as a Prophet.⁵² If there was no possibility of prophethood after him, why would he call the Messiah to come as ‘Prophet of Allah’?

The fifth major objection levelled against us is that we deny the concept of Jihad. I always wonder how a person can utter falsehood with such temerity, for this is an utter lie. On the contrary, we believe that a person’s faith cannot be complete if he does not subscribe to Jihad. All the weakness of Islam and the frailty of faith amongst Muslims that we witness today is the result of their laxity in Jihad. To say that we deny Jihad, therefore, is a false aspersions. When the Holy Quran teaches Jihad in so many places in the Holy Quran, how can we, being Muslims and lovers of the Holy Quran, deny it? What we do oppose is the shedding of blood, indulging in mischief and rebellion, and committing crimes in the name of Islam, because such acts tarnish its pristine image. We cannot tolerate that the holy injunctions of Islam should be distorted to serve people’s personal greed and egotism and vested interests. We do not deny Jihad but we do oppose the labelling of aggression and tyranny as Jihad.

One can readily understand the rage and resentment a lover feels when his beloved is attacked. In the same way, we have a serious grievance against those who defame Islam with their words or deeds. They call themselves Muslims but act like the enemies of Islam would do. Because of them, the world today sees Islam as an uncivilised religion and the Holy Prophet^{sas} as a tyrannical ruler. This is not because they have found something in the life of the Holy Prophet^{sas} that is contrary to piety or honesty, rather it is because the Muslims with their actions have instilled these notions into people’s minds. Among the great wrongs done to

the Holy Prophet^{sas} by Muslims themselves is that they have presented before the opponents of Islam such a false image of the Holy Prophet^{sas}—who was mercy personified and would never hurt even an ant—that their hearts have become filled with prejudice and animosity towards him^{sas}.

I hear the cry of Jihad from all sides, but the Jihad that Allah and the Holy Prophet^{sas} beckon us towards is completely different from the Jihad to which people are now being called. The Jihad to which the Holy Quran invites us is:

فَلَا تُطِيعُوا الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَّ جَاهِدُوْهُمْ بِهٖ جِهَادًا كَبِيْرًا⁵³

So obey not the disbelievers and fight against them by means of it (the Quran) a great fight.

Is it the same Jihad that Muslims are invited to join today? How many are there who, with the Quran in their hands, go out to do Jihad with the disbelievers? Is the Quran so utterly devoid of any inherent excellence that it is unable to draw people to itself? If this were true, it would be impossible to prove the truth of Islam. To believe this would mean that, while the words of mortals have the power to grip people's hearts, the Word of God (Quran) is so ineffectual that it cannot conquer the hearts of men without the use of the sword! The sword has never been able to conquer hearts, and Islam strongly condemns the idea of accepting a religion out of fear or greed. Allah says:

اِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ قَالُوْا نَشْهَدُ اِنَّكَ لَرَسُوْلٌ اِلٰهِ وَّ اَللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ اِنَّكَ لَرَسُوْلُهُ ؕ وَّ اَللّٰهُ يَشْهَدُ اِنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ۝⁵⁴

When the hypocrites come to you, they say, ‘We bear witness that you are indeed the Messenger of Allah.’ And Allah knows that you are indeed His Messenger, but Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are surely liars.

Had it been permissible to wage Jihad with the sword for the propagation of Islam, would God have used such words for those who accepted Islam but were hypocrites at heart? Who can expect to create a community of devoted followers by force? Far from wanting to convert people by force, Islam is the first religion that taught freedom of faith. Allah says:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۚ قَدْ كَبَّرَ الرَّسُولُ مِنَ الْعِجْ ۝٥٥

There should be no compulsion in religion. Surely, right has become distinct from wrong.

Thus, everyone has the right to accept or reject the truth based on reason and argument. Allah also says:

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ۝٥٦

And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors.

Islam only permits Muslims to fight those who fight them in the name of religion and seek to forcibly convert them. However, even in such cases, it warns that there must be no transgression and that Muslims must stop fighting if the enemy backs down. In

the presence of this teaching, how can one say that Islam teaches the use of coercion for its propagation? Allah does not teach us to fight to eliminate other religions; He teaches us to fight to protect them:

أَذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلِمُوا ۗ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ ۚ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا
 مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ
 بِبَعْضٍ لَهَادَ مَنْ صَوَّاعِمٍ وَبَيْعٍ وَصَلَاتٍ ۗ وَمَسْجِدٍ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ۗ وَكَيْتُصِرْنَ اللَّهُ
 مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ۝⁵⁷

Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged—and Allah indeed has power to help them. Those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly only because they said, ‘Our Lord is Allah’. And if Allah did not repel some men by means of others, there would surely have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft commemorated. And Allah will surely help one who helps Him. Allah is indeed Powerful, Mighty.

These verses clearly state that religious wars are only permissible when people are stopped from practising their faith. Such wars are not meant to destroy the places of worship of other people or to turn them away from their faith or to kill them, their purpose is to protect all faiths and preserve their places of worship. These objectives are in keeping with the teachings of Islam because Islam came to the world as a testifier and a protector, not as an aggressor and coercer.

In short, the Jihad that is permitted by Islam is only against

those who forcibly try to turn people away from Islam, stop them from entering it, or kill people for the 'crime' of becoming Muslims. Jihad can only be waged against such people and none other. All other wars would be for political or national interests, and these can take place even between Muslim nations.

The wars of aggression, whose purpose is to plunder and cause bloodshed, have unfortunately found their way into Islam from other religions. Islam itself has no concept of such wars. The greatest proponents of such wars are the Christians who, ironically, are loudest in their criticism of Islam. Religious wars were so rampant in the Middle Ages that the whole of Europe was engrossed in them. On the one hand, they made surreptitious attacks on Muslim lands (just like the tribesmen of the Frontier attack India these days), and, on the other, they attacked European nations that had not yet accepted Christianity. They even thought that they pleased God by waging these wars. Just as a man's reasoning faculties become dysfunctional when he is angry, so it seems that, in reaction to these attacks by the Christians, the Muslims started to respond in kind and completely forgot their own teachings. They went so far astray that a time came when those who had been their 'mentors' started criticising them for it. Unfortunately, despite all such criticism, Muslims failed to realize their error. Today the whole world uses this same weapon against the Muslims but they do not open their eyes and continue to hand this sword to their enemy. They do not see that these aggressive wars that they call Jihad are not benefiting Islam but damaging it. Is there any nation that has become victorious merely through fighting? Numbers are of no avail in war, what matters is the skill, organization, training, equipment, morale, and the support and goodwill of other nations. These factors can enable even

small nations to overcome great ones; without them, even massive armies are of no avail. Muslims would have been better served had they utilized these resources instead of defaming Islam by giving a false connotation to Jihad and suffering loss and defeat at the same time. When it is realized that a group of people is waging a political war in the guise of religion, all nations gather against them, for they feel a threat against which even the most equitable and benign governments are not safe. A government belonging to another religion is bound to feel that, no matter how well it treats its Muslim subjects, it cannot win the peace because their war is not against injustice or oppression but is due to religious differences.

Therefore, we do not deny Jihad, but we do oppose the wrong interpretation of it that is so severely injuring Islam today. In our view, the progress of Muslims lies in the realisation that the greater Jihad⁵⁸ can only be carried out through the Holy Quran and not with the sword. If they can understand that differences in matters of religion do not justify attacking the life or property or honour of anyone,⁵⁹ then their minds and their outlooks will naturally undergo a transformation that will lead them towards the right path. By thus acting upon the following verse of the Holy Quran, they will fathom the correct principles that lead to progress and will abide by them:

وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنِ اتَّقَىٰ ۗ وَأَنْتُمْ الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ٦٠

And it is not righteousness that you come into houses by the backs thereof; but truly righteous is he who fears God. And you should come into houses by the doors thereof; and fear Allah that you may prosper.

Your Majesty! Just as your name denotes peace, so we pray that peace may be established on the borders of Afghanistan through you. I have briefly described for you the beliefs of the Ahmadiyya Community, the objections that are raised against those beliefs, and their answers. I will now proceed to give a brief account of the claims of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement and of the arguments on which these claims are based. I do this so that, having delivered His message to you, I may stand absolved before God. I hope that after learning about the will of God, you will also reap His blessings and draw His love unto yourself.

The Claim of Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} claimed that God had raised him for the guidance and direction of mankind; that he was the same Messiah and Mahdi whose advent was foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas}; and that in his person were fulfilled all prophecies contained in various scriptures of the world regarding the advent of a Reformer in the latter days. He also claimed that God had granted him insight into the Holy Quran and had revealed to him its innermost secrets and truths, and that he had been given knowledge of the subtle paths of piety and righteousness. He claimed that he had been assigned the task of demonstrating the glory and superiority of the Holy Prophet^{sas} and causing Islam to become victorious over other religions. He had been sent to inform the

world that God loves Islam and the Holy Prophet^{sas}, and that He is not pleased when people do not pay heed to them.

Similarly, he said that since the Holy Prophet^{sas} had been sent for all mankind and it was God's will that the whole world should come together at his hand, He had, therefore, caused the Founders of all religions to make prophecies about the return in the latter days of the world of a Prophet from their particular religion. This was so that religious division should not be a barrier in the acceptance of the Seal of Prophets^{sas}. These prophecies of various religions in fact foretold the coming of a follower of the Holy Prophet^{sas} through whom his truth would be affirmed and all religions would come together under his banner, and they came to be fulfilled in the person of the Promised Messiah^{as} who came as the Messiah for Christians and Jews, as the Masiodarbahimi for Zoroastrians, and as Krishna for Hindus. His truth can be ascertained by the followers of these religions through their own scriptures. Once they have acknowledged the truth of the Promised Messiah^{as}, they can then become cognizant of the truth of Islam and enter into the discipleship of the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

Arguments in Support of his Claim

Having briefly described the claim of the Promised Messiah^{as}, I will now give a short description of the proofs and arguments through which the truth of someone who has been sent by God can be ascertained and how these apply to the Promised Messiah^{as}. Once it has been established that a person has been sent by God, it becomes incumbent upon everyone to accept all his claims, for

it is unreasonable to think that a person ordained by God would lead people away from the truth. If this were possible, it would discredit Divine Knowledge, as it would mean that God was mistaken in His choice, having selected a person whose heart was unholy and who, instead of spreading the truth, only desired his own aggrandisement and held himself above God.

Not only is such a thought contrary to reason and common sense, it is also explicitly rejected by the Holy Quran:

مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ اللَّهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنَّبُوءَةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا عِبَادًا لِي مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ كُونُوا رَبَّيْنَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ ۗ وَلَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ أَرْبَابًا ۗ أَيُّ أُمَّرِكُمْ بِالْكَفْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ٦١

It is not possible for a man that Allah should give him the Book and dominion and prophethood, and then he should say to men: ‘Be servants to me and not to Allah;’ but he would say: ‘Be solely devoted to the Lord because you teach the Book and because you study it.’ Nor is it possible for him that he should bid you take the angels and the Prophets for Lords. Would he enjoin you to disbelieve after you have submitted to God?

Thus, the vital question is whether the one who claims to be from God is true in his claim or not. If the truth of this claim is established, then the truth of all his claims is validated as well. On the other hand, if his very truthfulness is in doubt, then it is a waste of time to analyse his claim any further. Following this basic rule, I wish to examine the claim of the Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} so that the reader might become cognizant of the arguments on the basis of which he made his claim and because of which hundreds of thousands have accepted him thus far.

References

- ¹ I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the Accursed.
- ² In the name of the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.
- ³ We praise Him and invoke His blessings on His Noble Prophet.
- ⁴ God is the only Helper.
- ⁵ *Sūrah al-Ḥajj*, 22:79
- ⁶ Isaiah, 62:2
- ⁷ *Sunan at-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb-ul-Ahkam, Hadith no. 1339
- ⁸ *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, vol. 7, p. 293, Hadith no. 22145, Alamul Kutub, Beirut, 1998
- ⁹ *Sūrah an-Nahl*, 16:51
- ¹⁰ *Sūrah Fāṭir*, 35:25
- ¹¹ *Sūrah Āl-e-‘Imrān*, 3:82
- ¹² *Al-Yawāqīt Wal Jawābir*, part 2, p. 342, Dār al-Iḥya at-Turāth al-‘Arabī, Beirut
- ¹³ *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:187
- ¹⁴ *Tafsīr al-Baghawī*, vol. 2, p. 403, verse 108 of *Sūrah Hūd*
- ¹⁵ *Sūrah an-Nisā’*, 4:173
- ¹⁶ *Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:118
- ¹⁷ *Sūrah Āl-e-‘Imrān*, 3:56
- ¹⁸ *Izāla-e-Auhām*, Rūḥāni Khazā'in, vol. 3, p. 185
- ¹⁹ *Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl*, 17:94
- ²⁰ *Sharḥ Allāma az-Zarqānī*, vol. 1, p. 67, Dārul Kutub al-Ilmiya, Beirut, 1996
- ²¹ *Sūrah Āl-e-‘Imrān*, 3:145
- ²² *Sūrah az-Zumar*, 39:31
- ²³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Aṣḥābun-Nabī, Hadith no. 3668
- ²⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābul-Maghāzī, Hadith no. 4454

- ²⁵ *At-Tabaqāt ul-Kubra* by Ibn Sa'ad, vol. 3, p. 23, Dār al-Iḥya at-Turath al-'Arabī, Beirut, 1996
- ²⁶ *Majma' Biḥār al-Anwār*, part 1, p. 534, Dār al-Imān, Medina, 1994
- ²⁷ *Sūrah ar-Ra'd*, 13:12
- ²⁸ *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Kitābul Fitan, Hadith no. 4039
- ²⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Aḥādīth al-Anbiyā', chapter Nuzūl 'Īsā ibn Maryam, Hadith no. 3449
- ³⁰ *Sūrah at-Taubah*, 9:26
- ³¹ *Sūrah Āl-e-Imrān*, 3:155
- ³² *Sūrah az-Zumar*, 39:7
- ³³ *Sūrah al-A'raf*, 7:27
- ³⁴ *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:58
- ³⁵ *Sūrah al-Ḥadīd*, 57:26
- ³⁶ *Sūrah ash-Shūrā*, 42:28
- ³⁷ *Sūrah Hā Mim as-Sajdah*, 41:11
- ³⁸ *Sūrah at-Ṭalāq*, 65:11-12
- ³⁹ *Sūrah at-Taḥrīm*, 66:12-13
- ⁴⁰ *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*, by Sheikh Shahāb al-Dīn Suhrawardi, Part 1, p. 45
- ⁴¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍail Aṣḥāb al-Nabī, Hadith no. 3689
- ⁴² *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb*, 33:41
- ⁴³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābul-Manaqib, Hadith no. 3541
- ⁴⁴ *Sūrah al-Kauthar*, 108:4
- ⁴⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim*, Kitābul-Ḥajj, Hadith no. 3363
- ⁴⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim*, Kitābul-Imarah, Hadith no. 4773
- ⁴⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim*, Kitābul-Ḥajj, Hadith no. 3363
- ⁴⁸ *Majma'a Biḥārul-Anwār*, p. 502, Dār al-Imān, Medina, 1994
- ⁴⁹ *Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:67-71
- ⁵⁰ *Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:146-147
- ⁵¹ *Sūrah al-A'raf*, 7:34-36

- ⁵² *Şahîḥ al-Muslim*, Kitābul-Fitan, Hadith no. 7299
- ⁵³ *Sūrah al-Furqān*, 25:53
- ⁵⁴ *Sūrah al-Munāfiqūn*, 63:2
- ⁵⁵ *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:257
- ⁵⁶ *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:191
- ⁵⁷ *Sūrah al-Ḥajj*, 22:40-41
- ⁵⁸ *Sūrah al-Furqān*, 25:53
- ⁵⁹ *Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:91 ; *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:191; *Sūrah al-Mumtaḥinah*, 60:9
- ⁶⁰ *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:190
- ⁶¹ *Sūrah Āl-e-Imrān*, 3:80-81

Part II—Arguments

Argument 1—The Need of the Hour

The first argument for the truth of one appointed by God is the need of the hour. God does not do anything out of place or season. He does not send down anything unless it is needed, and when something is needed He does not bar it. There is no physical human need that God has not provided. He has taken care of everything to the last detail. When He has provided for the physical needs of man, it would be contrary to His glory and majesty to ignore his spiritual needs and not provide the means for their fulfilment. This is all the more true considering that the body is mortal and its needs are short-lived and its development limited, whereas the human soul is eternal, its suffering can be prolonged to a time beyond reckoning, and its progress exceeds human bounds and limitations.

No one who reflects on Divine attributes in the light of the Holy Quran will accept that even though the spiritual state of mankind required a Reformer, God did not make any provisions to meet this need. If this were so, the very creation of man would be without purpose. Yet, God says:

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لِعِبَادِنَا ۖ مَا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ¹

And We created not the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, in sport. We created them not but with the requirements of truth and justice, but most of them understand not.

The truth is that whenever mankind suffers from spiritual decline and stands in need someone to reform them, God sends a Reformer from Himself who then brings them back to the true path and helps them to overcome their inner shortcomings.

Keeping Divine attributes in mind, not only is it logically impossible to accept that God would abandon His creatures in their hour of need, but God Himself says so in the Holy Quran:

وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنزِّلُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَعْلُومٍ²

And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures thereof and We send it not down except in a known measure.

That is to say, God bestows everything according to need. His works are not devoid of wisdom. He does not send down something unnecessarily, nor is His hand constrained so that He cannot do so even when it is required. He also says:

وَأْتَسْأَلُونَكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ مَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُ وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا³

And He gave you all that you asked of Him; and if you try to count the favours of Allah, you will not be able to number them.

The word 'ask' in this verse points to a true need. God does not grant everything a person asks but He most certainly grants a genuine need that is inherent in human nature or that bears on man's eternal existence.

While this is a general law, Allah specifically says with regard to Guidance that whenever His creatures are in need of it He

most certainly provides it for them. In fact, this is something He has taken upon Himself and no one else has a part in it. He says:

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَىٰ⁴

The guidance of mankind is something that God has made obligatory upon Himself i.e. He himself provides all the means for it.

The Holy Quran does not only prescribe the providing of guidance according to the need of time, it goes further and says that had there not been such a provision, people would be entitled to ask God on the Day of Judgment as to how He could hold them accountable and punish them when He had not sent them any Messengers? Allah says:

وَ كَوَّأْنَا أَهْلَكُمُهمْ بِعَذَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِهِ لَمَّا كَانُوا رَبَّنَا لَوْ لَا أَرْسَلْتَ إِلَيْنَا رَسُولًا فَنُنَبِّئُكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نُنْزِلَ وَ نَحْزِي⁵

And if We had destroyed them with a punishment before appointing the Prophet they would have surely said, 'Our Lord, why did You not send to us a Messenger that we might have followed Your commandments before we were humbled and disgraced?'

God does not reject their objection but acknowledges it. In fact, it is reiterated in various other places in the Holy Quran that God considers it cruel and unjust to punish a people without having sent to them a Messenger. He says:

يَمَعْتَشِرَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِىَ وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ
يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا قَالُوا شَهِدْنَا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِنَا وَغَدَّوْنَاهُمُ الْحَيَوةَ الدُّنْيَا وَشَهِدُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ
أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَافِرِينَ ۝ ذٰلِكَ اَنْ لَّمْ يَكُنْ دَرَبُكَ مَهْلِكِ الْقُرَىٰ بِظُلْمٍ وَّ اَهْلِهَا غَافِلُونَ ٦

O company of Jinn and men! did not Messengers come to you from among yourselves who related to you My Signs and who warned you of the meeting of this your day? They will say, 'We bear witness against ourselves.' And the worldly life deceived them. And they will bear witness against themselves that they were disbelievers. That is because your Lord would not destroy the towns unjustly while their people were unwarned.

These verses show that to condemn and pass judgement on a people without having warned them is inequitable. In other words, if there are people who need reformation but God does not send them a Reformer, it would be unfair of Him to hold them accountable on the Day of Judgement for not following His commandments. Yet, God is never unjust. It is, therefore, impossible that a people should stand in need of guidance but God should fail to provide it for them.

In addition to this general rule, we also learn from the Holy Quran that Allah has made a specific promise to the followers of the Holy Prophet^{sas} in this regard. He says:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ٧

Verily, We Ourselves have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian.

Protection is of two kinds: one of form, the other of content.

Nothing can be considered protected until it is protected in both ways. For example, if we save the skin, beak and legs of a bird and we stuff it with straw, we will have saved the external appearance of the bird, but we cannot say that the bird is safe and protected. Also, if the bird damages its beak or its feet or if it loses its feathers, it cannot be said to be safe and protected. In the same way, if there is a book that suffers interpolations or extrapolations, and its language is dead so that nobody can understand it, and it no longer serves the purpose for which it was revealed, it will not be considered as having been protected. Its words may be intact but its essence is lost. Words themselves are only there to preserve the meaning. The protection of the holy Quran, therefore, constitutes the protection of its form as well as its content.

In order to fulfil one aspect of this promise, i.e., the protection of the form of the Holy Quran, Allah has made some extraordinary provisions. At the time that the Holy Quran was revealed, the Arabic tongue had not been systematized; its grammar, its diction, and its idiom had not been fixed. The forms of speech and other linguistic criteria had not been formulated. Even the art of writing was in a nascent state. As soon as the Holy Quran was revealed, God stimulated people's minds to organize these studies. It was only to protect the Holy Quran that the foundation was laid for Arabic grammar, rhetoric, *tajwid* or phonetics, diction and idiom, history, and *fiqh* or law. These studies advanced in proportion to their importance for the protection of the Holy Quran. The science of Arabic grammar and diction were the most important for the protection of the Holy Quran. Present-day European scholars admit that Arabic grammar and Arabic lexicons are the most advanced and systematized of all languages.

In addition to these sciences, thousands of people were inspired with the desire to commit the Holy Quran to memory. The text of the Holy Quran, being neither prose nor poetry, is very easy to commit to memory. Those who have any experience of memorizing texts of some size know that the Holy Quran is the easiest to memorize. On the one hand, the Holy Quran was revealed in a form that was easy to memorize, and, on the other, hundreds of thousands of people were motivated to memorize it. Since it is compulsory for every Muslim to recite verses of the Holy Quran in the five-time daily prayers, every believer becomes a preserver of some portion of the Holy Quran. Even if, God forbid, all existing copies of the Holy Quran were somehow lost, it would still not disappear from the world.

I have given only a few examples here, but these should be sufficient to prove that God has made formidable provisions for the preservation of the form of the Holy Quran so that there is no danger of it ever being lost.

The question now arises that if the words in themselves are not the real objective and yet God has provided such tremendous means for their preservation, would He then have left its meaning and content without any protection? Any reasonable person will admit that this is impossible. If God has provided the means for safeguarding the form of the Holy Quran, He must have made still greater provisions for safeguarding its essence. This is indeed true because the following verse speaks of the protection of both its form and content:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ⁸

Verily, We Ourselves have sent down the Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian.

The greater part of the protection of its essence is that whenever people deviate so far from the Holy Quran that its light is obscured by its words and people's hearts and minds no longer accept its influence, God makes provisions to restore its efficacy and to reveal its meaning and to restore to it its vitality and freshness. This interpretation is corroborated by authentic Sayings of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{sas} said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْعَثُ لِهَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ عَلَى رَأْسِ كُلِّ مِائَةِ سَنَةٍ مَنْ يُجَدِّدُ لَهَا دِينَهَا⁹

Verily God will continue to raise for this ummah at the beginning of every century one who will restore for it its faith.

This Hadith is, in fact, an exposition of the verse, 'Verily, We Ourselves have sent down the Exhortation and We Ourselves are its Protector.' The Holy Prophet^{sas} has explained a part of this verse in simple terms so that naïve and superficial-minded people may not take it literally and, by ignoring a very powerful means for the protection of Islam, become a stumbling block for themselves and others.

The above Hadith also shows that these men—who will come to correct the errors arising out of people's failure to fathom the meaning of the Holy Quran and out of their estrangement from the Word of God—will appear at the head of each century. In other words, a series of fortresses have been set up to safeguard

the Holy Quran, so that Islam will never remain without such Reformers, or without people who have met such Reformers, or those who have met the latter, and so on. Islam, according to the Divine promise, will remain free from the kinds of errors as have infiltrated other religions and caused their teachings to become corrupted. In short, what we learn from the Holy Quran in this context is as follows:

1. God definitely provides for man's physical and spiritual needs; more so the spiritual ones because they have precedence over the physical on account of their wider scope and greater significance. If God were not to make such provisions, the very creation of the universe would be purposeless.
2. God has promised that whenever people stand in need of guidance, He will provide it for them.
3. If God does not provide such guidance, His creatures would be entitled to object.
4. If God does not send guidance in a time of need and yet punishes those who went astray for want of guidance, this would be an act of injustice, and God cannot be unjust.
5. God has specifically promised that He will keep sending individuals to reform the Muslims, and that these individuals will safeguard the essence of the Holy Quran.

6. Hadith reveals that such men will appear at the head of each century, at the very least.

O, King of Afghanistan! May God open your heart to the acceptance of His words! Ask yourself whether or not this age is in need of a Divine Reformer? It appears from the Traditions that, at the head of every century, there arises the need for someone to come from God to expound the meaning of the Holy Quran and to reveal to the world the true teachings of Islam. Right now we are midway through the century. Setting aside the Traditions for a moment, let us just look at the state of the world and ask ourselves whether or not a Reformer is needed at this time. If we find that Muslims and other people are faring so well that they do not need any Divine Reformer, then we need not pay any attention to such a claimant. But if the state of the Muslims is practically crying out that a Reformer is needed now more than ever, or if the enemy is all out to destroy Islam, then we have to accept that someone must come from God to restore Islam to its pristine state, to repel the onslaught of the enemy, to teach the Muslims true Islam and fill their hearts with love for their faith, and to demonstrate Islam's ability to revive the spiritually dead.

There can be no difference of opinion when it comes to the state of the Muslims today and the tenacity of the enemy. No one—unless he wishes to conceal the truth for some ulterior motive or is so lacking in human values that he is no longer able to distinguish good from evil—will fail to confess that Muslims have strayed far from their faith and that the following verse truly applies to them:

يَرْبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا¹⁰

‘O my Lord, my people indeed treated this Quran as a discarded thing.’

The question we ask today is not what part of Islam the Muslims have abandoned, the question is, what part of it do they still hold on to? Truly has someone said, ‘You will only find Muslims in graveyards, and Islam in books.’ This means that Islam is only found in the Holy Quran, in Hadith, and in books of Muslim saints, but not in the lives of the Muslims. In the first place, Muslims are hardly aware of the teachings of Islam, but even if they want to gain knowledge of it, this has become almost impossible because its teachings have been so massively distorted. Such doctrines have been fabricated about God Himself that no honest person could accept them and at the same time proclaim, ‘Holy is God the Praiseworthy; Holy is God the High and Mighty.’¹¹ Unspeakable things have been attributed to angels regarding whom God says:

يَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ¹²

They do what they are commanded.

Angels are sometimes portrayed as critics of God and sometimes as lovers of impure women in the guise of mortals. Similarly, falsehood and sins are attributed to Prophets, which severs the relationship of love and reverence that people should have towards these holy men. The Word of God is said to have been tampered with by Satan, which renders it doubtful. Heaven and Hell are

described in ways that amount to either the hallucinations of a poet or ridiculous tales.

Let alone other Prophets, they do not even spare the Holy Prophet^{sas} himself! Stories are told of his affair with Zainab, and secret relations with a slave girl, and so on, which tarnish the image of his perfect and pristine character. On the other hand, they completely ignore the testimony of Ḥaḍrat ‘Āyeshah^{ra}—his wife and closest confidante—who said, ‘The Holy Prophet^{sas} was the very image of the Holy Quran.’¹³

A theory of *naskh* has been invented whereby contradictions are cited between verses of the Holy Quran and some are declared to have been abrogated. This is done without any authority from the Holy Quran or from the Holy Prophet^{sas}. For anyone who ponders and reflects, such a belief would leave no verse of the Holy Quran without an element of doubt.

Further, by teaching that a dead Prophet from among the followers of Moses will return to this world, the ummah of the Holy Prophet^{sas} has been rendered unworthy and the Holy Prophet^{sas} without any spiritual influence.

Such are the beliefs of the Muslims today, but their practical condition is no less lamentable. 75% of Muslims do not observe obligatory prayers or fasting. Most do not pay the Zakat, and of those who do, only 2% do so willingly and happily. Most of those for whom the Hajj is obligatory will not even hear of it; while some for whom it is not obligatory, and in some cases even forbidden, set out for the pilgrimage and tarnish the name of Islam by undergoing all kinds of hardship on the way. The few who do observe these obligations do it in such a way that, instead of fulfilling their purpose, they actually incur God’s wrath on account

of them and become a source of embarrassment for their religion. The meanings of the words recited in the five-time daily prayer are rarely known to people who are not of Arab ethnicity. And even these prayers are offered as an unpleasant obligation. People pray so fast that it is hard to tell whether they are in *rukū'* or *sajdah*. It is also considered blasphemy to pray in one's own tongue. Most people do not observe the fasting at all, and even for those who do, instead of being a source of Divine reward, it becomes a source of chastisement on account of their lies and slander and back-biting that they continue to indulge in.

The Islamic laws of inheritance are completely ignored. Usury—which God has described as being the same as waging war on God—has now become so rampant that, thanks to the Muslim scholars and their many interpretations and machinations, hardly any Muslim is free from it. Even then, Muslims are not as prosperous as other people.

High moral and ethical values, once the birth-right of Muslims, now seem as remote from Islam as faithlessness. Time was when the word of a Muslim was considered an irrevocable pledge and his promise unalterable law, but today nothing is more unreliable than the word of a Muslim, nothing emptier than his promise. Loyalty has become extinct, truthfulness is lost, courage is a thing of the past, and these have been replaced by treachery, falsehood, dishonesty, cowardice, and foolhardiness. The result is that the world has become our enemy, our trades have been destroyed, and our influence has waned. Knowledge, that was once the Muslim's friend and constant companion, is now a stranger.

The sufis have also regressed. They have converted religion into irreligion and religious law into permissiveness. Muslim clergy, in

addition to promoting schism and mutual hostility, are attributing their own words to God and to His Prophet and thus striking at the very root of Islam. The wealthy among the Muslims, even though their riches are nothing compared to those of other peoples, are yet so arrogant on account of their paltry wealth that they stay away from religion. Far from being of service to Islam, they do not even have any reverence for it. We do find Christian missionaries who come from wealthy families, but among rich Muslims, we barely find anyone who is even cognizant of the basics of their religion. The rulers are so corrupt that bribery and exploitation is their norm. They do not use their authority to be of service to the people but arrogate all power to themselves as if they were God. While the monarchs are lost in the pursuit of pleasure, the ministers are engaged in scheming and treachery. The masses are worse than barbarians and millions of them cannot even recite the *kalimah*, let alone know its meaning. Time was when Islam was fast eating away at other religions; now it is like a carcass swarmed by worms and vultures. People have all the money for their own needs and yet when it comes to the needs of the faith they find it hard to part with a penny. They have time for gossip and frivolities and entertaining friends but can't spare a minute to learn and teach the Holy Quran. The Holy Prophet^{sas} did not only say that those who don't offer the five-time daily prayers or don't offer them with congregations are hypocrites, but he says that those who don't even attend the *Fajr* and *'Ishā* prayers are hypocrites. In spite of being the embodiment of compassion, he said:

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَقَدْ هَمَمْتُ أَنْ أُمَرَ بِحَطَبٍ فَيُحْطَبُ ثُمَّ أُمَرَ بِالصَّلَاةِ فَيُؤَدَّنُ لَهَا
ثُمَّ أُمَرَ رَجُلًا فَيَوْمُ النَّاسِ ثُمَّ أَخَالَفَ إِلَى رَجَالٍ فَأَحْرَقَ عَلَيْهِمْ بُيُوتَهُمْ¹⁴

By God in Whose possession is my life, sometimes when men have congregated for prayer, I wish to have enough dry wood with me, then appoint someone else as Imam and go out myself to set fire to the houses where people have stayed away from the congregation.

Yet, today millions of people do not have time for the daily prayers, with the exception of the two Eid congregations. There are many who pray ostentatiously without due regard to all the preconditions and proprieties of prayer and even omit the preliminary ablutions.

The long and short of it is that today Islam is alone and helpless. In the words of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi^{as}, the Imam of the Age:

مے سزد گر خون بیاد دیدہ ہر اہل دین بر پریشانی عالی اسلام و قحط المسلمین

Meet is it if the faithful shed tears of blood

Over the plight of Islam and the dearth of Muslims.

دین حق را گردش آمد صعبناک و سہمگین سخت شورے اوقاد اندر جہاں از کفر و کین

The true faith has suffered a shaking big and dreadful,

Unbelief and hatred have made a great noise in the world.

آنکہ نفس اوست از ہر خیر و خوبی بے نصیب مے تراشد عیب ہا در ذات خیر المرسلین

Those without the least virtue themselves

Find fault with the greatest of all Divine Messengers.

آنکہ در زندان ناپاکی ست مجوس و اسیر ہست در شان امام پاکبازان نکتہ چیں
He who lives himself in a cell of vice
Is ready to detract from the greatness of the most pious among
men.

تیر بر معصوم مے بارد غیث بد گمہر آسماں را مے سرد گر نگ بارد بر زمیں
The most vicious among men aims his arrows at the most
innocent,
It would be just, therefore, if heaven rains stones on earth.

پیش چشمان شما اسلام درناک اوقاد چہیت عذرے پیش حق اے جمع الملتغمین
Islam is being thrown into the dust before your very eyes,
You who live in luxury, what defence will avail you before
God?

ہر طرف کفر است جو شاں بچو افواج یزید دین حق بیمار و بے کس بچو زین العابدین
On all sides, unbelief is storming like the armies of Yazīd,
The true faith is alone and helpless like Zain-ul-'Abidin.

مردم ذی قدرت مشغول عشرتہائے خویش خرم و خنداں نشستہ بایمان نازنیں
Men of means are lost in the pursuit of private pleasures,
Happy and hilarious in the company of sweethearts.

عالماں را روز و شب باہم فساد از جوش نفس زاہداں غافل سراسر از ضرورت ہائے دین
Doctors and divines busy day and night in personal quarrels,
Ascetics and mediators sit aside ignorant of the needs of faith.

ہر کسے از بہر نفسِ دونِ خودِ طرفے گرفت طرفے دیں خالی شدو ہر دشمنے جت از کمیں
Everyone has gone to care for his own mean interests, faith is alone,

So enemies have leapt out of their hidden places to attack.

اِس زمانے آنچنان آمد کہ ہر ابنُ الجہول از سفاہت می کند تکذیب اِس دینِ متیں
The time has emboldened every stupid person

To use his stupidity to find fault with this enduring faith.

صد ہزاراں ابلہاں از دینِ بڑوں و برند درخت صد ہزاراں جاہلاں گشتند صید الماکدین
Millions of fools have left the faith with their bag and baggage,
Millions of the ignorant have submitted to charlatans and cheats.

بر مسلماناں ہمہ ادبارِ زبں رہ اوقناد کز پیئے دیں ہمتِ ثاں نیت باغیرتِ قریبں
There is not a misfortune which has not befallen Muslims in their path,

Yet, their shame and valour stand not together.

گر بگردد عالمے از راہِ دینِ مصطفیٰ ؐ از رہِ غیرتِ نبی جنبد ہم مثلِ جنیں
Even if the whole world turns away from the faith of Muṣṭafā,
Muslims, much as the embryo in the womb, will not make the slightest movement.

فکرِ ایثاں غرقِ ہر دمِ دروہِ دنیاے دون مالِ ایثاں غارت اندر راہِ نوانِ دنیوں
They are drowned the whole time in low thoughts about the world,

Their wealth is all squandered on their wives and children.

ہر گُجا در محلے فق است ایٹاں صدرِ شاں ہر گُجا ہست از معاصی علقہ ایٹاں نگلیں
*They adorn gatherings of vice and wickedness,
 And become centres in circles of sinners.*

با خرابات آشنا بیگانہ از کونے ہدیٰ نفرت از اربابِ دس باسے پرتاں ہمیشیں
*Friendly and familiar in the tavern, they know not the path
 to righteousness,
 Strangers to the faithful, companions of worshippers of wine.*

لس دو فکر دین احمدؑ مغزِ جانِ ماگداخت کثرتِ اعدائے ملتِ قلتِ انصارِ دس
*Two worries about the faith of Ahmad^{as} have consumed my
 life:
 The abundance of enemies and lack of friends.*

اے خدا دُود آو برما آبِ نصرتِ ہا بیار یا مرا بردار یا رب نس مقام آتشیں
*O God, rush to our side and rain on us your help,
 Or remove me from near this blazing fire.*

اے خدا نورِ ہدیٰ از مشرقِ رحمتِ برار گمراہاں را چشمِ کن روشن ز آیاتِ مبین
*O God, send the light of guidance from the sun of Thy
 beneficence,
 And illumine the eyes of those who have strayed away from
 Thy clearest signs.*

چول مرا بخشدہ صدقِ اندرس سوز و گداز نیست امیدم کہ ناکامم بمیرانی دس
*As thou hast granted truth and reality to my feelings and
 passions,
 I fear not that I will fail or die a failure.*

کاروبارِ صادقان هرگز نماند ناتمام صادقان را دستِ حق باشد نهال در آستین
The duties that lovers of truth set themselves do not remain

undone,

*The lovers of truth have the Hand of God helping them in
 secret.¹⁵*

Thus, the general condition of Muslims obtaining today is crying for a Reformer to come from God; and not just a Reformer but a great Reformer who can put Islam back on its feet and counter unbelief with irrevocable arguments and subjugate it with the sword of reason. We see that, at the head of this century, there was only one person who claimed to have been sent by God for the defence of Islam, and he is none other than the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Community. It behoves all intelligent and rational people to ponder over his claim and not to turn away without giving it sufficient thought. Otherwise, they will have to deny an eternal Divine practice and be answerable to God for their neglect.

At this point, some people raise the objection that the Holy Prophet^{sas} was the perfect Prophet and there is no need for a Reformer after him. They say that the Holy Quran is now our Reformer and its spiritual power is our guide. On the surface, this might seem like a beautiful sentiment but a little reflection shows that it is completely at odds with the Holy Quran and Hadith, as well as logic and experience. It is contrary to the Holy Quran and Hadith because in both we find clear tidings of Reformers and divinely appointed Guides who would appear in the future. If the coming of a *Mujaddid* (Reformer) or a *Ma'mūr* (divinely appointed Guide) was contrary to the Holy Prophet's perfection,

then why did God promise the advent of such Reformers and Guides after He had declared the Holy Prophet^{sas} to be the Chief of Prophets and the most perfect of men? Would God undo His own action and contradict His own Word? Why, in such a case, would the Holy Prophet^{sas} foretell the coming of Reformers and Guides? Are we more cognizant of the Holy Prophet's status than himself so that while he gives tidings of future Reformers and Guides, we consider this to be derogatory to his status?

This assertion is also contrary to reason because if no Reformer or Guide was to come after the Holy Prophet^{sas}, then the condition of the Muslims should never have deteriorated and they should forever have walked the path of piety and righteousness. This is not what we see. Reason cannot accept that the condition of the Muslims should continue to grow worse and worse and yet none should come to reform them. If this is what was to become of Islam, then this is not a proof of the Holy Prophet's perfection, it is a sign that God wishes to put an end to Islam. If no Reformers and Spiritual Guides were to appear in the future, then, as a visible sign of this, Muslims should have been saved from being misled and from going astray, and even today they should have been like the Companions of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Since there is definitely a spiritual decline, there have to be some provisions for spiritual rejuvenation.

Secondly, if, on account of the Holy Prophet's perfection, no one representing him can appear after him, then why is it that God, Who is the Source of all perfection, sends His vicegerents? The truth is that Messengers and vicegerents are always required to remind us of something that is not visible to us. Even though the Holy Prophet^{sas} is perfect, there is still a need for individuals,

who reflect and represent him, to come into the world and remind us of his teachings and his example.

Likewise, this belief is contradicted by experience in that during the 1300-year period after the Holy Prophet^{sas} there have appeared many individuals who have claimed to have been blessed with Divine discourse and to have been sent to rejuvenate the faith. These people present to us a lofty example of Islam and have played a major role in spreading and strengthening the faith. They included people such as Ḥaḍrat Junaid of Baghdad, Syed ‘Abdul Qādir Jīlānī, Shaikh Shahāb-ud-Dīn Suhrawardy, Ḥaḍrat Moḥy-ud-Dīn Ibn-al-‘Arabī, Ḥaḍrat Bahā-ud-Dīn Naqshbandī, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī, Khawāja Moīn-ud-Dīn Chishty, Ḥaḍrat Shāh Walī Ullāh of Delhi, and others (peace be on them). Considering everything these sages did, how can we believe that there is no need for any Reformer after the Holy Prophet^{sas}? The fact is that there can be, have been, and will continue to be Reformers after the Holy Prophet^{sas}. However, the circumstances prevailing in this age call for an extraordinary Reformer. Since Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah^{as}, is the only one claiming to be such a Reformer, this constitutes a strong argument in his favour.

References

- ¹ *Sūrah ad-Dukhān*, 44:39–40
- ² *Sūrah al-Ḥijr*, 15:22
- ³ *Sūrah Ibrāhīm*, 14:35
- ⁴ *Sūrah al-Lail*, 92:13
- ⁵ *Sūrah Ṭā Hā*, 20:135
- ⁶ *Sūrah al-Anʿām*, 6:131–132
- ⁷ *Sūrah al-Ḥijr*, 15:10
- ⁸ *Sūrah al-Ḥijr*, 15:10
- ⁹ *Sunan Abū Daʿūd*, Kitābul-Malahim, Hadith no. 4291
- ¹⁰ *Sūrah al-Furqān*, 25:31
- ¹¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābut-Tauḥīd, Hadith no. 7563
- ¹² *Sūrah an-Naḥl*, 16:51
- ¹³ *Majmaʾ Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 2, p. 101, published by Dār al-Iman, Medina, 1994
- ¹⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābul-Adhān, Hadith no. 644
- ¹⁵ *Fath-e-Islām*, Rūḥāni Khazāʾin, vol. 3, p. 44–46

Argument 2—Testimony of the Holy Prophet ^{sas}

The first argument proves that the appearance of a Reformer is the need of the age and that since there is no one else who claims to have been sent to restore Islam to its glory, we have no choice but to seriously consider the claim of Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib. The Founder of Ahmadiyyat does not claim to be just a Reformer but to be the Promised Reformer. He claims to be both the Promised Messiah and the Promised Mahdi. As a further argument in support of his claim, I present the testimony of the Holy Prophet ^{sas} himself. Surely, there can be no greater testimony than his.

The concept of the second coming of the Messiah was not born in the Islamic era, for it had been prevalent in the Mosaic traditions hundreds of years before the advent of the Holy Prophet ^{sas}. There is no doubt that some aspects of this doctrine have been so ingrained in Islam that it has come to be seen as one of its basic tenets. These are some of those aspects:

1. The news was given that the Mahdi [Reformer] would come at a time that coincided with the coming of the Promised Messiah ^{as}. Even though in some Traditions it was said that ‘There is no Mahdi except ‘Īsā,’¹ and the two persons were described as one and the same individual, Muslims came to revere the Messiah as much as they should revere the elders of their own religion.

2. The Second Coming of the Messiah has been described as the dawn of a new age for Islam, and Islam's domination over other religions has been deferred until that time.
3. Since the Messiah and the Mahdi have been described as the same person, the coming of the Messiah has been seen as the coming of the Holy Prophet^{sas} himself. This has created in the hearts of the lovers of the Holy Prophet^{sas} a great longing for the coming of the Messiah.
4. The Holy Prophet^{sas} foretold a dangerous and tumultuous time that would effectively shake the foundations of Islam, but he also foretold that the task of overcoming these tribulations and making Islam safe forever had been given to the Promised Messiah^{as}. These descriptions led Muslims to look forward to the Promised Messiah^{as} as an angel of mercy. Also, the words of the Holy Prophet^{sas} that 'Nothing can avail against an ummah that has me at one end and the Messiah at the other,'² caused the Muslims to eagerly wait for the coming of the Messiah because they realized that with his coming Islam would forever be protected against Satan's onslaughts.

These factors have combined to make the advent of the Messiah a great event in the latter days of Islam, an event through which Muslims would witness an image or reflection of the Holy Prophet^{sas} himself. This event would also mark the restoration of Islam to safety. It was impossible to promise such an event without also outlining the signs that would accompany it.

Of course, prophecies regarding Messengers and Prophets

cannot be so clear and unambiguous that they virtually place the hand of the seeker into their hand. Such belief would be without merit and there would be no distinction between believers and unbelievers. Prophecies about God's Messengers are always presented in ways that help true and sincere seekers to find them, while allowing the mischievous and arrogant to find excuses for their refusal to believe. Who can deny the midday sun and yet who would give a reward for such belief? This is why Divine prophecies have an open and a hidden element to them, and this is how it should be.

The same principle was observed in the case of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Prophecies about him were worded in the same way as those regarding past Prophets but for true and insightful seekers, they were no less than luminous signs. Those who believe in a Prophet through arguments and are not content with blindly following their ancestors will readily benefit from these signs. On the other hand, those who profess to believe in hundreds of Prophets but have not believed in any one of them through their own investigation will find it difficult to accept a true claimant, no matter how many signs accompany him. Their faith is practically non-existent, for they only believe what their religious scholars and elders and ancestors have told them. Since they have not seen any Prophet in his true essence, it is impossible for them to recognize one. They can only recognize a Prophet when they have corrected their sight through heavenly guidance and have freed themselves from the stupor of man-made beliefs and ideals.

After this brief introduction, I will now cite some signs of the Promised Messiah^{as} that were foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas}. I believe that anyone who looks at these signs with an unbiased

mind will have no difficulty in pinpointing the time of the coming of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

Before we look at these signs, it is important to remember that at the time when Islam became divided into different sects, many people concocted false Traditions in support of their own sects. For instance, you will find many 'Hadiths' that specify the time of the coming of the Mahdi, and yet their very wording shows that they were designed to prove some argument in support of a certain sect. Even though some of these Traditions may be true, a seeker after truth must exercise great caution with regard to them. At the very least, he should not make any claims based on them. For instance, many Traditions recorded during the Abbassid era seem to speak of the Mahdi and the signs that would appear in his time, but their real purpose was to prove that the pro-Abbassid rebellion in Kharasan was in accord with the will of God. The inaccuracy of these Traditions was proven by subsequent events. A thousand years have passed since these Traditions were recorded and yet no Mahdi has appeared who meets those descriptions. Similarly, there are Traditions in which the signs announcing the time of the Mahdi have been mixed up with descriptions of past events. Unless the two are dis-entangled, it is impossible to discern the truth. Those who are not cognizant of Islamic history have been much misguided by such Traditions and they wait for things to happen in the future that had in fact already taken place prior to the concoction of these Traditions and had only been added to prove the truth of a particular sect. While considering the signs of the coming of the Mahdi, it is imperative that we select the signs that are not related to particular events of the past, so that we may

be saved from falling into the pit dug by selfish people for their vested interests.

The Holy Prophet^{sas} described the signs of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi^{as} in a manner that helps us avoid the snare of those who would mislead us. He described them as a continuous narrative that helps us to recognize any interpolations. Instead of foretelling signs such as his name and his father's name, which could be claimed by so many people, the Holy Prophet^{sas} only foretold signs that were beyond the power of man to fulfil and would only be possible after centuries of change and transformation. No man, not even a horde of men, could have fulfilled these signs even if they strived generation after generation.

The second point that was taken into consideration in describing the signs of the Mahdi was that some of them would not be fulfilled until after the Mahdi had come. In the light of these criteria, when signs appear in earth and heaven that are not in the power of man to bring about, it will not be difficult to know that the time of the Messiah and the Mahdi has come. And if there are some signs that seem not to have been fulfilled even that time, we will have to draw one of two conclusions: (a) that those signs were not real and had been added by dishonest people, or (b) that we have been mistaken in understanding them and they require interpretation.

Here, it is necessary to point out that the signs of the advent of the Messiah and the Mahdi that were foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas} have to be considered collectively, not singly. It takes but a little deliberation to understand this. For instance, one of the signs of the time of the Mahdi described in the Traditions is the disappearance of honesty³ and the prevalence of ignorance.⁴

If these signs are taken as complete in themselves, then we might be led to think that whenever honesty disappears or whenever knowledge becomes lost, the Mahdi must appear. This is not so. The fact is that during its 1300 year history, Islam has gone through many ups and downs, wherein at times honesty disappeared and at times knowledge was lost, and yet the Mahdi did not appear. This shows that these signs are not to be applied singly, rather all the signs (which have been described by the Holy Prophet^{sas} on the basis of Divine revelation and have not been concocted by human beings) together constitute the signs of the coming of the Mahdi. Individually, these signs might appear at different times, but only at the time of the Mahdi were they all to appear together.

The means of identifying a time or age are the same as for identifying a person. When we want to describe a person to someone who has not met him and does not know him, we describe his features, his height, his complexion, his habits and traits, his friends, relations, where he lives, etc. We may say the man is tall, fair, medium-built, has a broad forehead, a sharp nose, large eyes, thick lips, broad chin, etc. We might further say that he is a scholar of Arabic, a Muslim by faith, that his community is against him and that he is a man of noble character. We might even describe his house and his neighbourhood. Whoever goes into a village with such a description will easily find this person even if some people try to mislead him. Similarly, in order to identify a time or an age, one will point out the position of heavenly bodies; changes that would occur within the earth; political, social, religious, moral and economic conditions of the time; relationships between nations; the prevalent means of communication and transport, etc. Whoever

is given such a description beforehand will at once recognize the age when it comes.

The Holy Prophet^{sas} has given exhaustive details of the time of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi^{as} which make it very easy to identify. Even though people have concocted Traditions in this regard, they have failed to disfigure the description given by the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Anyone who studies this description cannot help but affirm that the time for the coming of the Promised Messiah^{as} has arrived.

The General State of Religion at the Time of the Promised Messiah^{as}

I will now proceed to take up the signs one by one and show how there can be no time for the appearance of the Promised Messiah^{as} other than the present. The first sign I will take up concerns the state of religion at the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

The state of religion at any given time can be described in two ways: (a) through numbers and statistics, or (b) by learning of the impact religion has on the lives of the people of that age. The Holy Prophet^{sas} has described the time of the Promised Messiah^{as} from both aspects.

Concerning the apparent state of religions at that time, the Holy Prophet^{sas} says that it will be a time of the dominance of Christianity. In a Tradition of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim* it is related that most people at that time would be ‘Romans.’⁵ It is the unanimous view of Muslim scholars that ‘Romans’ here stands for Christians because at the time of the Holy Prophet^{sas} the Romans were the

standard-bearers of Christianity and the face of its material progress. This sign is full of significance since the Holy Prophet^{sas} also said:

إِذَا هَلَكَ كِسْرَى فَلَا كِسْرَى بَعْدَهُ وَإِذَا هَلَكَ قَيْصَرٌ فَلَا قَيْصَرَ بَعْدَهُ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ
لَتُنْفَقَنَّ كُنُوزُهُمَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ⁶

When Chosroes dies, there will be no Chosroes after him.
And when Caesar dies, there will be no Caesar after him.
Then will you expend the treasures of both in the way of
Allah.

After having prophesied the fall of the Roman Empire and the Chosroes, it was strange to predict that the empire would once again rise up and become dominant. God's word is bound to come true and, in keeping with the prophecy of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, Caesar's empire fell. After the conquest of Constantinople, even the nominal title of Caesar was lost, while Islam spread to all corners of the world. However, from the tenth century onwards, there began a period of decline for Islam, and Christianity started to re-assert itself even in countries where it had never been heard of before. For the past century or so, almost the whole world is ruled by Christians, which leaves no doubt about the fulfilment of the prophecy that the 'Romans' would become dominant.

This prophecy is all the more important because some Muslim scholars have said that this sign will appear only after all the other signs have become manifest. Nawwāb Şiddīq Ḥasan Khan in his book *Hujajul Karāmah*, citing *Risālah-e-Ḥāshriyah*, writes:

چوں جملہ علامات حاصل شود قوم نصاریٰ غلبہ کنندہ بر ملک ہائے بسیار متصرف
شوند 7

When all the Signs have appeared, then will the Christian people rise and establish their dominion over most parts of the world.

In conjunction with the other signs, this prophecy provides tremendous guidance in helping to identify the time of the coming of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

In contrast to the dominance of Christianity, the Holy Prophet^{sas} describes the plight of Islam in the following words: ‘Islam began in a state of poverty, it will return to a state of poverty; fortunate, therefore, are the poor.’⁸ In another Hadith, the Holy Prophet^{sas} says that many Muslims will become followers of the *Dajjāl* (the Antichrist).⁹ We see today that, after its days of glory where it was the greatest power of the world, Islam has now become like a helpless orphan, so much so, that it would not be able to survive without help from Christian powers. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims have turned Christian and more continue to follow them.

The Inner Condition of Muslims

In addition to the outward state of religions at the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}, the Holy Prophet^{sas} also described their inner state. According to a Hadith related by Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra}, the Holy Prophet^{sas} said that among the signs of the Last Day would be that people would deny the *Qadr* (predestination).¹⁰ This obviously

refers to the Muslims because other religions do not even hold this belief. The denial of *Qadr* is now so widespread among Muslims that it requires no elaboration. Muslims who have become enamoured with modern knowledge are rejecting the belief in *Qadr* for fear of being criticised by ignorant European scholars. In this way, the truth and benefits of this most essential doctrine have become lost to them.

Another sign was that Muslims would consider Zakat to be some kind of ransom. This part of the prophecy has been narrated by Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra} and reported by Albazar.¹¹ Today Muslims are facing tribulations from every direction. At such a time they need to give as much in charity as they can, even in addition to Zakat, and yet most Muslims shy away from this obligation placed upon them by God. In countries where Zakat is received under Islamic law, people pay it willy-nilly, but in other countries where there is no such system, only a rare few bother to pay it, and even they make it a means of ostentation and view it as a communal endeavour rather than Zakat.

An important change in the moral condition of Muslims which the Holy Prophet^{sas} has mentioned is their love of the world. Time was when they would sacrifice their dearest possessions at a mere signal from God and His Messenger, and the world was to them no more than a corpse, but today they are bartering their faith for the world.¹² This change is so prevalent that it grieves the heart of anyone who loves Islam. Religious scholars and Sufis, the rich and the poor, all put their worldly interests above religion and sacrifice the interests of Islam for paltry worldly gains.

Another change predicted by the Holy Prophet^{sas} was that people would stop offering Salat, the five-time daily prayer.¹³ This

too has come to pass. Hardly one out of a hundred people who call themselves Muslims are regular in their five-time daily prayers despite the fact that it is foremost among the pillars of Islam. According to some divines, one who neglects his Salat is an unbeliever. There are plenty of mosques but few are the worshippers that frequent them. There are mosques that are being used as stables and are desecrated and yet Muslims feel no obligation to utilize them for worship.

Another change predicted by the Holy Prophet^{sas} is that people would offer the Salat in haste. According to a report by Ibn Mas'ūd, the Holy Prophet^{sas} said that a time would come when fifty people would pray and none of their prayers would be accepted by God.¹⁴ This means that they would pray hastily. Of course, it is not possible to say something about the inner state of a person, for God alone is aware of it, but the apparent sign of the state of one's prayer is to see whether he prays hastily or unhurriedly. On one occasion, the Holy Prophet^{sas} told a person who was going through his prayer quickly that his prayer had not been accepted and that he should pray again.¹⁵ Another sign is the indecent haste people show in observing the Salat. Their prostrations are in such rapid succession that it seems like a hen pecking, but after the prescribed prayer is finished they sit for a long time repeating some incantations.

Another sign predicted by the Holy Prophet^{sas} is that the Holy Quran would 'disappear' and only its form would remain.¹⁶ This sign, too, has come to pass. The Holy Quran exists and yet no one reflects on it. It is strange that, leaving aside the followers of the Promised Messiah^{as}, no one even bothers to read the Holy Quran. Many learned scholars of *fiqh* and Hadith do not deliberate upon

the meaning of the Holy Quran and contend that it contains no meanings other than those that have already been derived by past scholars. The question is that if the door to the interpretation of the Holy Quran remained open even after the Holy Prophet^{sas}, why should it be closed now?

Another sign of the latter days foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas} is that while people would disregard the essence of the Holy Quran, they would revere its physical form and adorn it with covers of gold.¹⁷ This sign is all too evident. Muslims are not bothered to read the Holy Quran but they do keep it wrapped up in satin and gold. They care so much about its physical adornment that nothing like it was seen among people of past ages, even though they were superior to the people of today in terms of their piety as well as their worldly wealth and power.

Another sign indicated by the Holy Prophet^{sas} is the exaggerated devotion to the physical decoration of mosques.¹⁸ This can also be witnessed in this age. Like the people of other religions, Muslims overly decorate their mosques with carvings and chandeliers and hang precious drapes on the walls, which make them look more like places of idol-worship than mosques.¹⁹

Another sign is that the people of Arabia would deviate from their religion (the same religion that was revealed to one of them, that took birth and prospered in their land, whose scripture was revealed and is recited to this day in their own tongue and because of which it has survived to this day). It was foretold that, despite speaking Arabic, the Holy Quran would not benefit them. Their hearts would become as empty of knowledge and wisdom as the people who do not have the ability to understand the Holy Quran at all. Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra} cites the Holy Prophet^{sas} as saying that in the

latter days, people's hearts would be like the non-Arabs while their language would be that of the Arabs.²⁰ That is to say, they would speak the language of the Arab Prophet^{sas} but it would have no impact on their hearts. This transformation is most visible today. Arabs have become such strangers to Islam that they know as little of the Holy Quran as those who can neither understand it nor have anyone to teach it to them.

Another great change in the condition of the Muslims predicted by the Holy Prophet^{sas} is that freedom of religion would become extinct in Arabia, so much so that any righteous person would find it impossible to live there. According to Ḥaḍrat 'Alī^{ra}, the Holy Prophet^{sas} said that in Arabia men of piety and virtue would choose to remain obscure.²¹ This can also be witnessed in Arabia today where there is a total lack of religious tolerance. They have become so fundamentalist in their beliefs and traditions that the lives of people who respond to the call of God and His Prophet^{sas} are not safe. Even though this affliction is shared by other Muslim countries, it is all the more lamentable in the case of Arabia because every able Muslim has to go there to perform the Hajj, as commanded by God. Their intolerance, thus, has a negative impact on piety. The only way open is to fulfil the obligation of Hajj quietly and come back. May Allah guide the people of Arabia and may they become the banner-bearers of Islam as they were thirteen hundred years ago.

The Moral Condition of Muslims

One of the signs foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas} was that sexual immorality would become rampant, so much so that people would take pride in it. According to Ibn Abī Shaiba, one of the signs of the proximity of Doomsday would be a great increase in immorality.²² Similarly, according to Anas ibn Mālik, as reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim*, one of the signs of the latter days would be the profusion of adultery.²³ Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah^{ra} relates that one of the signs of that time would be the surge in illegitimate births.²⁴

Every kind of sexual depravity is to be found in the world today. Even aside from all-out indecency, we find that Western society has taken on a character whereby things that have been deemed indecent by Islam have become a part of their society. These include ballroom dancing, praising the beauty of women, spending holidays with other women, etc. In the past, such things were unthinkable anywhere in the world. India, despite its rampant idolatry, was free from such licentiousness. Iran, despite its tradition of pleasure-seeking, was free from such indulgences. Even the Romans, the pillars of Christianity, despite their dead morality, were free from indecency of this kind. If people of the past were told about what is happening today, they would never believe that nations that laid claim to civilization would not only indulge in such acts but consider them to be a part of their culture and etiquette. Dancing and entertainment existed in the past but nobody would have thought that women of noble families would make it their pastime, that it would be something to be proud of,

and that it would increase their social prestige rather than bring them disrepute.

In addition to such indecency, the carnal sin of idolatry is also rampant. It has spread on such a large scale, especially in Christian countries, that it is considered something natural and is seen as a human need rather than a sin. Prostitutes have always existed but who would have thought that a time would come when governments would pay women high salaries to serve the needs of soldiers so that they wouldn't have to go out of the cantonments? Who would have thought that relations between men and women would become such that it would not be strange for a woman to visit a man and that this would be seen as an essential part of human freedom, whereas marriage would be considered mental servitude, as is thought by millions of people in France and America. Who would have thought that people would seriously consider marriage to be an outdated institution and say that men and women can have relations with whomever they please, and that a woman is no more than a machine for bearing children and should be utilized fully to serve the nation, as is contended by some Socialist elements, particularly the Bolsheviks.

This being the state of sexual promiscuity, it is easy to imagine the number of illegitimate births. Where sexual relations outside marriage are thought to be sinful, people do not like to leave behind children who have the mark of illegitimacy on them. However, in a society that becomes insensitive to sin and where marriage is regarded as an unjustified interference on the part of religion, there can be no shame in producing and acknowledging illegitimate children. When things come to such a pass, legitimacy becomes the exception rather than the rule. People who hold such

beliefs give birth to illegitimate children and find nothing wrong in doing so.

Even among the people who do not wish to do away with the ancient custom of marriage, there is a morbid sympathy for illegitimate children. Some eminent philosophers consider illegitimate children to be a gift and a means of defending the realm. They make great efforts to make such children the legal heirs of their parents, or urge the government to take such children into its own care. Under such conditions, one can imagine what a large number of illegitimate children there must be. We do not find a parallel of this in world history and people of the past could never have imagined such a state of affairs.

Another sign of the time of the Promised Messiah^{as} foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas} was that the use of alcohol would become rampant. According to Anas ibn Mālik, one of the signs of the latter days is the excessive drinking of alcohol.²⁵ Similarly, the Holy Prophet^{sas} is reported to have said that one of the signs of the time would be the public consumption of alcohol.²⁶ The abundant use of alcohol in this age requires no elaboration. European countries consume more wine than water. Whereas in the past alcohol was used for pleasure or for medication, in major parts of the world today it is consumed in place of water. The sign described by the Holy Prophet^{sas} that alcohol would be consumed in the streets distinguishes this age from all past ages. Before now it was considered a pleasure-seeking activity and was sold at specific places and no efforts were made to make it widely available. Today, it has become a common drink that has to be provided in all places and made accessible to all and sundry. In European countries, wine shops are found at short distances from each other so that

people do not have to go a long way to find a place where they can buy alcohol. Dining cars on railway trains are stocked with wine. Waiting rooms make sure to stock it, whether or not they have food. In places like London, wine and water are sometimes sold at the same price. I am reminded here of the experience of one of our missionaries in England. This missionary had made a very favourable impression on his landlord by his courteous and upright manner. One day the landlord said to him, 'Remember my advice, it will help you remain healthy: never drink water at all while you are in this country. My father drank water only once in his life and he died soon afterwards. I have not touched water to this day.' When the missionary told him that he had never tasted wine in his life and only drank water, the landlord could barely believe it.

Another moral transformation described by the Holy Prophet^{sas} is that gambling would be widespread.²⁷ It has been reported by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī^{ra} that one of the signs of Doomsday would be excessive gambling as a sport.²⁸ This change is so apparent that it needs no description. Gambling is not merely a pastime for people of Europe and America, it has become a part and parcel of their civilisation. It was common enough to play for stakes after dinner parties but now lotteries have become so widespread that it would not be wrong to say that about a quarter of all trade is being wasted on gambling. People of all classes indulge in this practice daily and gambling clubs are wealthier than any other. In Monte Carlo, millions of rupees leave one hand and go to another through gambling. So widespread is the evil of gambling that it would not be inaccurate to say that if it were taken out of modern civilisation, it would be difficult to fill the gap this would create. It can be said without fear of contradiction

that a year of gambling in the past would be nothing compared with a single day of gambling today. Many forms of insurance, such as life, fire, theft, etc., that were inconceivable to the people of the past, have become a necessity today.

Another great moral change predicted by the Holy Prophet^{sas} for the time is the disappearance of the 'pure self'.²⁹ People have interpreted this in many ways, but it quite clearly means that it will become difficult to find righteous people. We can see today that, with the exception of the Promised Messiah's followers, it is hard to find righteous people anywhere in the world. Time was when thousands of godly people could be seen among the Muslims at a time, but today, in our hour of need, it is hard to find even one such person. No doubt we have our hereditary saints, scholars and religious leaders with millions of followers, but not one of them is truly righteous or has a true connection with God. Repeating holy words and incantations is not a sign of righteousness. The sign of inner purity is absorption in the love of God which should result in God expressing His love for them, coming to their aid, fulfilling their needs, revealing the secrets of His Word to them, causing a torrent of Divine knowledge to flow in their hearts, removing the tribulations of Islam through them, and curing them of their real ailments. Today no such person is to be found among the whole tribe of doctors, mystics, saints, savants, and scholars. The world has done away with righteousness and instead follows 'the self that incites to evil'.

Another sign pointed out by the Holy Prophet^{sas} is the disappearance of honesty and integrity. Ḥaḍrat 'Alī^{ra} reports that one sign of the eve of Doomsday will be the loss of honesty.³⁰ This fact

requires no elaboration as its effects can be seen in every village, town and household.

Another moral change predicted by the Holy Prophet^{sas} was that while people would not show kindness to their parents, they would hold their friends in great regard. Abū Na‘īm relates in *Hilya*, on the authority of Hudhayfah ibn al-Yamān, that a boy will disobey his parents while being kind to his friend.³¹ This sign has become so apparent that people of decency are distressed by what they see. Young people who are fond of Western culture and Western education look upon their elders as primitive and naïve and try to avoid their company, preferring to spend their time in shameless pursuits with their friends. They have all the money to entertain their friends but are unable to take care of the needs of their poor parents. In our country, there are thousands of cases of parents who endured hunger and thirst and worked hard in order to educate their children, and yet when these children grew up and started earning they did not even want to sit with their parents. They treated them almost like servants. While we can find thousands of such examples today, it would be rare to find one in past ages.

The Intellectual Condition of Muslims

Describing the intellectual condition of the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}, the Holy Prophet^{sas} said that one of the signs of the time would be that knowledge would be lifted and ignorance would take its place.³² With minor variation, a similar Hadith is recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.³³ This sign, too, has come to pass.

There was a time when even Muslim women discharged the function of jurists. Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} once said that the Ansārī women had more knowledge of the Holy Quran than he did, which meant that even common people were so knowledgeable about the Holy Quran that they could disagree with a learned one, not because of naivety or ignorance, but on the basis of reason. Who can deny the knowledge and insight of Ḥaḍrat ‘Āyeshah^{ra}? Today no one cares about religious knowledge other than those who are incapable of learning anything else. People opt for religious education only because they don't have to spend anything to get it and receive food and boarding for free. What good can such knowledge bring and of what benefit are such scholars to the world? There are many other Traditions to support this. This, however, does not mean that all forms of knowledge will disappear. It only speaks of religious knowledge because the expansion of worldly knowledge is already established in Hadith. *Tirmidhī* records, on the authority of Abū Hurairah, that in the latter days, people will acquire knowledge for purposes other than religious ones.³⁴ This is exactly what is happening today. Secular sciences have advanced so far that people are left amazed. On the other hand, religious learning has fallen so low that ignorant people easily pass for religious scholars.

The Social Condition of Muslims

The Holy Prophet^{sas} has also described the social conditions of the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}. He has foretold so many signs that they portray a complete picture of the social conditions of

the time. One of these is that the manner of greeting one another would change. According to a report by Imam Ahmad Mu'adh ibn Anas, one important sign of the degradation and decay of the Muslims would be that people would curse each other when they met.³⁵ Commentators of Hadith think that this change relates to the lower classes among Muslims who constantly curse one another. However, this Hadith points to an even greater deterioration that has impacted even the nobles among the Muslims, and it relates to greetings such as *Taslim* or *Ādāb*, instead of *Assalāmu 'Alaikum*. They even use the word *Bandagī* in the manner of the Hindus, which means to express one's subservience to the other person, instead of *Assalāmu 'Alaikum*, which means peace and harmony. This is effectively a form of mutual cursing because when people use idolatrous language or express subservience to one another, which only God is entitled to, they in effect curse one another. Muslims more often use the word *Ādāb* because they feel ill at ease in repeatedly using idolatrous words like *Bandagī* or *Taslim*, but they mean the same thing.

The Holy Prophet^{sas} said that (at the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}) Muslims would respect a person not because of his piety but because of his wealth, power, and prestige. The Holy Prophet^{sas} said that one of the signs of the time would be that only wealthy people would be honoured.³⁶ This, too, has come to pass. The old custom of holding family lineage above all other considerations of honour has almost vanished and social status is now measured by the sole criteria of wealth. Time was when wealthy and affluent people presented themselves before religious scholars but now it is the religious scholars who feel honoured to have links with wealthy people.

Holy Prophet^{sas} also said that a time would come when a person would be praised for being brave or courteous or wise, even though he would not have an iota of faith in him.³⁷ This has also come about. Muslims today will accept as their leader whoever claims to stand up for their rights and no one will ask how God could have made a person leader over them who does not even follow the basic tenets of Islam. It is enough for them that he is a great orator who outwits his opponents or is ready to make any sacrifice for political gains.

Another transformation foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas} is that believers would be demeaned and would keep themselves in seclusion for fear of people. The Holy Prophet^{sas} said that a believer will be given less respect than even a slave woman.³⁸ This means that while people might establish relationships with slave women, no one would want to associate with a believer. In another Hadith reported by Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī^{ra} the Holy Prophet^{sas} said that (at the time of the Promised Messiah) godly people would keep themselves secluded.³⁹ This has been true for a long time now. No one is considered lower than one who truly follows the Holy Quran and walks in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Indeed, this sign has become so apparent after the coming of the Promised Messiah^{as} that while people find nothing wrong in associating with women of ill repute or with men who shun the daily prayers and offer insults to God and the Holy Prophet^{sas}, they have nothing but contempt and animosity for those who have responded to the Divine call.

Another sign described by the Holy Prophet^{sas} is that the Arabic tongue would no longer be in vogue among Muslims.⁴⁰ Ibn Abbās reports that the lines of worshippers would be long

but their tongues would be different.⁴¹ This is most strikingly witnessed at the time of the Hajj. One of the major aims of the institution of Hajj was to uphold Muslim unity, but since Muslims have by and large abandoned the Arabic tongue, they are not able to reap any social, religious or cultural benefits from the Hajj. Had the Muslims kept alive the knowledge of Arabic, it would have served as a powerful bond between Muslims from all parts of the world that no enemy cut asunder.

Another sign described by the Holy Prophet^{sas} was that women, despite wearing clothes, would be naked.⁴² This change has come about in two ways. First, silks and other fine fabrics are now produced in large quantities. In the past, they were only available to the affluent but today everyone can wear them. The cloth is so thin that it does not serve to veil the body. Most of the world is in love with such clothes because they enhance female beauty. Secondly, this change has come through fashions that prevail in Europe and America where women tend to keep some parts of their body (such as cleavage, arms and legs) exposed, which would have been thought indecent in the past. Women are virtually naked despite wearing clothes. While among Muslims it is true on account of wearing transparent clothes, among the Christians it is because of exposing various parts of the body.

Another sign foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas} is that women would keep their hair coiled up like the hump of a camel.⁴³ In Europe today women do not braid their hair like before, instead, they keep them puffed, giving the impression that something sits on their head. Women in other parts of the world are also imitating them. Just as people give greater value to European trends

than they do to Divine revelation, so do they follow them in this respect as well.

Another sign described by the Holy Prophet^{sas} and reported by Ibn Abbās is that women would engage in business alongside their husbands.⁴⁴ This also has come to pass and it is thought that business cannot succeed without women. Some shops in Europe employ pretty women specifically to attract customers and lure them so that they do not leave without buying something.

Another sign foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas} was that women would become so free that they would dress like men, ride horses,⁴⁵ and even rule over men.⁴⁶ This transformation has also taken place. In America and other Christian countries, and, in their imitation, among followers of other religions as well, an exaggerated concept of the emancipation of women has taken root. As a result, social norms have completely changed. Women are increasingly joining men to go hunting and horse racing and even performing tricks as circus artistes. The vogue of masculine dress among women is also widespread in Christian countries. Indeed, after the Great War, hundreds of thousands of women have started dressing like men and many have taken to wearing just a short jacket over a pair of breeches.

The dominance that women enjoy over men today is also without parallel. Consequently, the overall culture of Europe and of other countries under its influence has undergone such transformation that only God can save us from its adverse effects. Otherwise, it will result in great social upheaval. Even the institution of marriage may become extinct and the progress of humanity may suffer an irreversible loss.

Another transformation foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas} was

that men would change their appearances to look like women.⁴⁷ This has come about and men in major parts of the world have taken to shaving their beards and looking like women. There was a time when a beard was considered to be a man's glory. It was all the more important for Muslims as it was the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, but now it has disappeared from most faces. Even scholars who are held in high esteem by Muslims prefer to shave their beards. Another form this transformation has taken is the profusion of theatres wherein men and women dress like the opposite sex to entertain and dance. Also, the attention that European and American men give to their hair is certainly more than what women did in past ages.

Pestilences

The Holy Prophet^{sas} also foretold the physical state of people at the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Ḥaḍrat Anas^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{sas} said that when the *Dajjāl* makes his appearance and heads towards Medina, a plague would break out, but God would save Medina from both the *Dajjāl* and the pestilence.⁴⁸

This prophecy has also come true. For 25 years now the plague has played havoc with the world, desolating thousands of homes and ruining hundreds of villages, but Allah has saved the holy places of Islam from any significant impact of the plague. The apparent reason for this is that quarantines have been established on all sides to keep the pestilence away. The plague has been described by the Holy Prophet^{sas} on various occasions in varying words, such as, 'insect of the earth'.⁴⁹ Since the plague is spread

among humans by a flea that rises from the earth, the same name has been given to it by the Holy Quran. This plague is not an ordinary pestilence, for it has spread over a considerable part of the world and has now been active in India for the last 26 years.

The appearance of this 'insect', as described in the prophecy, does not only indicate the appearance of the plague but foretells the coming of many epidemics that will owe their fatal effects to germs. No wonder, today we have diseases that were either unknown in the past or did not cause death on such a wide scale. The prophecy also alludes to the invention of the microscope, without which the world would not know that these diseases were coming from minute 'insects' that are invisible to the naked eye. In past ages, medical knowledge attributed all disease and contagion ultimately to bile, black-bile, blood, or phlegm.

Another sign foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas} was that there would be an increase in sudden deaths.⁵⁰ Such deaths have always occurred but in this age they are becoming more and more common. One reason for this is the greater use of alcohol, and the other is excessive work or study. Alcohol weakens the heart and the brain, while excessive stress or study has a deleterious effect on the nerves. Both are on the rise. Cases of sudden death are rampant in wine-imbibing nations. People just collapse standing or sitting in their chairs or lying in their beds. This has no parallel in past ages.

Another disease foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas} is one that would be connected with the nose and would claim many lives.⁵¹ This disease, known medically as influenza, killed 20 million people all over the world in 1918. In other words, about 1.5% of the world's population died as a result of this disease and it reminded

people of Domsday, for they saw that it was not difficult for God to end the world if He so wished.

Gender Ratio

The Holy Prophet^ﷺ has also mentioned the ratio between the sexes as an important sign of the time of the Messiah. He said that women would so outnumber men that a man would be guardian over fifty women.⁵² The prophecy has come true. There are more women in the world today than men. In some European countries, on account of the depletion of men in wars, women so outnumber men that even those who used to ridicule Islam for its teaching of polygamy are now seriously considering it as a solution to this problem. Eminent scholars are writing articles saying that in order to avoid anarchy and preserve civilisation, it is necessary to either permit polygamy or to free fornication of the taboo associated with it. Most people are of the view that those who practice polygamy should be ignored and not dragged into courts. All this is because women now outnumber men, otherwise, only a few years back polygamy was considered a grievous sin that no Christian could ever condone. In fact, on account of so much hate towards polygamy, even Muslims were starting to become apologetic about the teachings of Islam that allow for more than one wife.

Transport and Communication

The Holy Prophet^{sas} also told about the state of communication between nations at the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}. He predicted that innovations would lead people to abandon old modes of transport and adopt new ones that would traverse land and sea. The Holy Prophet^{sas} said: ⁵³لَيُشْرَكَنَّ الْقَلَاصُ فَلَا يُسْعَى عَلَيْهَا ‘The camel will be abandoned and will not be so sought after.’

This is happening right now and people in many countries are abandoning old means of transport. Even with the advent of the railway, people still used camels and horses to travel, but they are now being abandoned with the coming of the motor car. As these new modes of transport grow, animals will quickly be replaced as modes of transport.

The Holy Prophet^{sas} prophesied the invention of the steamship and the railway. He^{sas} said:

The *Dajjāl's* donkey will travel on water as on land. Travelling on land it will have clouds both in front and behind.⁵⁴

This Tradition alludes to the steamship and the railway because this is the ‘donkey’ that travels both on land and on water and has been used predominantly by Christian missionaries to travel to different parts of the world to ensnare people through their false teachings. Similarly, trains and ships give off smoke that never leaves them. They are fed by coal, a kind of stone, which was said

to be the food of the donkey of the *Dajjāl*. These modes of transport have also revolutionized relationships between nations.

Economic Conditions

The Holy Prophet^{sas} also described the economic conditions that would prevail at the time of the Promised Messiah^{as} and said that gold and silver would become abundant.⁵⁵ This also has come to pass. There is so much gold and silver in the world today that we did not have even one-tenth of it in the past. Every town is full of people dealing in gold and silver, and more and more innovative and efficient methods of mining these precious metals have been discovered, resulting in their abundance. England alone now has more gold than was possessed by the whole world in the past. As a result, trade has become very brisk. In past ages, copper pieces or cowries were used as currency, but no one values them today. In England, the smallest coin is a penny, in America a cent, and most of the business in these countries is transacted through gold coins.

Another sign of the economic conditions foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas} was the profusion of usury. The Holy Prophet^{sas} said that one of the signs of the proximity of doomsday would be the increase of usury or interest.⁵⁶ This description has also come true. The practice of usury today is a million times greater than in the past. Barring a few exceptions, all trade now runs on usury and cannot survive without it. Banks number in their thousands, governments take and receive interest, traders take and receive interest, industrialists take and receive interest, and rulers take and receive interest. In short, people from all walks of life are

dependent on interest. It seems that in the present age everybody is determined to lend on interest and to borrow on interest. In a trade worth millions, barely a few thousand would lie outside the scope of usury. Muslims were told that if they did not desist from usury they should:

فَاذْنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ⁵⁷

Beware of war from Allah.

Yet, many still use interest money in the name of profit. There are others who admit their error but still continue to make use of it. Muslim doctors of religion have invented strange definitions of ‘interest’ and ‘profit’ and issued fatwas legalizing the acceptance of bank interest. By declaring that it is lawful to receive interest under a non-Muslim government, they have removed all barriers to usury. They have, in effect, invented a new Shariah. All this goes to show that the practice of usury has grown so much that no one can be safe from it unless God himself saves him.

Another sign of the economic circumstances at the time of the Promised Messiah^{as} foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas} is that Christian nations will be richer while others will be poor. The Holy Prophet^{sas} said that the *Dajjāl* would say to the people, ‘Accept me,’ and then he will take all the wealth of those who refuse to accept him, while those who do accept him will be made affluent and he will cause wealth to rain upon them from heaven and to sprout from the earth.⁵⁸ This is what is happening today. Christian nations are growing richer by the day and their adversaries are growing poorer, and this has been going on for the last century.

Political Conditions

The political situation prevailing at the time of the Promised Messiah^{as} has been foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas} so clearly that the present time is a living picture of it. Here are some of the most distinctive features:

The Holy Prophet^{sas} said that among the signs of Doomsday is that so many afflictions would befall the Muslims that they would become like the Jews.⁵⁹ This analogy implies the loss of political power and influence so that Muslims, like the Jews, would live at the mercy of others. How true this description is! Muslim empires have disappeared and barely a sign of them is left now. Time was when the Muslim flag flew in all parts of the world but today it has no place to stand. Muslim rulers are dependent on Christian nations to keep their hold on power. Allah help us!

Another sign of the time of the Promised Messiah^{as} foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas} was that Syria, Iraq and Egypt would slip out of the hands of their rulers and chaos would ensue. The Holy Prophet^{sas} said:

مَنْعَتِ الْعِرَاقُ دِرْهَمَهَا وَقَفِيرَهَا وَمَنْعَتِ الشَّامُ مُدِّيَهَا وَدِينَارَهَا وَمَنْعَتِ مِصْرُ إِزْدَبَّيَهَا
وَدِينَارَهَا وَعَدْتُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ بَدَأْتُمْ وَعَدْتُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ بَدَأْتُمْ⁶⁰

Iraq will refuse to share her produce and her prosperity. So will Syria, so will Egypt. And you [the Arab peoples] will become as divided and disunited as you were once.

That is to say, chaos will reign in Arab lands. This prophecy has been fulfilled. Iraq, Syria and Egypt have freed themselves

from the dominion of the Sultan and no longer pay taxes to the Turkish government, and thus Arab lands are in a state of chaos. True, Hejaz has an Arab government but it has numerous enemies and is lacking in resources and remains insecure. Other Arab lands are completely lacking in proper administration or governance.

Another prophecy of the Holy Prophet^{sas} in this regard is that Gog and Magog would assume such tremendous power that other nations would pale in comparison. *Muslim* and *Tirmidhi* report on the authority of Nawwas ibn Saman that the Holy Prophet^{sas} said: God would reveal to the Promised Messiah^{as} in these words:

حَرَّزُ عِبَادِي إِلَى الطُّورِ فَإِنِّي قَدْ أَنْزَلْتُ عِبَادًا لِّي لَا يَدَانَ لِأَحَدٍ لَقَاتَالِهِمْ قَالَ وَيَبْعَثُ
اللَّهُ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ⁶¹

Lead my servants to Sinai. I have sent some men into the world whom no one can fight in battle. And God will cause Gog and Magog to come out.

This, too, has come to pass. Gog and Magog have appeared whom no one has the power to fight. The names Gog and Magog refer to Russia and the Western powers and their allies, as is written in the Bible:

Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles.⁶²

Both these nations with their respective allies have reached the zenith of their power. As predicted in the Traditions, their rise was destined to take place after the advent of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

Thus, their rise in itself is proof that the Promised Messiah^{as} has come.

Another sign foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas} was the rise of the proletariat, and poor and 'naked' people becoming rulers.⁶³ The word 'naked' is to be understood in a relative sense because the poor would seem unclothed as compared to the rich. This sign has been fulfilled. As governments have become more and more representative, political power has shifted to the less privileged and they are becoming rulers. Labour unions are becoming so powerful that governments tremble before them. No party, no matter how strong, finds itself secure unless it can appease them. In some countries, such as Russia and Switzerland, they enjoy full dominion. They are also growing in strength in parts of Australia.

Another sign of the time of the Promised Messiah^{as} foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas} was that there would be a large number of *shurt* (assistants or deputies of the ruler).⁶⁴ This also has come true. In former times, government administrators did not require so many deputies or assistants. One or two representatives in an area were considered sufficient but today the responsibilities of states have become so vast that they have to employ hundreds of officers. Departments, such as the police, public health, registration, public works, post office, communications (railway, telegraph, and telephone), irrigation, excise, audit, etc., have become so expansive that governments require vast personnel to run them.

Another sign related to the time of the Promised Messiah^{as} foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas} was that the penalties prescribed by the Shariah would be abrogated. This has come to pass and

all Muslim dominions, including Turkey, Arabia, Egypt, Iran, and indeed in your own country of Afghanistan, the adulterer is no longer stoned to death, nor is the thief punished by the cutting of his hand. Some governments have been forbidden to give such punishments under certain agreements. No one could have imagined that a time would come when Muslim governments would ignore these laws and would not be able to put them into practice even if they wanted to.

Aside from the sign of the time of the Promised Messiah^{as} that pertain to religion, morality, intellect, physical characteristics, politics, culture, etc., the Holy Prophet^{sas} has also described certain terrestrial signs, some of which I will relate here.

Terrestrial Signs

The Holy Prophet^{sas} said:

When these signs have been fulfilled, you should be ready to face some afflictions, one of which would be the sinking of the earth.⁶⁵

Physicists know that sinking of the earth results from earthquakes therefore the Holy Prophet^{sas} was foretelling the coming of earthquakes. This sign, which relates to the inner state of the earth, has also come to pass and the world has witnessed more earthquakes in the last 20 years than in the whole 300 years before this. So many people have died of these earthquakes that there is no parallel of it in past centuries.

Celestial Signs

The Holy Prophet^{sas} also foretold some celestial events. For example, he prophesied the eclipses of the sun and the moon on specific dates during the month of Ramadan. Stressing the significance of this sign, the Holy Prophet^{sas} said that these two signs have never occurred in support of any Prophet in the past. In the words of the Hadith:

إِنَّ لِمَهْدِيَّتِنَا آيَاتَيْنِ لَمْ تَكُونَا مُنْذُ خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَنْكَسِفُ الْقَمَرَ لِأَوَّلِ لَيْلَةٍ
مِّنْ رَّمَضَانَ وَتَنْكَسِفُ الشَّمْسُ فِي النُّصْفِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ تَكُونَا مُنْذُ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ ۖ⁶⁶ -

The advent of our Mahdi will be marked by two important signs. These signs have never appeared since the creation of Heaven and earth. One is the eclipse of the moon on the first of Ramadan, and the other is the eclipse of the sun in the middle of Ramadan, and these two signs have not appeared since the creation of Heaven and Earth.

This sign is of great significance in many respects. The first is that it has never appeared for anyone other than the Mahdi. Secondly, this Hadith is found in both Sunni and Shia literature and, therefore, cannot be labelled as dubious. Thirdly, the signs described in this Hadith are also found in past scriptures with regard to the second coming of the Messiah. It is written in Matthew 24:29:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.

In other words, the sun and the moon will undergo an eclipse. Though I am recounting the signs found in Hadith, it is not out of place here to mention that the Holy Quran has also described the eclipse of the sun and the moon as a sign of doomsday. In the *Sūrah al-Qiyāmah* we have:

يَسْأَلُ أَيَّانَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ فَإِذَا بَرِقَ الْبَصَرُ ۗ وَخَسَفَ الْقَمَرُ ۗ وَجُمِعَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ ۗ⁶⁷

He (disbeliever) asks, ‘When will be the Day of Resurrection?’ (We tell you its signs.) It will be when the eye is dazzled, and the moon is eclipsed, and the sun and the moon are brought together.

This means that after the eclipse of the moon, the sun will also be eclipsed in the same month. Since the time of the coming of the Messiah is said to be close to the Day of Resurrection, this verse lends weight to the aforementioned Hadith.

The prophecy was of great importance and it was fulfilled in 1311 A.H. (1894 AD) exactly as described in the Hadith. In the month of Ramadan of that year, the moon suffered an eclipse on the first of the three dates on which lunar eclipses can occur, i.e. the 13th; and the sun suffered an eclipse on the middle date, i.e. the 28th. What is more, this conjunction of the two eclipses in the same month took place in the lifetime of one who claimed to be the Promised Mahdi.

Two courses are now open to anyone who claims to be a Muslim. He can either accept as true the above-mentioned

prophecy of the Holy Prophet^{sas} (that the time of the Messenger of the latter days will be marked by the conjunction of the lunar and the solar eclipses, the lunar eclipse occurring on the first and the solar on the second of the three dates on which they can occur; and that these signs have never appeared for anyone except the Mahdi), and accept the person whose claim preceded these signs. The other option is to abandon God and His Prophet who—God forbid—foretold a sign that was no sign at all and was unable to establish the truth of any claimant.

Some people object to this, saying that the prophecy speaks of the lunar eclipse occurring on the first of Ramadan, and of the solar eclipse occurring in the middle of Ramadan, whereas the eclipses we speak about took place on the 13th and the 28th of the month, respectively. Even a little reflection will show that this objection is ill-founded and contrary to the words of the Hadith. It should be realized that the solar and lunar eclipses only take place on particular dates and there is no deviation from this law of nature until the world comes to an end. If this objection had any basis, then this prophecy might well be a sign of Doomsday but it cannot be a sign of the proximity of the end of the world or of the time of the Promised Mahdi.

Furthermore, while such critics concentrate on the words ‘first night’ and ‘middle night’ of the month, they do not consider that the word used for the moon is *qamar*, not *hilāl*. *Hilāl* denotes the new moon while *qamar* is the name given to the moon once it has advanced into the fourth night. We find in the lexicon:

وَهُوَ قَمَرٌ بَعْدَ ثَلَاثِ لَيَالٍ إِلَى آخِرِ الشَّهْرِ وَ أَمَّا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ فَهُوَ هِلَالٌ⁶⁸

The Moon is called *qamar* after the first three nights and

remains *qamar* up to the end of the month. On the first three nights, the moon is called *hilāl*.

Since the Hadith uses the word *qamar* and the law of nature states that the lunar eclipse can only occur on the 13th, 14th or 15th night of the lunar month, it becomes clear that the first night of Ramadan mentioned in the prophecy means the first of the three nights on which the lunar eclipse is possible, i.e., the 13th. To insist otherwise is to be illogical and unfair, and the purpose can only be to falsify the word of Allah and His Prophet lest people believe in the one who has been sent by God.

In short, the Holy Prophet^{sas} laid down a large number of signs for the identification of the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Some of these signs are significant and important even taken singly, but the Holy Prophet^{sas} intended them to be taken collectively as they present a complete picture of the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}. When so many signs appear together, they must constitute a time of great importance. With the help of such a comprehensive picture, nobody can have any difficulty in identifying the appointed time when it comes.

There is no doubt that plagues and pestilences have occurred in the past, as have earthquakes. There have been periods of excessive gambling and degradation of people's moral condition. Even in the past, there have been times when Christian nations have enjoyed dominion over the greater part of the world. The question, however, is whether these signs have ever appeared together at the same time. The answer is no. Let us imagine a person who does not know of the condition of the world today. Let us narrate to such a person the signs of the time of the Promised Messiah^{as} as

foretold by the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Let us then ask him to study the history of the world and tell us at what point in time the Promised Messiah^{as} should have come? This imaginary person will study the time of Adam and of all the subsequent Prophets, but none will he identify as the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}. However, as soon as he reaches our time and reads about the signs and conditions that obtain today, he will at once cry out that if the Holy Prophet^{sas} was a true Prophet and if he did make this prophecy, then the present time is the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}. This imaginary person will note the indifference to religion that is so evident today. He will see the great advances which natural sciences have made. He will observe how very weak Muslim states have become after their days of glory. He will see Christianity once again dominating the greater part of the wealth of the world. He will see other nations reduced to poverty. He will also see the plague and influenza wreaking havoc in the world despite advances in science and medicine. He will note that the great discovery of the time is that disease is caused by germs. He will also observe a great many old superstitions and customs cramping the intelligence of mankind. He will see the railway and the steamer and an abundance of banks. He will acknowledge the frequency of earthquakes and the advent of Gog and Magog and their dominion over the whole world. He will notice the lunar and the solar eclipses. He will see the increase in wealth. He will also observe the labouring classes rising to become rulers. In short, a description of contemporary conditions will convince him that this is the time for the coming of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Our imaginary observer will not observe the signs singly but as a whole. As soon as he has gone over the scene, he will at once lay aside the book and say that his work is done and he doesn't

need to read anymore. He will declare that either the Promised Messiah^{as} was to appear in this age or he will never come.

An objection is often raised about the prophecy relating to the *Dajjāl*. It is said that the *Dajjāl* was to appear before the Promised Messiah but since the *Dajjāl* has not yet appeared, the time of the Promised Messiah has also not come. It must be remembered that the prophecy relating to the *Dajjāl*, like all prophecies, is subject to interpretation. We read in the Holy Quran:

وَالشَّيْطَانُ وَالْقَبْرَ رَأَيْتَهُمْ فِي سَجْدَيْنِ ۝٦٩

‘I saw in a dream eleven stars and the sun and the moon, I saw them making obeisance to me.’

إِنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ ۝٧٠

‘I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you.’

It is a pity if a person reads these verses and yet waits for the physical manifestation of the *Dajjāl*. If it is true, as the Traditions say, that the Promised Messiah was to be preceded by the *Dajjāl* and that the advent of the Promised Messiah is to be marked by the dominance of Christianity, does it not follow that the prophecy about the *Dajjāl* refers to the dominance of Christianity? Since only one can dominate the world at one time, it shows that they both refer to the same power.

Another point that confirms the fact that *Dajjāl* and Christianity are one is that the Holy Prophet^{sas} instructed his followers to turn to the first ten verses of *Sūrah al-Kahf* to be saved from the onslaught of the *Dajjāl*, and it so happens that the first

ten verses of this chapter contain a refutation of Christianity. One of the verses reads:

وَيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا⁷¹

(Allah has revealed this book so) that it may warn those who say, ‘Allah has taken unto Himself a son.’

This shows that *Dajjāl* and Christianity are the same, because the cure is administered according to the malady. If the evil of the *Dajjāl* was something distinct from that of Christianity, the Holy Prophet^{sas} would never have told his followers that, to be saved from the *Dajjāl*, they should recite verses that have no mention of *Dajjāl* at all and instead contain a refutation of Christianity. Obviously, he considered the proponents of Christianity to be the *Dajjāl*.

The greatest obstacle to a true understanding of the *Dajjāl* is the preconception that he would be an individual. This is not so. The lexicons define *Dajjāl* as:

أَوْ مِنَ الدَّجَالِ بِالشَّدِيدِ الرَّفْقَةِ الْعَظِيمَةِ تُعْطَى الْأَرْضَ بِكَثْرَةِ أَهْلِهَا وَقِيلَ هِيَ الرَّفْقَةُ
تَحْمِلُ الْمَتَاعَ لِلتَّجَارَةِ⁷²

The *Dajjāl* is the name of a large party which, through force of numbers, will spread over the earth; and, according to some authorities, it is the name of a party that keeps moving its good and materials from one part of the world to another.

⁷³الدَّجَالُ الرَّفْقَةُ الْعَظِيمَةُ (The *Dajjāl* is a very large group).

These descriptions fully apply to Christian preachers who, in

pursuit of their mission, do not only carry their books with them but also other things that might attract people and promote their trades wherever they go. The *Dajjāl* is also described as ‘the Deceiver’.⁷⁴ To whom would this description be more applicable than to the Christian missionaries of our time who portray a poor mortal as God?

As for the prophecies that the *Dajjāl* would be one-eyed, that he would have with him a donkey of inordinate size, that clouds of smoke would go with him where he went, all these beg interpretation. Being one-eyed means that the *Dajjāl* would be weak on the spiritual side because in dreams the right side is interpreted as faith and righteousness. The donkey of the *Dajjāl* symbolizes the railway which feeds on fire and water and clouds of smoke accompany it wherever it goes, and it is used by Christian missionaries to travel to different parts of the world.

It would not be right to reject these as mere interpretations because we learn from the Holy Prophet^{sas} that all such prophecies require interpretation. It is related in a Hadith that one day the Holy Prophet^{sas} went to see Ibn Sayyād, a man to whom strange things were attributed. In talking to him it became evident that he was the recipient of some Satanic whisperings. Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra}, who accompanied the Holy Prophet^{sas}, at once drew his sword and wanted to kill Ibn Sayyād, swearing that he was the *Dajjāl*. The Holy Prophet^{sas} stopped him and said, ‘If he is not the *Dajjāl*, it is wrong to kill him. And if he is, then it is not for you but for the Messiah to kill him.’⁷⁵

This shows that all the prophecies regarding the *Dajjāl* are subject to interpretation, for when Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} declared Ibn Sayyād to be the *Dajjāl*, the Holy Prophet^{sas} did not contradict

him, even though he had himself foretold as a sign of the *Dajjāl* that the words '*kafir*' would be written on his forehead,⁷⁶ that he would have one eye,⁷⁷ and that he would fail to reach Medina.⁷⁸ None of these three signs was present in Ibn Sayyād. He did not have one eye, nor did he have '*kafir*' written on his forehead, as neither the believers nor the Holy Prophet^{sas} could see it, and he was already living in Medina. Yet, the Holy Prophet^{sas} did not contradict Ḥaḍrat Umar's assertion that this man was the *Dajjāl*. This shows that the Holy Prophet^{sas} knew that the signs of the *Dajjāl* could be interpreted in other ways and did not have to be fulfilled literally. If the Holy Prophet^{sas} considered his prophecy to be subject to interpretation, how can anyone insist on taking it literally and refuse to learn of its deeper meaning?

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Argument 3—Personal Purity

The proof of the sun is the sun.

I have shown that this is the age in which the Promised Reformer was to appear. I have also shown that, according to the testimony of the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sas}, this Reformer would be none other than the Promised Messiah and Mahdi. Today, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement is the only claimant to this office. To deny him and his claims is to deny God's eternal practice and to ignore the prophecies of the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

I will now proceed to enumerate arguments that go to prove that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} is true in his claim and that he has been sent by God. The first argument I wish to submit is the testimony of his own purity and piety. I do not speak of personal purity in the sense in which it is described in earlier scriptures, but as laid down by the Holy Quran in support of its own truth. Allah says:

وَإِذَا تَشَلَّى عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ ۖ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا إِنَّا بُرْهَانَ غَيْرِ هَذَا أَوْ بَدِّلْهُ ۗ قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أُبَدِّلَهُ مِنْ تَلْقَائِي نَفْسِي ۚ إِنْ أَتَيْتُمْ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ ۚ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ۝ قُلْ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا تَلَوْتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَدْرِكُمْ بِهِ ۚ فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ عُمُرًا مِمَّن قَبْلِهِ ۗ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ۝¹

And when Our clear Signs are recited unto them, those who look not for the meeting with Us say, 'Bring a Quran other than this or change it.' Say, 'It is not for me to change it of my own accord. I only follow what is revealed to me. Indeed, I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the punishment of

an awful day.' Say, 'If Allah had so willed, I should not have recited it to you nor would He have made it known to you. I have indeed lived among you a whole lifetime before this. Will you not then understand (that a person like me cannot lie and whatever is being said is the truth)?'

This is the argument which the Holy Quran presents for the truth of the Holy Prophet^{sas} and it is a great criterion to judge the truth of every righteous claimant. Just as the proof of the presence of the sun lies in the sun, so does the truth of a truthful person lie in his personal purity, which says to friends and foes, to strangers and confidants, that before you reject my claim, look at me and consider whether you can call me a liar, because, if you do so, then you will have to give up all the criteria that are used to discriminate between truth and falsehood. If you call me an impostor, you will close upon yourself all the doors that lead to true certainty. Everything requires continuity and cannot jump from one point to another without going through intermediary stages. A person who has been running westward will not suddenly find himself on the eastern horizon. A person who has been running southward will not find himself in the north. The claimant would thus say: I have spent a lifetime among you as a child and a youth and an adult. You have seen me in public and in private. Whatever I have said or done is known to you. There is none among you who can accuse me of falsehood, or of excess, intrigue, fabrication, transgression, or any attempt to seek power or dominion over others. You have observed me in many different contexts and tested and tried me in myriad ways but have always found me steadfast in my regard for truth and honesty. You found me free from every sin

and every evil. Friend and foe alike admitted to my honesty and truthfulness. How come then that while until yesterday I could be trusted for my honesty and truthfulness, and falsehood was alien to me, and I would sacrifice myself for the sake of truth, and you trusted me in all things great and small and believed everything I told you, now, all of a sudden, you say that I am the worst of the human beings and the most hardened of liars. If I did not lie about men, how would I suddenly start telling lies about God? Is such a sudden shift in one's character possible? Does human experience offer an example of such extraordinary transformation? If I had been truthful and trustworthy for a few days or a year, you could have said I had put on an appearance. You have seen me as a child and as a man. Can a child put on an appearance of righteousness? A child is innocent and cannot act in a way that is not natural to him. Also, could I have concealed my real character behind a facade during adolescence when one is subject to all kinds of natural impulses and passions? Could I have presented a character that was alien to me? If, upon reflection, you find all my earlier life spotless and clean and an embodiment of integrity and honesty, you do not have any right to brand me a liar or impostor. Seeing the sun, you cannot deny that it is day. Seeing its light, you cannot complain of darkness. Do you need proof other than my own past life? My character is my witness. My life is my witness. Consult your consciences and hear your inner voice and it will tell you that my life is truth personified. I am the truth and the truth is me. I honour truth and truth honours me. To prove my truth I need no argument because I am my own argument. The proof of the sun is the sun.

Appeal for Early Believers

This is the argument that convinced Abū Bakr^{ra} and this is the argument that shall forever bring conviction to the hearts of honest seekers after truth. When the Holy Prophet^{sas} announced his claim, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} was at a friend's house and a woman servant said to him, 'The wife of your friend Muhammad says that her husband has become a Prophet, just like Moses.' Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} at once stood up and went to the Holy Prophet and asked him if this was true. The Holy Prophet^{sas} said that it was. Hearing this, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} immediately accepted his claim. Regarding Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr's faith, the Holy Prophet^{sas} said, 'I have never invited anyone to Islam who did not at first hesitate or stop to think about it, but Abū Bakr^{ra} did not hesitate for a moment and believed at once.'² What was it that persuaded Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} to believe without witnessing a sign? It was the purity of the Holy Prophet's character that spoke for its own truth.

Ḥaḍrat Khadijah^{ra} (the Holy Prophet's wife), 'Alī^{ra} (his young cousin), Zayd ibn Ḥārith (his freed slave), all believed in the same way and by the same argument. Ḥaḍrat Khadijah^{ra} has specifically stated this to be the reason that led her to believe in the Holy Prophet^{sas}. When the Holy Prophet^{sas} saw Gabriel in the cave of Ḥirā, he came home and told Khadijah^{ra} about it and said, 'I am afraid for myself.' Khadijah^{ra} replied, 'No, Allah will never disgrace you. You are kind to your relations. You help the helpless. You have all the virtues that have been forgotten. You entertain your guests and help people in their troubles.'³

The first proof of the authenticity of a claimant to a spiritual office is his own person and character. In the presence of this, there is no need for any miracles or signs. It is the same proof that God has provided for the truth of Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}. He lived in Qadian which was inhabited by followers of all the three major religions of India—Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. They all watched him grow up before their very eyes. Nor were the relations of his family with these people such that they would have any sympathy for him. The British had taken possession of Punjab when Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib was a child. Until then, the inhabitants of Qadian and its environs had lived as tenants and serfs of his family. With the coming of the British, a great change had taken place and the old inhabitants of Qadian were determined to make the most of it. They started working for their release from old contracts and commitments through litigation against Mirza Sahib's father. Mirza Sahib could not remain aloof from these proceedings because, for a time, his father instructed him to follow the lawsuits and he became the face of the opposing party in the eyes of these people.

The Sikh community, in particular, were hostile to his family because in the past the Sikhs had driven out Mirza Sahib's family and ruled these lands. Therefore, they were not happy with the success of this family and a sense of rivalry had taken possession of them.

Also, from an early age, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib had been deeply engrossed in the service of Islam. He would often hold oral and written debates with Christians, Hindus and Sikhs. This made these communities naturally antagonistic towards him.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib was known to the people of other

religions and they opposed him on account of his interest in religion. Yet, all of them—Hindu, Sikh, Christian, Muslim—agreed that, even prior to his claim, Mirza Sahib had led a blameless life, had practised the highest morals, and had never let go of honesty and truthfulness. Such was their trust in his honesty that, even in matters where they disagreed with his family, they would insist that he arbitrate between them and would accept what he decided. In short, all who knew him considered him to be most honourable and trustworthy. While Christians, Hindus and Sikhs had strong religious differences with him, they nonetheless testified to the purity of his life and character.

As an example of this, I will present the writing of a man who, after Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib made his claim, became his bitter enemy and issued a verdict of heresy against him. Nor was he a common man, for he was none other than Maulawī Muhammad Hussain of Batāla, the acknowledged leader of the *Ahle-Ḥadīth* sect. Before the Promised Messiah^{as} had made his claim, this cleric had written the following review on *Barāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya* in his journal *Ishā'at-us-Sunnah*:

Few among my contemporaries would be aware of the thoughts and circumstances of the author of *Barāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya* as I am. The author does not only belong to my district but we went to the same elementary school in our early years and studied *Qutabī* and *Sharah Mullā* together. Since then we have communicated constantly in person and through written communication. Therefore, it should not be considered an exaggeration on my part when I say that I know the author very well indeed.⁴

So far, the reviewer affirms that his testimony is not based on hearsay but on long and intimate personal association with the author. The testimony itself is as follows:

In my opinion, this book [*Barāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya*], at this time and in view of the present circumstances, has no parallel in the whole history of Islam, and only God knows about the future. Its author has been so relentless in the service of Islam, with his money and time, with his oral and literary skills, and with his personal character and example, that very few instances of this can be found among Muslims. If anyone considers my words to be the kind of exaggeration that is common to the orient, let him bring forth at least one book that so vigorously counters all the opponents of Islam, especially the Aryā Samājists and the Brahamo Samājists, and let him name some people who have supported Islam, not only financially and physically and with speech and writing, but through personal example, and who have boldly thrown the challenge to all the opponents of Islam and the deniers of Divine revelation that whoever doubts the truth of Divine revelation may come and observe it for himself, thus giving other religions a taste of this experience.⁵

The above statements about Mirza Sahib's character and devotion to Islam were made by the same person who, after Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib^{as} made his claim of being the Promised Messiah, not only denied his claim but spent the rest of his life in denouncing him as a *kāfir* and a liar. This is reminiscent of the Meccan deniers of the

Holy Prophet^{sas} who had previously proclaimed him to be trustworthy and truthful. This kind of opposition that arises after a claim is made carries no weight. We know from the Holy Quran that it is impossible for a person whose truthfulness is acknowledged by friends and foes, despite a lifetime of scrutiny, should at once turn around and start telling lies about God. If a man's life has been known to be blameless even by his enemies, God could never be so cruel as to corrupt his heart so completely that he suddenly begins to lie about God Himself while he had previously remained steadfast through the worst of trials and temptations.

The Holy Prophet^{sas} challenged his enemies, again and again, to point out the slightest moral lapse in his early life, but no one took up this challenge. Similarly, the Promised Messiah^{as} declared that he had been informed by God that his opponents would not be able to point to any weakness in his character.⁶ He repeatedly challenged them to point out any shortcomings in his earlier life and dealings, or to prove that they had not found his character, right from infancy to manhood, to be flawless and exemplary. Despite repeated challenges, no one spoke up. Some of those who saw him in his youth are still alive and, despite their extreme opposition to him, cannot hide their testimony that the Promised Messiah^{as} was a man of extraordinary character. Indeed, according to many Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, his childhood and youth were like that of 'godly people'.

In short, just as the virtue and piety of the Holy Prophet^{sas} was a mighty proof of his truthfulness, a proof which God Himself put forth in the Holy Quran, so is the earlier life of the Promised Messiah^{as} a testimony to the truth of his claim. This is a testimony that no one can deny. He was the proof of his own truth.

References

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- ³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Bad’ul-Waḥī, Hadith no. 3
- ⁴ *Ishā‘at-us-Sunnah*, June, July, August, 1884, p. 176, vol. 7, no. 6,7,8
- ⁵ *Ishā‘at-us-Sunnah*, June, July, August, 1884, pp. 169–170, vol. 7, no. 6,7,8
- ⁶ *Nuzūlul-Masīḥ*, Rūḥāni Khazā’in, vol. 18, p. 590

Argument 4—Triumph over Other Religions

The fourth argument, or the fourth category of arguments for the truth of the Promised Messiah's claim, is that the prophecy regarding the triumph of Islam—which Allah describes in the Holy Quran as the special task of the Promised Messiah—was fulfilled through him. The Holy Quran says:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ ۗ

He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it prevail over every other religion.

It is evident from the sayings of the Holy Prophet^{sas} that this would take place in the time of the Promised Messiah, because the vanquishing of the *Dajjal*, the destruction of Gog and Magog, and the triumph over Christianity are tasks that the Holy Prophet^{sas} assigns to the Promised Messiah. These have been described as the greatest of all threats to Islam. It was also foretold that the *Dajjal*, or Christian missionaries, would succeed in dominating all other religions. Hence, overcoming Christianity would mean Islam's triumph over all religions.

The words 'that He may make it prevail over every other religion' relate to the time of the Promised Messiah. All Muslim commentators are agreed on this point. For instance, in the

well-known Commentary *Jami'ul-Bayān*, under the verse in question, we have:

وَذَلِكَ عِنْدَ نُزُولِ عِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ²

This [triumph of Islam] will be secured in the time of 'Īsā ibn Maryam [at the time of his second coming].

Rational arguments also support his view because at no other time have all the religions come out in full force as they have done in this age. Owing to the better means of communication, the invention of the printing press, and the consequent ease of printing and publishing of books, there is a renewed zeal among followers of all religions that was never witnessed before. In the time of the Holy Prophet^{ṣas}, there were only four religions that rose against Islam. They were the idol-worshippers of Mecca, Christians, Jews, and Magians. Therefore, that was not the time for the fulfilment of this prophecy. Today, with the new modes of transport and communication, the rivalry between religions has become intensified.

It is thus evident from the Holy Quran, Hadith, and reason, that Islam's triumph over other religions on the physical level was destined to take place in the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}, and that this was his real mission which only he could fulfil. This means that anyone who fulfilled this objective would undoubtedly be the Promised Messiah. Facts have shown that Allah has accomplished this mission through Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, and he is, therefore, the Promised Messiah.

Before Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} announced his claim, Islam was indeed in a precarious state, so much so, that

knowledgeable and worldly-wise Muslims were predicting its imminent demise and the prevailing circumstances were certainly pointing in this direction. Christianity was growing rapidly and it was feared that Islam would vanish from the face of the earth within a century. Muslims were suffering such losses against the Christians that, let alone the Muslims who had converted to Islam relatively recently, even the descendants of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, the Syeds, were starting to abandon Islam in their thousands and turning Christians. They even started publishing vituperative literature against Islam and its Holy Founder^{sas}. They would ascend the pulpits and utter vile and heart-rending criticism of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Muslims were becoming so demoralized that even the Hindus—a hitherto dead religion that had never ventured into missionary work and was ever on the defensive—took courage and the Aryā Samājists launched a campaign to convert Muslims to Hinduism. The scene was pitiful indeed, almost like vultures gathering on the dead body of an expert marksman. Previously they would not venture anywhere near him for fear of his skill but they now preyed upon his flesh. Some Muslims writers who used to stand up in the defence of Islam, gave up trying to do so and instead started saying that Islamic injunctions were meant for the age of ignorance and should not be criticised in view of modern knowledge.

At this time of despondency and continuous external onslaught, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} took it upon himself to defend Islam. His very first attack proved so effective that the enemy was left stupefied. He wrote a book entitled *Barāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya* in which he stated in detail the arguments for the truth of Islam and challenged the opponents of Islam to come

up with just one-fifth of those arguments in support of their own respective religions. He also promised a reward of Rs. 10,000 to anyone who would succeed in meeting this challenge.³ Despite trying their utmost, no opponent could meet the challenge, and thus *Barāhīn-e-Ahmadiyya* became famous all across India as a book without parallel. The opponents were dumbfounded and Islam, which had hitherto been powerless even to defend itself, now, with the entry of this warrior, was launching such a fierce attack upon its opponents that they were virtually routed.

By that time Ḥaḍrat Mirza [Ghulam Ahmad] Sahib^{as} had not yet claimed to be the Promised Messiah, therefore, there was no hostility or prejudice against him. As a result, thousands started saying openly that this man was indeed the *Mujaddid* (Reformer) of the age. A sage from Ludhiana went so far as to write:

ہم مریضوں کی ہے تمہیں پہ نظر! تم مسیحا بنو خدا کے لئے!

We, the sick and destitute, look to you;

For God's sake, be our Messiah.⁴

After the publication of *Barāhīn-e-Ahmadiyya*, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib^{as} made tremendous efforts in defence and support of Islam, and the opponents had to admit that, far from being dead, Islam was as alive and vibrant as ever. They became fearful of how their religions would be able to stand up against Islam. Christianity, which had prided itself on its success and considered Islam to be its prey, was now in such a state that its missionaries fled from the followers of the Promised Messiah^{as} and dared not stand before them. Now, through the efforts of the Promised Messiah^{as}, Islam

has again become dominant over other religions. The weapon of proof and reason is slow in its effect but produces enduring results.

True, Christianity still dominates the world and other religions continue to exist, but there is no doubt that their death-knell has been sounded and their backbone is broken. Due to social and traditional constraints, people are not yet entering Islam in numbers significant enough to inform the superficial viewer of the nearing demise of these religions, but the signs are quite evident.

The wise, however, can draw inferences from something even as small as a seed. Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib^{as} has countered non-Muslim faiths so effectively that they cannot now escape their fate. Sooner or later they will collapse in a heap at the feet of Islam. Here are some of the ways in which Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib^{as} sounded the death-knell on other religions:

The Offensive against Christianity

All the success that Christianity had achieved was based on the belief that Jesus Christ had died on the cross to atone for the sins of mankind and that he was then resurrected and raised to Heaven to sit at the right hand of God. While the story of his death, as it was related, caused people's hearts to be drawn to him in love, the story of his resurrection and ascension to Heaven inspired people to revere him as a deity. Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib^{as} disproved both these beliefs with the help of the New Testament itself. He showed on the basis of historical accounts that while people were normally left nailed to the cross for up to three days, Jesus was only placed on the cross for four hours. What is more, the New

Testament records that when Jesus' side was pierced with a spear, warm blood gushed forth,⁵ whereas warm blood cannot flow from a dead body. Moreover, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib^{as} proved that Jesus had prophesied that he would come down alive from the cross. He had said:

An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.⁶

Everyone agrees that Jonas entered the belly of the whale alive and came out alive. In just the same way, Jesus entered the tomb alive and came out alive.

Since all these arguments were derived from the New Testament, the Christians could not refute them, and have not been able to do so to this day. The result was that the whole doctrine of Jesus atoning for the sins of mankind by dying on the cross, which was drawing people towards Christianity, was debunked, and Christianity lost one of the legs it was standing on.

The other leg was the doctrine of Jesus' ascension to Heaven and being seated on the right hand of God. This, too, was broken by the Promised Messiah^{as} when he proved from the New Testament that Jesus did not ascend to heaven after the event of the cross; instead, he journeyed towards Iran, Afghanistan and India in search of the lost tribes of Israel, as he had said:

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring.⁷

It is evident from history that Nebuchadnezzar, a Babylonian king, had taken captive ten out of the twelve tribes of Israel and driven them into exile towards Afghanistan. It was, therefore, essential for Jesus to travel towards Afghanistan and Kashmir to convey his message to these 'lost sheep'. Had he not done so, then, according to his own statement, he would have failed in his mission.

The Promised Messiah^{as} reinforced this argument with further testimony drawn from history and geography. He proved with the help of ancient Christian chronicles that Jesus' disciples had travelled towards India, that a book very similar to the teachings of the New Testament had been discovered in Tibet, and that it claimed to contain an account of Jesus' life. All this proves that Jesus must have travelled towards these lands. The Promised Messiah^{as} also cited historical evidence, such as the names of landmarks and towns and villages of Afghanistan and Kashmir, to prove that people of Israelite descent had lived in these parts. The very name Kashmir (which was originally *Ka-Sheer*) means 'like Sheer', Sheer being another name for the Levant. Similarly, the name of Kabul and many other towns in Afghanistan closely resemble the names of towns in the Levant. Even the physiognomy and facial features of the people of Afghanistan and Kashmir bear a great resemblance to that of the Israelites. Finally, the Promised Messiah^{as} crowned his triumph by tracing Jesus' tomb to Khānyār Street in Srinagar, Kashmir. It appears from ancient Kashmiri chronicles that the tomb belonged to a Prophet who was known as a 'Prince Prophet' and had come to Kashmir from the West about nineteen

hundred years ago. Ancient inhabitants of Kashmir describe the tomb as the tomb of ‘Īsā Sahib.

In short, drawing on all kinds of evidence, the Promised Messiah^{as} proved that Jesus had died and had been buried in Kashmir, and that what God had said of him in the Holy Quran was indeed true:

وَأَوْيْنَهُمَا إِلَىٰ رَبْوَةٍ ذَاتِ قَرَارٍ وَمَعِينٍ⁸

And We gave them [Mary and Jesus] refuge on an elevated land of green valleys and springs of running water.

This description perfectly applies to Kashmir. By presenting a testified account of Jesus’ life and death, and proving the existence of his tomb, the Promised Messiah^{as} delivered such a fatal blow to the doctrine of Jesus’ divinity that it can never raise its head ever again.

One Argument against All Religions

In this age, Christianity occupies a distinct position because of its political power, its territorial expansion, its missionary activities, and the scientific and intellectual progress made by its followers. Therefore, to prove the superiority of Islam over this leading world religion, God provided Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib^{as} with some special weapons. However, in dealing with all the other religions, God provided him with one formidable weapon before which they were all forced to succumb. This weapon consists of prophecies contained in the scriptures of all religions wherein their founders

foretold the coming of a great Reformer in the latter days of the world. On account of these prophecies, followers of all religions are waiting for the coming of a Prophet or an Avatar, or whatever name they give him, and have linked all their future progress with his coming. Such prophecies exist in the scriptures of Hindus and Zoroastrians and of all other religions, big or small, and contain signs that would help to identify the time of the advent of the 'Promised One'. God revealed to the Promised Messiah^{as} that all these prophecies were remarkably similar and that they all pointed to the same age, which means that all these Prophets or Avatars were to appear at the same time.

The fact that these prophecies came to be fulfilled thousands of years after they were made is a clear indication that they originated with God and not with Satan or with any human being. The following verse is a clear indication of this:

فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا ۚ إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ ۗ

He is the Knower of the unseen; and He reveals not His secrets to any one, except to him whom He chooses, namely a Messenger of His.

However, it seems unreasonable that Prophets, Messengers and Avatars should appear in every religion at the same time for the purpose of vanquishing every other religion, for this presents a scenario where Divine Messengers are in rivalry against one another. While the prophecies in themselves were true and originated from God, the thought that their fulfilment would end up creating utter chaos was unreasonable. This could only mean that the prophecies foretold the coming of one person. God intended

that the nations of the world should await the Promised One, and once he had made his appearance, God would proclaim the truth of Islam through him. The Promised One would invite the followers of all religions into the fold of Islam, thus resulting in its triumph over all religions.

We can, thus, say that the Mahdi was none other than the Messiah, Krishna was none other than the Messiah, and Maisodarbahmi of the Zoroastrians was none other than the Krishna and the Mahdi and the Messiah. In short, all the Reformers promised by the different religions were but one and the same person. The reason why the prophecies were made under different names was so that each community should eagerly look forward to the coming of the Promised One as foretold by their own Prophets and in their own language and consider him one of their own and not some stranger. When, at last, he did appear and they saw all the prophecies about him come true, they would accept Islam based on his testimony.

To understand this, we can take the analogy of warring parties that wish to settle their disputes by appointing arbitrators. After they have each appointed an arbitrator to represent them, they find that the individual they have separately chosen is the same person, albeit known to them by different names, and thus they are able to reconcile through his arbitration.

Having proved that all the prophecies regarding the 'Promised One' have been fulfilled in this age, and having established that it is impossible for there to appear, at one and the same time, separate individuals from among different religions for the purpose of establishing the supremacy of their respective faiths, the Promised Messiah^{as} made it clear that the person awaited by the various

religions was but one individual, and that he was none other than himself. Since a Prophet belongs to no one particular community and only sides with those who join him for the sake of God, he belongs to all religions. All future progress depends on accepting him, and to accept him means to enter into the fold of Islam. This is how the prophecy which foretold that the Promised Messiah^{as} would come to make Islam supreme over all other religions was to be fulfilled.

This was such a powerful argument that no religion could withstand it. All the signs foretold by every religion regarding the time of the Last Reformer had come to be fulfilled in this age, and yet there had arisen no claimant other than the Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}. This left the people of other religions with only two options, either to deny their own religions, or to admit that the one who had been promised by Islam was the one who had also been promised to them by their own religions, and to follow him. Both these options would lead to the triumph of Islam. If the followers of other religions deny their own prophecies, Islam triumphs; and if, in order to prove the truth of their own religions, they accept the Reformer who has appeared in this age in fulfilment of their own prophecies, Islam also triumphs.

This argument is so powerful that as it continues to impress the followers of other religions, they will have no recourse but to accept Islam. In time, Islam will be the only religion. In keeping with the practice of God's Messengers, the Promised Messiah^{as} has sown the seed. The tree will bear fruit in the fullness of time, and when people become enamoured of the sweetness of its fruit and the comfort in its shade, they will flock towards it.

One religious group that would seem to escape the brunt

of this argument is the Sikh religion, and this is because Guru Nanak, the Founder of the Sikhs, appeared long after the Holy Prophet^{sas}. This is despite the fact that they, too, have a prophecy about a Reformer of the latter days, and it is clearly written that he would appear from around Batāla.¹⁰ (Batāla is the *teḥṣīl* within which the village of Qadian is located, thus this prophecy has been literally fulfilled). The objection that might arise is how could the Sikh religion have been born after the Holy Prophet^{sas} if he was *Khātamun-Nabiyyīn*? In order to reform the Sikh religion and to convert its members to Islam, Allah informed the Promised Messiah^{as} through a dream that Guru Nanak was not the founder of a new religion but was in fact a sincere Muslim.

The reader will be amazed to learn that this seemingly strange claim was proven with such strong arguments that thousands of Sikhs accepted its truth. Sikhs, who had hitherto associated themselves with Hinduism, now started to vehemently distance themselves from that religion. Before the coming of the Promised Messiah^{as}, many Hindu idols would be found in Sikh Gurudwaras. After this claim by the Promised Messiah^{as}, while the Sikhs as a community did not accept Islam, there came about such a transformation in them that they started throwing out these idols from their Gurudwaras and began distancing themselves from Hinduism.

When the Promised Messiah^{as} started researching the Sikh religion after his dream, he found that the Granth Sahib, the collection of the teachings of Baba Guru Nanak, contains strong exhortations for the five-daily prayers, the annual month of Ramadan, paying Zakat, performing the Hajj, as well as warnings for those who fail to observe these religious duties. It also appeared

from Sikh literature that Guru Nanak Sahib used to visit Muslim saints, meditate at the tombs of past divines, and join Muslims in congregational prayers. He also performed the Hajj and visited Baghdad and other Muslims holy sites. Most important of all was the discovery of a cloak (*Chola Sahib*) worn by Baba Nanak Sahib which the Sikhs protect and adore as a relic. This cloak is covered with inscriptions of verses from the Holy Quran, such as *Sūrah al-Ikhlās*, *Āyah al-Kursī*, and the verse ¹¹ إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ 'Surely the true religion with Allah is Islam'. Even the *Kalimah* is written on it in bold letters. The Sikhs, being ignorant of Arabic, revered these writings as divine mysteries and failed to realize that they were Baba Nanak's affirmations of his faith in Islam.

Armed with these arguments, derived from Sikh literature and relics, the Promised Messiah^{as} started conveying to the Sikhs that Baba Nanak Sahib was a Muslim. This has to a great extent succeeded in bringing about a change among the Sikhs, and it is hoped that, as they become more and more cognizant of this fact, they will realize that they are but our lost brothers and that Islam is their true religion from which they deviated centuries ago because of political controversies. At the source of these controversies, as historical research has shown, were Hindus, not Muslims. We are hopeful that the Sikhs will not let this history be a barrier to accepting the true faith, that they will use their famed bravery to overcome all barriers and, raising the cry '*Sat Sri Akāl*' ('Hail, the One True God'), join the ranks of Islam, and that they will accept the Reformer who appeared in the locality of Batāla (according to their own prophecies) and join the community of believers in its struggle against unbelief and heresy.

The third means through which the Promised Messiah^{as}

brought about the triumph of Islam, and in the presence of which no religion could stand up against Islam, was that he changed people's notion of religious debate. Before the Promised Messiah^{as}, the way religious debates were held by and large was that each group would try to prove the Founder of the other group to be a liar. The Jews would say that Jesus was false, the Christians would say the same of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, the Zoroastrians would reject the Founders of all these three religions, and the followers of the three religions would in turn label the Prophets of the Zoroastrians as impostors, and then all the four together would label the Founders of other religions as untrue. Each group was thus at war with the other. Every sane person, seeing in every religion proofs for its truthfulness and yet finding every religion labelling the founder of every other religion as false, was left in a quandary.

Such disputes resulted in increased bias and antagonism. The Hindus would read about the lives of their Rishis and marvel at their great moral and spiritual qualities, and yet they heard followers of other religions say that these Rishis were liars and pretenders. Naturally, they were offended by this and thought that these people had been blinded by bias. Followers of other religions were equally horrified and angered to hear others denigrate their spiritual leaders. In short, an unsolvable dilemma had arisen that no one was able to solve. Those who examined the question without prejudice wondered how God could have chosen just one people and abandoned all the rest, but no one dared to openly raise this question, for it would destroy the very foundations of their religion.

Hindus solved this problem, in their own estimation, by saying that all religions originated from God and are like the many paths

that lead to the same destination, but that the Hindu religion was the best of these paths. This solution was of no help either, for it was open to two serious objections. The first was that if all religions, as we find them today, are from God and lead ultimately to Him, why do they contain fundamental differences? There could be differences in matters of detail but how can there be differences in the fundamentals? Many roads may lead to a mansion but it would be absurd to think that roads coming from the east should reach it via the west or the north or the south. There can be minor divergences but the general direction should be the same. There can be no disparity in eternal truths. It may be understandable that God taught various people various modes of worship, but the sane mind cannot comprehend how He could say to one group 'I am One'; to the other, 'I am two'; and to a third that He is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; and to a fourth that Divine powers reside in thousands of idols; and to a fifth that everything is God; and to a sixth that God transcends all and cannot appear in material form; and to a seventh that He can incarnate into a human body; and to an eighth that He can adopt the guise of the lowest of creatures, even swine; and to a ninth that life after death is real; and to a tenth that there is no life after death; and to an eleventh that the dead do not return to this world; and to a twelfth that man keeps returning to this world in new incarnations. In short, while it is possible for God to reveal different commandments to different people, He could never teach them contradictory beliefs about eternal truths and verities. Since all religions, as they exist today, differ from one another not just in terms of their commandments but also in terms of eternal truths,

it cannot be correct to say that they are different paths leading to the same God.

The second objection to the Hindu doctrine is that while they see their religion as superior to all the others, they also say that it is the most ancient religion. However, no sane mind can accept that God revealed the best religion first and lesser religions afterwards. If man, in his initial stages, had been able to receive and benefit from a perfect teaching, why would God reveal lesser religions later on when mankind had become more advanced in its knowledge and understanding? It is more reasonable to believe that the religion that comes afterwards is superior than, if not equal to, the religion that came before.

So formidable were these objections that the proponents of the doctrine could not answer them, and the question remained as to what provisions God had made for the guidance of mankind since the beginning of the world.

The Christian solution to the problem of conflicting religious beliefs was to contend that since God had invited the whole world towards guidance through Jesus Christ, the Christian faith could not be accused of bigotry. This solution also did not work as it did not answer the vital question of what were the means that God had adopted for the guidance of mankind before the coming of Jesus. The Bible tells us that Jesus came only for his own people and that his teachings were not for anyone else. Later Christians, however, opened the doors to others. Yet, the question remains as to what provisions had God made for guiding millions of people who had lived before him?

The question remained unanswered and was inwardly gnawing at people's minds when the Promised Messiah^{as} turned to the

Holy Quran for an answer and changed the very outlook of the world regarding this issue. The Holy Quran says:

إِنَّ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ¹²

There is no people to whom a warner has not come.

That is to say, God's Messengers came to every country and every people. We do not say that India did not have Prophets, or Africa did not have Prophets, or Europe did not have Prophets, or America was without Prophets, nor do we hear of the spiritual founders of other religions and consider them to be false, for we have been told that Prophets have come to every people. The fact that Prophets and Divine laws and scriptures are found among other peoples and nations does not contradict our beliefs in any way. Indeed, this testifies to the truth of our religion.

We do, however, believe that while in the past God sent Messengers to various nations and peoples according to their specific requirements, later, when man became capable of receiving the perfect Guidance, God revealed it through the Holy Prophet^{sas} and sent him as a Messenger to the whole world. In this way, no people were ever deprived of Divine guidance. Today, Islam alone is the path of guidance, for it is the final and perfect teaching and all past teachings were abrogated with its coming. A sign of the abrogation of past teachings is that God no longer safeguards them and they constantly suffer from human interpolation. They have deviated far from the truth and are beyond recognition. They are true in terms of their origin but are false in the form that we see them today.

No one can disagree with this outlook presented by the

Promised Messiah^{as}, because, otherwise, we will have to believe that God sent His guidance only to some people and left others without guidance. No sane mind can accept this. On the other hand, if they accept this outlook, they will have to accept the truth of Islam as well because Islam is the final religion and because it was Islam that presented this true concept to the world.

This was such an amazing discourse that the educated classes and broad-minded people, regardless of which religion they belonged to, could not help but be moved by it. If they were to abandon the principle presented by the Promised Messiah^{as}, they would have to abandon God as well, which they could not do. If they did accept this principle, they would have no recourse but to accept Islam at the same time.

Thus, by changing the world's past conception, which was extremely myopic, the Promised Messiah^{as} provided us with a powerful means to guarantee the supremacy of Islam.

The fourth tool given to the Promised Messiah^{as}, which transformed the whole debate around Islam and completely dazed its opponents, was that, having received guidance from God, he changed the very course of contemporary religious literature and prescribed certain principles around it which the opponents could not deny, and if they did accept them then they could not hold their own against Islam. They were vanquished either way. They could find no safety either in fight or flight.

Before the Promised Messiah^{as}, the way religious debates were held was that one side could raise all kinds of objections against the other and make whatever claims of its own. A debate held in such an unconstrained fashion could never produce real results. Even when horses run against each other, they have to run

according to some rules, only then can the winner be judged. If one horse runs this way and the other that way, how would anyone know which one has won? In the same way, no opinion can be drawn from religious debate and scrutiny unless it is undertaken within some limits.

Also, before the coming of the Promised Messiah^{as}, anyone who came across some great teaching or read it in a book would at once ascribe it to his own religion and present it as proof of its excellence. There would be no real debate on religion, instead, scholars and debaters would merely talk about their personal beliefs and opinions. Consequently, seekers after truth were unable to decide between the various religions. The Promised Messiah^{as} explicitly demonstrated the futility of this form of debating. He laid down the principle that if a Divine scripture has been revealed for our guidance then it must contain everything that it wants us to believe, as well as the reasons why we should do so. Of what good is the Word of God if it contains neither the claims nor the arguments for its teachings? In that case, the religion could not be said to have come from God; it would be of our own making since we are the ones who are suggesting its claims as well as providing the arguments to support them. When discussing any religion, it should be ensured that all the claims that the proponents of that religion make can be found in their respective scriptures. The same goes for the proofs and arguments that they put forth.

This was such a solid principle that advocates of other religions could never reject it. If they did, they would in effect be admitting that the claims they make on behalf of their religion are not to be found in their scriptures. And, if the claims are to be found in the

scriptures, then why are the arguments missing from them? God has fashioned the human mind in such a way that he does not accept anything without proof or reason. How is it possible then that God should expect us to believe His teachings without giving us arguments to convince us of their truth? Non-Muslims could not reject this principle; if they did so they would be admitting that their respective religions were not worth believing in. The reason, which might surprise you, dear reader, is that when this principle was applied to other religions it was found that almost 90% of their claims could not be found in their respective scriptures. As for the claims that were found in the scriptures, almost 100% were without accompanying arguments. Are we to believe that God taught man something and then left him to prove and defend it on his own?

In this manner, the Promised Messiah^{as} demonstrated that advocates of different religions invented beliefs or borrowed ideas from here and there and attributed them to their own religions, and thus wasted people's time in trying to prove the superiority of their religions based on such beliefs. Even if they can manage to prove that their opinion about a matter is correct, this would not necessarily mean that their religion is also true because that concept is not found in their revealed scriptures. In contrast to this, the Promised Messiah^{as} proved that all Islamic teachings are derived from the Holy Quran and that it also provides proofs and arguments for the truth of these teachings. The Promised Messiah^{as} made this as clear as day by presenting the teachings of the Holy Quran on hundreds of topics along with their arguments, thereby completely humbling the opponents of Islam. They were so dispirited that to this day they have not found a way to counter

this point, nor will they ever do so. This theological discourse is so perfect and superior that it cannot be rejected, nor can falsehood be upheld in its presence. As this criterion is employed more and more, advocates of false religions will withdraw from the field of religious debate, the vulnerability of these religions will become further apparent to their followers, and the world will witness the fulfilment of God's promise that Islam will triumph over all religions.

The fifth method adopted by the Promised Messiah^{as} was such that it completely humbled other religions and gave Islam superiority that no one can deny. The Promised Messiah^{as} addressed the opponents of Islam and stressed that the true purpose of any religion is to establish a relationship between man and God; hence, only that religion would be considered true and chosen by God for this age that can establish this relationship and produce demonstrable signs of it. We know from our daily experience that everything, no matter how small, has an effect. If we touch fire, we get burnt. When we sit close to the fire, we feel its heat. Drinking water not only slakes our thirst but also brings life and freshness to our faces. If we start eating rich foods, we gain weight. If we exercise more, our body gets stronger and we have more energy. Likewise, all medicines have healing or adverse effects. Given all this, it would be strange if one's connection with God had no effect whatsoever, and that even if one prays and prostrates for unbearably long periods of time, or observes fasting to the point of death, or gives charity to the end of one's resources, one will still experience no transformation in one's life and all these actions will produce no results. If this were indeed the case, why then would we need God at all? If we have a connection with a minor ruler, we

observe the effects of this in that we are honoured in his presence, his subordinates respect us, our petitions are heard, our problems solved, and everyone can see that we are close and dear to that ruler. How then is it possible that we should have a relationship with God but it should have no effect on us or on our relationships and we should remain the same as before?

The Promised Messiah^{as} demonstrated that a living religion is to be recognized by the fact that its followers can reach God and attain His nearness, and that those who have attained such nearness should possess some distinguishing signs. Therefore, instead of attacking one another, followers of the various religions should focus on providing proof of their own spiritual life and vitality and provide examples of individuals among them who, by observing the precepts of their religion, have attained nearness to God. Any religion which lives up to this criterion should then be accepted, and one that does not should be thrown away like a dead body that cannot support anyone and itself requires support. Such a religion will do more harm than good because it disgraces its followers in this world and leads them to damnation in the next.

This was a proposition that no reasonable person could question. It fell like lightning on the followers of other religions and they started looking for ways to save face. The Promised Messiah^{as} proclaimed that only Islam possesses the signs of spiritual life and vitality and no other religion comes anywhere near it. He invited anyone who thought otherwise to come forward and take up the challenge but, despite repeated reminders, no one came forward. How could they do so when they had nothing to present. If it were a matter of shouting at the top of their voices and vociferously claiming that their religion is the true one, a thousand

people would have come forward; but when they needed to prove their love for God and show signs thereof, they were unable to do so. Love of God is another matter, these people do not even have a superficial connection with God, how then could they present any proof of it?

The Promised Messiah^{as} extended this challenge to the Hindus, Christians, Jews, and people of other religions, but nobody took it up. In different ways and on various occasions he tried to arouse their sense of honour so that they would accept the challenge, but to no avail. He invited the Bishop of Lahore to compete with him in the acceptance of prayer. He said that it was promised in the New Testament that if one has faith even as little as a mustard seed, one will be able to move mountains, and that our books also contain the promise of help for the believers and acceptance of their prayers, therefore, let the Bishop come forward and let us find out whose prayers are heard more, whether of those who lead their lives according to Islam or those who follow the Christian teachings. This challenge was offered repeatedly but the Bishop remained silent. Indeed, his silence was so strange that even some British newspapers criticised him and asked why people who drew fat salaries and made loud claims fail to come forward when they are challenged. Neither Christians nor anyone else tried to convince the Bishop to come forward, and so he kept avoiding it with one excuse or another.

The Promised Messiah^{as} kept throwing such challenges at the opponents of Islam but no one dared accept them. This criterion, again, is such that it will have a deep impact on every man of reason and understanding. As people continue to realize the ineffectiveness of their own religions and the efficacy of Islam, the truth

of Islam will become even more evident to them. In debates, one might be able to make up things to eclipse the truth, but the mind accepts no excuses when it actually observes the effects of something and it finally succumbs to the truth.

This criterion, too, will prove to be extraordinarily effective for establishing the truth of Islam. In the eyes of every reasonable person, Islam has already attained intellectual victory through this means, though the practical manifestation of it may take some time.

I have presented these five principles as examples of the strategy employed by the Promised Messiah^{as} against the opponents of Islam. This makes it clear that he has already accomplished all the tasks that the Promised Messiah was supposed to accomplish. If he is not the Promised Messiah, then what are the tasks left for a future Promised Messiah to perform? Will he forcibly bring people into Islam? If so, what good will this do to Islam or to the converts themselves?

Consider this: If Christians today started to forcibly convert Muslims to Christianity, what will any decent person think of it? Would the same criticism not apply to the Promised Messiah if he did such a thing? Trying to forcibly convert people to Islam will surely be detrimental and not beneficial for Islam as it would alienate every decent and freedom-loving person. The Promised Messiah should have no use for the sword; he can only bring about the triumph of Islam through reason and argument. We can see that Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} has already made Islam triumphant over other religions through reason and demonstrable testimonies, and there is nothing left for another supposed Messiah to do. Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib^{as} is, therefore, the Promised

Messiah, for he has accomplished all that the Promised Messiah had been ordained to accomplish.

Someone might say at this point that since all the arguments were already present, how then can the victory of Islam over other religions be ascribed to Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}? The answer is very simple: Is it possible to say that an enemy can be defeated by a sword without a swordsman? Of course not. The enemy will only be defeated when there is someone who can wield the sword. The situation with Islam was such that, even though the sword of reason and argument was present, Muslims were unable to use it; in fact, they weren't even aware of its existence. It was the Promised Messiah^{as} who, having received Divine insight into the meaning of the Holy Quran, deduced arguments for the supremacy of Islam that were relevant to this age and used them against other religions and taught Muslims to do the same. It was through his coming that the supremacy of Islam was established. Just as a cannon without a cannoneer can prove fatal for one's own side, so was the Holy Quran, in the absence of one who had been given its true understanding, proving to be harmful to Muslims and they were being hurt by its wrongful application. When the Promised Messiah^{as} made his claim, the blessings and benefits of the Holy Quran became manifest and he countered the enemies of Islam with such arguments that, let alone trying to fight back, they could not even defend themselves. Some became so frustrated that they started appealing to the government to forcibly stop the Promised Messiah^{as} from spreading his message. It thus became clear as day that Islam was destined to triumph over all other religions.

References

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- ² *Tafsīr at-Tabari*, part 6, p. 24, Dāral-Iḥya at-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, 2001
- ³ *Barāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya*, Rūḥāni Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 24–28; English rendering: *Barāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya* (Part I), London, 2012, pp. 46–59,
- ⁴ *Ḥayāt-e-Aḥmad*, by Sheikh Yaqoob Ali Irfani, vol. 3, p.39
- ⁵ John, 19:31–4
- ⁶ Matthew, 12:39–40
- ⁷ John, 10:16
- ⁸ *Sūrah al-Mu'minūn*, 23:51
- ⁹ *Sūrah al-Jinn*, 72:27–8
- ¹⁰ *Janam Sakhi* of Bhai Bala, Urdu translation by Dr. Ajit Singh Aulakh, p. 297, 2013
- ¹¹ *Sūrah Āl-e-Imrān*, 3:20
- ¹² *Sūrah Fāṭir*, 35:25

Argument 5—Revival of Islam

The fifth argument for the truth of the claims of Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} is that he has brought about the inner revival of Islam exactly as it was supposed to happen through the Messiah and the Mahdi. This also proves that he was the Promised Messiah^{as}.

Barring the Muslim clerics who have become biased on account of their indulgence in religious debates, all educated people will agree that Islam today is not as it was in the time of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Everyone can feel that something is lacking in Islam. There was a time when Allah said in the Holy Quran:

رَبِّمَا يَوْذُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ كَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ ١

Often will the disbelievers wish that they were Muslims
(and could follow such excellent teaching).

But today Islam is the target of all kinds of criticism. Let alone non-Muslims, a lot of educated Muslims are becoming doubtful about many of its teachings. Some object to its basic precepts, others to its moral code, and yet others to the practical application of its principles. Islam no longer inspires the faith and conviction that it did in the past and this is why Muslims today are not willing to make the kind of sacrifices for the sake of Islam as they did in the past. This being so, we have to accept one of three possibilities. (i) That all that we know about Islam's great past is no more than fiction and is a result of exaggeration by people of the past. (ii) That no one practices the teachings of Islam today.

(iii) That Islam has been changed and is it no longer beneficial for anyone to follow it. The third possibility is the correct one.

The fact is that Islam's effect on people's lives is not limited to accounts told by people of the past; rather, the signs of the progress made by Muslims because of following the teachings of Islam are found in all corners of the world. Nor is it true to say that no one practices Islam today, for people still do follow the teachings of Islam as they understand them. Some people perform strenuous meditations and lose their lives in the process without gaining anything. The only possibility that now remains is that the concept of Islam has changed in people's minds and, according to the following saying of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, only the name of Islam has survived:

لَمْ يَبْقَ مِنَ الْإِسْلَامِ إِلَّا اسْمُهُ²

A time will come when nothing will be left of Islam except its name.

Due to the ages that separate us from the Holy Prophet^{sas}, people have completely distorted the essential teachings of Islam. In its present form it cannot bring about in its followers the kind of transformation as it did in the past. Nor can it impress the minds of non-Muslims in the same way, except for some devout souls who might be drawn its obliterated ruins. In general, Islam no longer has the appeal that it once did. This is testified by this saying of the Holy Prophet^{sas}:

تَفْتَرِقُ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ وَ سَبْعِينَ مِائَةً كُلُّهُمْ فِي النَّارِ إِلَّا مِائَةً وَاحِدَةً قَالُوا مَنْ هِيَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ مَا أَنَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَصْحَابِي³

A time will come when my followers will become divided into seventy-three sects. All of them, except one, will be thrown into the Fire. Some in the audience asked who were the people that would be on the side of truth? The Holy Prophet^{sas} answered, ‘Those who follow my example and the example of my Companions.’

On another occasion, he said:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ خُذُوا مِنَ الْعِلْمِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُقْبَضَ الْعِلْمُ أَوْ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُرْفَعَ الْعِلْمُ - قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ يُرْفَعُ الْعِلْمُ وَهَذَا الْقُرْآنُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِينَا فَقَالَ أَيْ تَكَلِّتُكَ أُمِّكَ وَهَذِهِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى بَيْنَ أَظْهُرِهِمْ الْمَصَاحِفُ لَمْ يُضْبِحُوا بِتَعَلُّقُونَا بِالْحُرُوفِ مِمَّا جَاءَ تَهُم بِهِ أَنْبِيَائُهُمْ أَلَا وَإِنَّ ذَهَابَ الْعِلْمِ أَنْ يَذْهَبَ حَمَلَتُهُ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ⁴

‘O men, acquire knowledge before knowledge disappears.’ He was asked, ‘O Prophet of God, how will knowledge disappear while we have the Holy Quran in our possession?’ The Holy Prophet^{sas} replied, ‘In the same way as it happened before. Do you not see that the Jews and the Christians have their scriptures but they have not the least regard for the teachings contained in these Books that their Prophets had brought to them from God? Knowledge disappears from the world when those who have knowledge disappear from the earth.’ The Holy Prophet^{sas} repeated this three times.

It appears from this Tradition that a most critical time lay ahead for the Muslim ummah when true knowledge would disappear from the world. However, we are also told that there would be one sect that would be established on the truth and would be similar

to the Companions of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. It is established on the basis of Hadith that this sect will be the Community of the Promised Messiah^{as}, because the Holy Prophet^{sas} said that he did not know whether the first or the latter part of this ummah was the best. The Holy Prophet's words 'those who follow my example and the example of my Companions' refer to the followers of the Promised Messiah^{as}. This has to be so because no Community can be like the Companions of the Holy Prophet^{sas} unless they are directly taught by someone sent by God.

It follows from the above Traditions that after the disappearance of knowledge and faith from the Muslim ummah, Allah has promised to revive Islam through the Promised Messiah. Consequently, anyone who claims to be the Promised Messiah should re-establish the true teaching of Islam and present the true knowledge of the Holy Quran. If he fails in this, he cannot be the Promised Messiah. On the other hand, anyone who, in the tumultuous times of the latter days, manages to purify Islam of people's misconceptions, and reveals its excellence to the world, and lives up to the prophecy of the Holy Prophet^{sas} that he and his followers would follow in his and his Companions' footsteps, such a person must be the Promised Messiah. This also opens for us another way to judge anyone who claims to be the Promised Messiah. That is, can we ascertain that Islam has in fact deviated completely from its original form? Secondly, has this claimant in effect presented Islam to the world in its pristine form?

As for the fact that Islam has been disfigured and alienated from its essence, no reasonable person will deny this because God's practical testimony shows that Muslims are no longer Muslims. The very image of Islam today, which does not satisfy even the

Muslims themselves, testifies that Islam has indeed been disfigured. The only question that remains is whether or not Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} has presented to the world the lovely and pristine face of Islam that instantly draws both Muslims and non-Muslims to itself, and whether or not the Promised Messiah^{as} has cleansed the holy teachings of Islam of everything that had been added to it by ungodly and self-serving mullahs. To answer these questions, I will now give some general examples of how the image of Islam had been distorted by people and how the Promised Messiah^{as} has once again presented it to the world in its pristine form.

The central teaching of religion, around which all other teachings revolve, is the belief in God. In Islam, belief in God is the root for which all other doctrines and practices are like leaves and branches. This is the core belief which all other beliefs and practices are meant to uphold. The essential component of belief in God is the belief in God's Oneness. From the day the Holy Prophet^{sas} made his claim of prophethood till the day of his demise, he continued to profess, 'There is no God but Allah.' He did not desist from doing so despite suffering all kinds of hardship and persecution. Even on his deathbed, his only worry was lest this teaching that he had re-established with so many sacrifices should become lost from the world. The heart of a Muslim is torn apart to read in Hadith that when the Holy Prophet^{sas} was on his deathbed and his body would be covered with sweat because of the severity of the illness which was affecting his every nerve, his only fear was lest his followers should forget his teaching after him and become engrossed in idolatry. Even at that time of extreme suffering, he

had no care for himself but was only concerned for his ummah. Turning over and over in his bed, he kept saying:

لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ ۗ

Curse of God be on the Jews and the Christians, for they turned the graves of their prophets into objects of worship.

He meant to warn his followers not to go against what he had taught them all his life and, forgetting his teaching of *Tauhid*, start worshipping him after his death. Imagining the Holy Prophet's state of anguish at that moment and his expression of such devotion to *Tauhid*, no one who professes to love him could even think of *Shirk*—associating partner with God. Yet, many of those who call themselves Muslims are openly defying this teaching. Thirteen hundred years ago, no Muslim could have imagined that a time would come when the upholders of the *Kalimah*, 'There is no God but Allah', would prostrate before graves, offer the daily prayers while facing the tombs of their elders, attribute knowledge of the unseen to mortal men, ascribe Divine powers to their holy men, address prayers to the dead and make offerings over their graves, offer sacrifices in the name of others besides God, and, worst of all, claim that they have been taught all this by the Quran and the Holy Prophet^{sas}! Yet, wherever Muslims live in the world, the majority of them are guilty of one or more of the above-mentioned deeds. Even though, seeing the Holy Prophet's anguish and hearing his prayers, Allah saved the grave of the Holy Prophet^{sas} from such vile innovations, the graves of other Muslim divines have become abodes of idolatry just as much as Hindu temples. Things have reached such a point that if the Holy

Prophet^{sas} appeared in the world today and saw what the Muslims were doing, he would think that they were followers of some pagan religion.

It may be said that those idolatrous beliefs and practices are confined only to the ignorant masses and that knowledgeable Muslims are averse to them, but the fact is that groups and nations are judged by the conduct of their majority. When the majority of Muslims hold such beliefs, it has to be concluded that the Muslims have deteriorated in terms of their belief in the Oneness of God and have forgotten the essence of ‘There is no God but Allah’, which was the very life and substance of Islam. It is also not true to say that only the masses are prone to such beliefs because many of the elders and scholars are in agreement with them. If there are some among them who do not at heart approve of these beliefs and practices, they have themselves deteriorated to such an extent that they cannot publicly denounce the beliefs of the masses. This is further proof that true faith has disappeared from among the Muslims.

True, there are sects among the Muslims that claim to be completely free of *Shirk* and condemn other Muslims for defaming Islam by indulging in idolatrous practices, but the fact is that these sects too indulge in *Shirk*. The only difference being that whereas common Muslims set up many saints and sages as equal to God, these people consider Jesus alone to be His equal. This is because, like other Muslims, they believe that Jesus is alive in heaven. In their view, the Holy Prophet^{sas}, the best of all Prophets and their Chief, is buried in the earth while Jesus has been sitting alive in heaven for the last two thousand years and God does not cause

him to die. They read the following in the Holy Quran regarding the people whom they worship besides God:

أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرٌ أَحْيَاءٍ ۖ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۗ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ⁶

They are dead, not living; and they know not when they will be raised.

They see that the Christians worship Jesus besides God, and yet they do not give up the belief that Jesus is alive in Heaven. They hold this belief and still have the temerity to claim that they are believers in *Tauhid*! Likewise, while they raise their voices against *Shirk*, they at the same time believe that Jesus used to restore the dead to life. They believe this despite the fact that God Himself does not send the dead back to the world. The Holy Quran says:

وَحَرَامٌ عَلَىٰ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ⁷

And it is an inviolable law for a township which We have destroyed that they shall not return.

وَمِنْ دُونِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمٍ يُبْعَثُونَ⁸

And behind them is a barrier until the day when they shall be raised again.

These people call themselves Ahl-e-Hadith but forget the following Hadith wherein the Holy Prophet^{sas} says: When Jabir's father Abdullah was martyred, God asked him to make a wish. Abdullah said that he wished to be returned to the world so that he might join the Holy Prophet^{sas} in Jihad and be martyred, and then be raised once again and then be martyred. Upon this, Allah said:

Had I not sworn to myself [not to return the dead to life], I would surely have returned you. But having made that promise to Myself, I will not do it.⁹

They don't seem to understand that if God does not choose to practice an attribute that is unique to Him, how then could the Messiah of Nazareth have done it? They are misled by the following verse of the Holy Quran wherein Jesus is cited as saying, 'I will quicken the dead.'¹⁰ But when the same words are used regarding the Holy Prophet^{sas} in the following verse, these same people say that here the words refer to spiritual revival and not physical resurrection:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ¹¹

O ye who believe! Respond to Allah, and the Messenger when he calls you that he may give you life.

When we know that the word *Ihyā* can mean spiritual resurrection, and that no one but God can bring people back to life, and that God never gives life to the dead to return them to this world, why then is the verse regarding Jesus not interpreted in a way that does not involve associating partners with God?

Likewise, these so-called believers in the Oneness of God maintain that Jesus was able to create birds, even though we read in the Holy Quran that God alone is the Creator:

وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ¹²

And those on whom they call beside Allah create not anything, but they are themselves created.

أَمْ جَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ خَلَقُوا كَخَلْقِهِ فَتَشَابَهَ الْخَلْقُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ قُلِ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ
الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ¹³

Or, do they assign to Allah partners who have created the like of His creation so that the two creations appear similar to them?’ Say, ‘Allah alone is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Most Supreme.’

إِنَّ الدَّيِّينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَنْ يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ¹⁴

Surely, those on whom you call instead of Allah cannot create even a fly, though they combine together for the purpose.

Even though the Holy Quran categorically states that no one other than God can create anything and that anyone who could do so would be worthy of worship, they insist on giving the following verse a meaning that is contrary to the explicit teaching of the Holy Quran and do not try to understand that words can have various connotations:

أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ¹⁵

I will fashion out for you a creation out of clay after the manner of a bird.

It is important to apply meanings to verses of the Holy Quran that are compatible with other verses and are in conformity with the status of the person they speak about. It is wrong to give them meaning that are contrary to the fundamental teachings of Islam and are at odds with God’s Glory and Majesty and to become engrossed in *Shirk* while claiming to be believers in *Tauhid*. These

are the dangerous beliefs that are widespread among Muslims today, be they the clergy or the laity, *Muqallid* or *non-Muqallid*, Sunni or Shia. In the presence of such beliefs, no one can say that these Muslims conform to the *Kalimah* 'There is no God but Allah'. No doubt, Muslims still profess the *Kalimah* and recite it all the time, but owing to the above beliefs, they are as far removed from its essence as are the idol-worshippers.

The teaching the Promised Messiah^{as} brought to correct these erroneous and misguided beliefs was so firmly rooted in *Tauhid* and so upholding of Divine majesty that, in accepting it, one's heart is filled with Divine love, and having been delivered from the fire of *Shirk*, one attains the status that belonged to the Companions of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. The Promised Messiah^{as} disproved all the above-mentioned beliefs with the help of reason and argument and proclaimed in clear terms that God is One, and that to pray to any dead person, or to make offerings at the graves of the dead, or to prostrate before anyone, dead or alive, or to ascribe Divine powers to a mortal, be he a Prophet or non-Prophet, or to make an offering of an animal or any other thing in the name of someone other than God, or to believe that a person has the power to persuade God to do anything he wants, all these are forms of *Shirk* that a believer should avoid at all costs.

The Promised Messiah^{as} also proved that Jesus, like all other Prophets, had died and had been buried in a grave. He could revive the spiritually dead and could create as a man can create, but he had no power to bestow life upon lifeless objects or to quicken the dead, with or without God's permission. God never shares His special attributes with any man, and the Holy Quran categorically denies that Jesus or anyone else possesses these attributes. Those

who spread idolatrous beliefs always say that God has given his powers to someone but never claim that such a person rules the world independent of God.

With this teaching, that conformed both to the Holy Quran and reason, the Promised Messiah^{as} dispelled the darkness of *Shirk* and revealed to the Muslims the straight path that they had long abandoned. He, thus, accomplished that which had been destined for the second coming of the Messiah.

The second pillar of faith in Islam, after belief in the Oneness of God, is the belief in angels, and this too had been completely distorted by the Muslims. Some believe that the angels can commit sin or object against God—Heaven forbid! The story of Adam has been presented in such a fashion that it appears as if angels stood up before God and criticised His commandments, whereas, in fact, they were proclaiming:

وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ^ط

‘And we glorify You with Your praise and extol Your holiness.’

The story they tell about the angels Hārūt and Mārūt is painful indeed. It is said that God sent two angels to the world disguised as men but they became infatuated with a woman of ill repute and were hung upside down in a well as punishment. God save us! It is also said, God forbid, that Lucifer was the chief of the angels. Others believe that angels are physical beings who move about like human beings. For example, the angel Izrā‘īl runs around taking people’s lives. On the other extreme are those who deny the very existence of angels and consider them to be imaginary beings.

They interpret Quranic verses to mean that what are described as angels are just certain powers and influences. They even go so far as to say that the Quran was not brought by Gabriel, which is in total contradiction to the Holy Quran and Hadith. They object to the teaching about angels and consider it to be at odds with the concept of Divine omnipotence.

These un-Islamic beliefs were repudiated by the Promised Messiah^{as} and he put forth the true doctrine of Islam that removed all such objections. He proved that angels do not criticize God, nor do they commit sin. On the contrary, Allah says about them:

لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ¹⁷

(Angels) disobey not Allah in what He commands them and do as they are commanded.

How can beings that have been created with attributes of submission and obedience ever indulge in sin, or become infatuated with prostitutes, or forget Allah and invite His chastisement? If angels could indeed be guilty of sin, then why are we commanded to believe in them? Belief indicates obedience, therefore, to command someone to obey beings that can disobey would mean to put oneself in peril.

The Promised Messiah^{as} also taught that angels are spiritual entities and do not run about here and there. Just as the sun remains in its position and spreads light, so do the angels carry out God's will from their specific stations while employing powers that have been bestowed on them.

The Promised Messiah^{as} similarly refuted the idea that Lucifer was the chief of the angels or even one of the angels. Lucifer was,

in fact, an evil spirit, as God has said about him: ¹⁸ **وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ** 'And he [Lucifer] was one of the disbelievers.'

The Promised Messiah^{as} also removed the misconception that angels are some kind of imaginary beings or are merely symbols of certain powers and influences. He proved the reality of angels through his own observation and experience. He exposed the ignorance of those who believe that God created the sun so that the eyes could see and the air so that the ears could hear, and that none of this detracts from His Omnipotence; but when it comes to creating some means to carry out some spiritual functions, they see this as being derogatory to God and His Omnipotence. The Promised Messiah^{as} countered them with their own beliefs and explained that God did not create the 'means' because He is unable to convey His will to mankind directly, rather it is because man is dependent upon the means to be able to hear the word of God, and also because they are helpful in man's progress.

In this way, the Promised Messiah^{as} did away with all the misconceptions that had found their way among the Muslims regarding the second pillar of their faith. He taught the concept of angels as had been taught by God and His Prophet^{sas}.

The third pillar of faith in Islam is the belief in the Divine scriptures. In this respect, too, the faith of the Muslims had become quite vulnerable and they harboured strange concepts about divinely revealed books, particularly the Holy Quran. The fact is that belief in the Holy Quran is an essential part of faith in Islam, while belief in the other revealed scriptures is only as a matter of principle as they no longer exist in their original form, nor are we bound to follow them as they are.

I am truly amazed at the kinds of beliefs Muslims entertain

regarding the Holy Quran but I also know that I am only amazed because I have accepted the Promised Messiah^{as} and learnt the truth from him. Otherwise, like other people, I would also have been mistaken about the Holy Quran.

Some believe that after the death of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, portions of the Holy Quran literally disappeared and a large part of it was lost to the world—God forbid! According to others, the Quran that we have today has been subjected to human interference. There are still others who strongly reject the above beliefs but are themselves engrossed in beliefs that are no less obnoxious. For instance, they teach that parts of the Quran have been abrogated. The criterion they use for this is that if two verses seem to contradict each other, one of them must be abrogated. The result is that while some find discrepancies in one area, others find them in other areas, and thus a substantial part of the Holy Quran is rendered obsolete and impracticable.

The dangerous outcome of this belief, aside from the fact that some portions of the Holy Quran were considered abrogated, was that people became confused as to why Allah and His Prophet did not specify the parts that had been abrogated. Therefore, the Holy Book lost its credibility, leaving people to choose the parts they liked and to declare the rest to be abrogated.

Another dangerous misconception that is harboured regarding Divine scriptures, particularly the Holy Quran, is that they are not free from satanic influence. It is even claimed that Satan can at times interfere in Divine revelation. The following verse is cited in support of the belief that Satan meddled with the revelations of all Prophets and added words to them that were not from God:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّى أَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِي أُمْتَاتِهِ¹⁹

Never sent We a Messenger or a Prophet before you, but when he sought to attain what he aimed at, Satan put obstacles in the way of what he sought after.

Nor do they rest content with this; they go further and claim that one day the Holy Prophet^{sas} was reciting *Sūrah an-Najm*, and when he reached the words²⁰ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ ۚ وَمَنْوَةَ الْبَاثِنَةَ الْآخَرَىٰ ‘Now tell me about Lāt and Uzzā; And Manāt, the third one, another goddess,’ Satan caused him to add the words ‘these idols, who are like beautiful women with long necks, can serve as intercessors.’²¹ And that when the disbelievers heard these words praising their idols, they too fell prostrate. Later, when the Holy Prophet^{sas} learned that Satan had caused these words to flow from his tongue, he was greatly perturbed. God forbid! This whole incident is a fabrication but Muslim commentators have accepted it so easily.

Some people who think that this story is far too bizarre and unacceptable have instead suggested that Satan did not cause these words to flow from the Holy Prophet’s tongue, rather Satan himself uttered these words in the voice of the Holy Prophet^{sas} so that it appeared as if he had said them. Then, so as to alleviate the doubts that would arise regarding the Holy Quran as a result of accepting this story, they resort to this verse:

فَبَسْخَ اللَّهُ مَا يَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ يَحْكُمُ اللَّهُ الْبَيْنَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ²²

But Allah removes the obstacles that are placed by Satan. Then Allah firmly establishes His Signs. And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

Can anyone be satisfied with this? If the premise is that Satan can interfere in Divine revelation, then who can say whether or not this verse too was revealed by Satan to reassure the Holy Prophet^{sas} that verses inspired by Satan had been removed and that the verses that remained should be considered the pure Word of God!

Many have deemed the Holy Quran so insignificant as to render its verses subservient to the most inauthentic and dubious of Hadith. In the name of *Sunnah* (the practical example of the Holy Prophet^{sas}), they have placed the Word of God under the authority of self-seeking and immoral men. The Holy Quran may reject a thing vehemently, and yet if they find it to be permissible in a most unsupported Hadith, they will give priority to that Hadith. If the Holy Quran teaches something but they find it forbidden in a Hadith, they will put the Holy Quran aside and adopt the Hadith.

Some believe that the Holy Quran was narrated by the Holy Prophet^{sas} and not revealed by God. Although they describe the Holy Quran as the Word of God, they interpret this to mean that the words that came from the Holy Prophet^{sas} were supported by God and, therefore, should be called the Word of God, even though they were the words of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. They think that God cannot reveal in the form of words because words require lips and a tongue to be expressed.

Others think that the Holy Quran must not be translated. In this way, they have barred the only way of conveying its message to the masses and are responsible for the resultant spread of ignorance and godlessness among Muslims.

Some think that the Holy Quran is an abstract book that

points out some essential teachings but nothing specific can be derived from it.

Some think that the Holy Quran is full of *taqdim* and *ta'khir*, whereby the apparent order of words has to be changed in order to arrive at the true meaning.

Some have collected all kinds of fictitious tales that are unacceptable to common sense and abhorrent to human nature and ascribed them to the Holy Quran. Even if no such mention is made in the Holy Quran, or even when such tales are completely at odds with the Holy Quran, they still bring old Israelite stories into its commentaries. They do not even hesitate to attribute such stories to Prophets and sages of the past.

Another injustice they have done to the Word of God is that they deny that it has any rational order or sequence in its chapters or verses. In other words, just as a person utters meaningless words when he is not in his senses, so do they imagine that the Holy Quran has related random accounts without any regard for order or sequence.

Another wrongful belief almost all Muslims hold about Divine revelation is that, whereas God would reveal His word in earlier ages, He no longer does so. In other words, one of God's attributes has been held in abeyance, and while He can see and hear, He can no longer speak.

God save us from all this!

In short, they have all tried their best to tear apart the Holy Quran and to conceal its beauty from the world, and they do all this in the name of 'service to the Quran', but in so doing they have only managed to alienate people from the Quran and made them indifferent to its guidance.

The Promised Messiah^{as} removed all these misconceptions and proved with powerful arguments that the Holy Quran is God's final guidance; that it is free from abrogation and every word of it is to be practised by Muslims; that no part of it contradicts another part; that any seeming discrepancy in its verses is due to ignorance and lack of understanding; that it has not been altered in the least; that every word we find in it today is exactly as it was revealed to the Holy Prophet^{sas}; that not only has it not been altered, it is incapable of alteration, either through change or addition of subtraction; that God Himself has provided such means for its protection—both physical and spiritual—that it cannot be affected by human interpolation; and that it is, therefore, wrong to believe that some parts of it have been abrogated or changed even in the smallest degree. It is secure and shall forever remain secure.

To say that parts of it taken away from the world reflects badly upon God because it would mean that the perfect Book He sent for the guidance of humankind could not serve its purpose even for one day. To accept any sort of alteration in the Holy Quran would render it forever unreliable. If this had indeed been the case, it would necessitate the coming of a new Prophet and a new Shariah so that the world would not be left without Divine guidance.

The Promised Messiah^{as} proved that the Holy Quran, and indeed all Divine revelation, is free from the influence of Satan. Satan can never interfere in the Word of God, neither by taking control of a Prophet's tongue nor by mimicking the Prophet's voice. Citing his own experience, the Promised Messiah^{as} said that even though he was a mere servant of the Holy Prophet^{sas},

the Revelation he received was true beyond any doubt; how then could the Holy Quran, which was revealed to the Holy Prophet^{sas} and is the source of Divine guidance for all times to come, be susceptible to Satanic influence even for one small instant?

The Promised Messiah^{as} told the Muslims that the Holy Quran was an authentic scripture and that God has promised to safeguard it in such a way that even its opponents are forced to admit that it has remained intact to this day. To try to counter it with Hadith amounts to denigrating and knowingly rejecting the Word of God. Any Hadith that contradicts the Holy Quran cannot be the saying of the Holy Prophet^{sas} because the Prophet of Allah cannot contradict the Word of Allah. Moreover, Hadith was not compiled in a safe and secure manner. It is, therefore, wrong to force Hadith on the Holy Quran; indeed, it is important to keep Hadith subordinate to the Holy Quran. If the two appear to be irreconcilable, then we should abandon the Hadith, which might have been distorted, intentionally or unintentionally, by some human being.

It is said in response to this that most of our knowledge of Islam comes from Hadith. However, the Promised Messiah^{as} said that we have yet another source aside from the Holy Quran and Hadith, and it is the *Sunnah*—the actions of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, which his Companions learnt directly from him and performed them in the same way. For this, we do not need to rely on any verbal Hadith. Millions of Muslims saw millions of other Muslims perform certain acts in certain ways, and they, in turn, imparted them to the generations that followed them. The *Sunnah* never contradicts the Holy Quran, whereas the verbal Hadith has an element of doubt. Hence, if a Hadith is in keeping with the Holy

Quran, it is to be accepted, otherwise, it is to be rejected. *Sunnah* is based on historical evidence which cannot be dismissed without cause, otherwise, many important truths would be lost to the world.

The Promised Messiah^{as} also demonstrated the falsity of the belief that the Holy Quran is the word of the Holy Prophet^{sas} rather than of God. He explained that every word of the Holy Quran is the Word of God and that the Holy Prophet^{sas} was only the medium of the Divine revelation, not its author. It is wrong to think that, since human speech entails the use of lips and a vocal apparatus and since God cannot be said to possess such things, it is not possible for God to speak to a human being. The fact is that God is Unique. ²³ كَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ 'Nothing is like unto Him.' The powers and attributes of God cannot be understood in the context of human attributes. If it were not possible for God to reveal His Word without having lips and a tongue, then wouldn't it be equally true to say that nothing can be created without physical hands? Is God then not the Creator of the universe? Just as God created the whole universe without physical hands, so is He capable of revealing His words to His servant without the use of physical lips and a tongue. The Promised Messiah^{as} again cited his own experience and said that such misconceptions arose because of ignorance of the ways of God. He said that if God could reveal to him in actual words, then why could He not reveal to the Holy Prophet^{sas} who was the Chief of Mankind and the closest to God any man could be? Who would be more naïve than one who interferes in matters of which he has no knowledge and speculates about Divine secrets based on his own meagre understanding?

The Promised Messiah^{as} also refuted the belief that the Word

of God cannot be translated. He asked how the beauty and depth of the Holy Quran would be conveyed to people without conveying its meaning. To publish the translation of the Holy Quran alone is undoubtedly forbidden because it could lead to deviation from the original, but for people who do not understand Arabic, it is vital to give the translation alongside the Arabic text. At the same time, it is important to give currency to the Arabic tongue so that more and more people can read the Holy Quran in its original form and receive blessings that cannot be attained from reading the translation alone. At the very least, every Muslim should learn by heart portions of the Holy Quran that need to be recited in the five-time daily prayers.

The Promised Messiah^{as} likewise refuted the belief that the Holy Quran is a synoptic book that broadly outlines some teachings without giving the details. He proved with clear arguments that there is no book in the world as complete and comprehensive as the Holy Quran and that the fault lay with the people who had stopped trying to comprehend its meaning and striving to attain the purity without which its meaning cannot be fathomed, as Allah says of the Holy Quran:

لَا يَسْتَسْأَلُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ ۝²⁴

Which none shall touch except those who are purified.

The Promised Messiah^{as} told them not to ascribe their own lack of understanding to the Holy Quran, and then went on to derive all religious truths and verities from the Holy Book. He also refuted on the basis of the Holy Quran all the objections that are raised by the enemies of Islam. He proved that there is no Scripture more

clear and comprehensive than the Holy Quran in terms of moral, religious, and spiritual teachings. Its words are concise but encompass an ocean of knowledge. A single sentence can express tens or hundreds of meanings. Its teachings answer questions, remove doubts, and fulfil the needs of people of all times and ages.

The Promised Messiah^{as} also refuted the theory of *taqdim* and *ta'khir* and taught that every word of the Holy Quran is so appropriately placed that it is impossible to move it anywhere else. Some people, because of their lack of understanding, think that there is a need to change the order of words, but the fact is that each word is exactly where it should be and most appropriately conveys the beauty that God wanted to convey. The Promised Messiah^{as} illustrated this by presenting commentaries of various verses of the Holy Quran in a manner that it removed all doubt from the minds of those who had naively sought to change the order of their words.

The Promised Messiah^{as} similarly countered the assumption that the Holy Quran is full of ancient Israelite stories and fables. He said that if there appeared to be some similarity between the accounts told by the Holy Quran and the stories of the Israelites, it does not mean that they are the same. When the Holy Quran records those account in different words, this means that the Holy Quran does not accept the Israelite version. The Promised Messiah^{as} also made it clear that the Holy Quran is not a book of fables, and that if it contains some accounts of the past, they are meant as prophecies for the future. They foretell that the same things will happen to some among the Holy Prophet's ummah. Therefore, the true purpose of the Holy Quran is lost when people try to add ancient Israelites stories to commentaries of the

Quranic verses. The Holy Quran came to bear witness to earlier scriptures, not vice versa. We do not need the testimony of scriptures that contradict the Holy Quran. Instead, we need to understand the Holy Quran in the light of the Holy Quran itself. We should seek its meaning from within it, not outside of it.

The Promised Messiah^{as} also proved that the Holy Quran is a perfectly ordered and coherent Scripture. There is nothing random about its contents. From the very first letter to the last, its chapters and verses are organised in such an excellent and natural order that anyone who ponders over them is bound to go into ecstasy. The reader will not find such delight in the writing of any human being. Those who believe that the Holy Quran is a composite of random stories and topics have no insight into this peerless Scripture. They merely pride themselves on their ignorance and trust their lack of knowledge and draw false conclusions. The Promised Messiah^{as} demonstrated the perfect order of the Holy Quran with many examples and left the world marvelling.

The Promised Messiah^{as} also cited his own experience to refute the notion that God no longer speaks to man. He said that Divine attributes are never left in abeyance. If God sees and listens, as He did in the past, how come he has now stopped speaking? The Shariah is one thing and Divine revelation quite another. Revelation is an expression of God being pleased with His servant. To say that revelation has come to an end means that all the paths that lead to Divine approbation have been blocked. The truth is that the Divine word can never cease. As long as there are human beings in the world and as long as there are people who strive with sincerity for the realization of Divine pleasure and act on the teaching of Islam, God's Word will continue to be revealed.

In this way, the Promised Messiah^{as} removed the many misconceptions that had grown around Divine scriptures and had caused this pillar of faith to collapse. He placed this pillar on its true foundations. He disclosed the true nature and importance of Divine revelation and drew people towards them. He revealed the brilliance of the Word of God by removing the veils that the Muslims had placed on it on account of their ignorance. Even non-Muslims were bedazzled by the light of the Holy Quran.

The fourth pillar of faith in Islam is the belief in Prophets. This pillar, too, had been tarnished by Muslims who were unaware of the truth and estranged from spirituality. They not only distorted the form of this pillar but made it so repulsive that the hearts of Muslims became devoid of love for Prophets. The fact is that these so-called Muslims are primarily responsible for all the vile attacks that have been made on the character of the Holy Prophet^{sas} in this age. Truth be told, Christians and other critics of Islam do not fabricate lies against the Holy Prophet^{sas} as much as they base their objections on accounts that the Muslims themselves accept and relate in their gatherings and recount in their sermons. A Muslim who has the honour of his religion at heart is devastated to see that the enemies of Islam are attacking the person and character of the Holy Prophet^{sas} with weapons forged by Muslims themselves. It might seem that these attacks are exposing the moral weaknesses of the Holy Prophet^{sas} but, in fact, they only expose the hypocrisy of the attackers themselves.

Prophets come to the world to promote piety and purity and to bring guidance. However, in *faije-a'waj*, or the age of darkness, the Muslims started attributing to Prophets shortcomings that are repulsive even to hear. They recounted the sins of all Prophets,

from Adam to the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Adam was said to be a sinner because he disobeyed clear Divine laws. Noah was said to be a sinner because he prayed for his son even though he had been forbidden to do so. Abraham was said to be a sinner because he lied on three occasions—God forbid. Jacob was said to be a sinner because he deceived his dying father by putting on the guise of his elder brother in order to receive his father’s blessings. Joseph was said to be a sinner because he had intended to commit adultery with the wife of his Egyptian master, and only desisted from it when he saw the face of his father in a vision. It was also said that Joseph committed theft and indulged in intrigue to keep his brother with him. Moses was said to have killed a man without cause, thus committing a cardinal sin. He was also said to have made off with people’s belongings. David was said to have had a man killed so as to marry his wife and was reprimanded by God for this. Solomon was said to have fallen in love with a pagan woman. It was also said that Satan took control of Solomon’s mind and started to rule in his stead, that he was so infatuated with wealth and riches that he forgot to worship God, and that once when he was inspecting his horses he forgot to pray until the sun had set. As for the Holy Prophet^{sas}—to whom these people owe such a debt of gratitude that their heads should forever remain bowed before him, they attacked his character even more than the others and did not leave any aspect of his life untarnished. Some said that he wanted to appoint ‘Alī^{ra} as his successor but could not do so for fear of people. Some said that he became infatuated with his cousin Zainab^{ra}—God forbid—therefore, God caused her to be divorced so that the Holy Prophet^{sas} could marry her. Some said that he had secret relations with the slave-girl of one of his wives,

that he was remorseful when his wife found out and promised not to do it again, and also made her promise not to tell anyone about it. Some said that he sometimes wished that the teaching of Islam could be more relaxed to cater to the feelings of idolaters of Arabia as this would make it easier for them to accept the new religion.

These are the kind of beliefs that are prevalent among Muslims regarding Prophets. Some even went beyond criticizing the personal character of the Prophets and started attacking their religious status as well. They said that Prophets were merely patriotic people who knew that people could not be made to follow civilized norms without believing in things like the Day of Judgment and Heaven and Hell; therefore, in all good faith, they taught people some commandments in keeping with the needs of their time. It is said that the claim of the Prophets that they had received revelation from God was not true, but that they should still be revered because they had the best intentions at heart and gave excellent moral teachings.

Despite holding such beliefs, these people dare call themselves Muslims!

The Promised Messiah^{as} also presented to Muslims and others the correct teaching of Islam regarding these beliefs. He said that Prophets come to the world to establish godliness and to show their own example in this regard. If they did not show such an example, then what was the need for their coming? Would a revealed scripture alone not suffice? The reason why Prophets are sent is so that people can witness the practical demonstration of the teachings sent by God, and feel encouraged and inspired to walk in the same path, and are able to overcome their weaknesses by deriving strength from the holy influence of the Prophets.

The Promised Messiah^{as} taught that the reason people hold such misconceptions regarding Prophets is because of their lack of understanding, their failure to fathom the Divine word, and their eagerness to spread their half-baked ideas. All of God's Prophets are sinless. They are an embodiment of truth and devotion and a reflection of Divine attributes. Through their own purity and holiness, they point to the Purity and Holiness of God. They are like a mirror in which a sinner will often see a reflection of his own distorted self and naively attribute it to the Prophets.

Adam was no sinner. Abraham never lied. Joseph never resolved to do any evil deed, nor did he steal or fabricate. Moses committed no murder. David did not seduce another man's wife. Solomon never forgot his duty to God for the love of a pagan woman or his horses. Nor did the Holy Prophet^{sas} commit any sin, great or small. He was free from every fault and innocent of every evil. Anyone who points to a shortcoming in the Holy Prophet^{sas} only exposes the evil within himself. All the stories mentioned above were invented by hypocrites. They have no historical evidence to support them and are inconsistent with all the rest of the Holy Prophet's life. All such tales that are told regarding the Holy Prophet^{sas} or other Prophets were either deliberately invented by hypocrites or are the result of people's failure to understand the meaning and connotation of the Divine Word.

The Promised Messiah^{as} made it clear with arguments from the Holy Quran that all such beliefs are un-Islamic and that they have originated from Christianity. The Christians, in their zeal to establish the Divinity of Jesus, were wont to find fault with all other Prophets to show that Jesus was the only one without sin and, therefore, must be superhuman. This seems to be the reason

why, even among Muslims, faults are attributed to all Prophets, including the Holy Prophet^{sas}, while Jesus, and even his mother, are considered sinless. This should be proof enough that all these false and repugnant stories originated from Christianity. It is possible that Muslims became influenced by these ideas because they lived in proximity to Christians. It is also possible that some mischievous Christians outwardly accepted Islam and then started spreading these fabricated stories among Muslims. Early Muslim historians and collectors of Traditions, in their honesty, collected all such stories alongside the true ones so that every aspect should be available to the reader, but people of later generations, who had lost the light of faith, started accepting the stories that were contrary to the teachings of Islam while ignoring those that testified to the innocence and purity of the Prophets.

However, praise be to Allah, the Promised Messiah^{as} exposed all this falsehood, re-established the true status of Prophets, and undertook to safeguard their honour. In particular, he upheld the greatness of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, not just with claims but with powerful arguments that silenced the opponents. In the words of the Promised Messiah^{as}:

ہر رسولے آفتاب صدق بود ہر رسولے بود مہر انورے
Every Prophet was the light of truthfulness;
Every Prophet was a luminous sun.

ہر رسولے بود ظلے دکن پناہ ہر رسولے بود باغے مثرے
Every Prophet was like a divine shelter for the faith,
Every Prophet was a fruit-bearing orchard.

گر بدینا نامدے لیں خلیل پاک کار دین ماندے سراسر اترے
*Without the holy community of these Prophets,
 All objectives of faith would have remained unfulfilled.*

ہر کہ شکر بعث شان نارد بجا ہست او آلائے حق را کافرے
*Whoever is not grateful for their coming,
 Rejects the bounties of the Almighty.*

آں ہمہ ازیک صدف صد گوہر اند متقد در ذات و اصل و گوہرے
*They are a hundred pearls from the same shell;
 Equal in their person, essence and brilliance.*

اول آدم آخرِ شان احمدست اے خنک آخنس کہ پیند آخرے
*Adam was the first and Ahmad^{sas} the last;
 Blessed is he who recognizes the latter.*

انبیا روشن گہر سمستند لیک ہست احمد زان ہمہ روشن ترے
*All Prophets are luminous gems,
 But Ahmad^{sas} is the brightest of all.*

آن ہمہ کان معارف بودہ اند ہر کے از راہ مولیٰ مجرے
*Every Prophet was a treasure-house of knowledge;
 Every one of them a guide towards the Lord.*

ہر کہ راعلمے ز توحید حق ست ہست اصل علمش از پیغمبرے
*Whoever has any knowledge of Tauhid [Oneness of God],
 Owes this knowledge to one Prophet or another.*

آن رسیدش از ره تعلیم با گو شود اکنون ز نخوت منکرے
He has surely learnt it from their teachings,
Even if he arrogantly refuses to admit it.

ہست قومے کج رو و ناپاک رائے آنکہ نزن پاکان ہی پیچہ سرے
Those who have turned their backs on these holy ones
Are a lost and unholy people.

دیدہ شان رونے حق ہرگز ندید بس سیمہ کردند رونے دفترے
Even though their eyes have not seen the face of the Truth,
They write volumes upon volumes arguing about it

شور بنتے ہائے بختِ شان یہ بین ناز برچشم و گریزان از خورے
How unfortunate they are, taking pride in their eyes,
While turning their backs on the sun.

چشم گر بودے غنی از آفتاب کس بودے تیز بین چون شہرے
If eyes did not need the sun,
The bat would surely be the most sharp-eyed creature.

چون بروز ابتدا تقسیم کرد در میان خلق از خیر و شرے
That when He distributed good and evil among His creation,

راستی در حصہ او شان قتاد دیگرال را کذب شد آشخورے
To them alone did He grant truth; and falsehood to all others.

قول شان این ست کاندہ غیر شان آمدہ صد کاذب و حیلت گرے
They say that among other nations,

There have only come hundreds of liars and pretenders.

لعل تابان را اگر گوئی کثیف ندان چه کابد قدر روشن جوهرے
*If you call a brilliant ruby worthless,
 The lustrous stone will not be any the less precious for it.*

طعنہ بر پاکان نہ بر پاکان بود خود کنی ثابت کہ ہستی فاجرے
*Revilng the virtuous affects them not in the least,
 It only reveals your own wickedness.*

The fifth pillar of faith in Islam is the belief in the Hereafter and in Heaven and Hell. The Muslims did their best to bring down this pillar as well. Their hearts were definitely in denial of life after death, why else would they have so blatantly turned their backs on the teachings of Islam? Even on the physical level, strange concepts were being entertained. The idea of Paradise held by a Muslim reflected the fact that the true meaning of Paradise had been forgotten. Paradise to them was no more than a place of fun and pleasure. In other words, they thought that the purpose of man's existence was to go to a place where he would have plenty of food and drink and women and that if this was achieved then nothing more was wanted. However, Allah says in the Holy Quran that the purpose of man's creation is to worship Him (51:57). In other words, man should try to acquire Divine attributes because the Arabic word *al-'ubūdiyyah* also means to humble oneself and to accept the influence of another. It is, therefore, the height of naivety to think that man should only fulfil the purpose of his creation for fifty or sixty years and then spend an eternity eating and drinking and indulging his carnal desires. Similarly, Hell was

thought of as a place where God would subject evil-doers to eternal damnation and, like a cruel tyrant, never forgive them.

The Promised Messiah^{as} rejected these misconceptions and restored people's faith in the Hereafter through arguments and miracles. He expounded upon the ephemeral nature of this world and the excellence of the Hereafter and inspired others with the eagerness to act accordingly. He also undid the absurd notions about Paradise. He said that Paradise was not a mere metaphor, nor was it a place of physical delights that was only more stable and on a larger scale than the physical delights of this world. He said that the delights of Paradise are very different from those of the material world. The physical delights of the Hereafter are like the joy one derives from worship and good works in this life. In other words, what we call the soul in this world becomes the body in the next; and the soul of the next world is a more developed and a more advanced form of existence than anything we know of in this world. This can be likened to the man who develops out of the sperm but has far greater powers than the sperm.

Similarly, the Promised Messiah^{as} also proved that the punishment of Hell is not eternal and that it is bound to end sooner or later. It may last a long time but it is not forever, because Allah says: ²⁵ رَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ 'My mercy encompasses all things.' It is, therefore, contrary to His Majesty that He should subject someone to eternal damnation. Also, when the Holy Quran speaks of the bounties of paradise it describes them as ²⁶ غَيْرَ مَجْدُودَةٍ 'which shall not be cut off', and ²⁷ عَزِيدٌ مِّنْهُنَّ 'rewards unending'. However, the punishment of Hell is not described in the same way. Why should the readers of the Holy Quran not observe and heed this

difference? The Holy Prophet^{sas} himself said in explanation of the teachings of the Holy Quran about Heaven and Hell:

يَأْتِي عَلَى جَهَنَّمَ زَمَانٌ لَيْسَ فِيهَا أَحَدٌ وَ نَسِيمُ الصَّبَا تُحَرِّكُ أَبْوَابَهَا²⁸

A time will come when no one will be left in Hell, and the morning breeze will blow rattling its windows and doors.

In addition to the pillars of faith, there was also a lot of distortion in the practical aspects of Islam. Some had started stressing permissiveness and believed that so long as a person recited the *Kalimah*, ‘There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger’, he was free to do anything he liked. They said that if they did not sin, how then would the Holy Prophet^{sas} intercede on their behalf? Others preached that the Shariah is not the objective, it is rather like a boat that leads to God, and that once a person has found God he had no further use for religious ordinances.

Others thought that religious duties had been ordained as external symbols of internal states. They claimed that the external aspects of the law were stressed in the time of the Holy Prophet^{sas} because people at the time were uncultured and primitive, but since mankind has now evolved into a state of knowledge and understanding, it is no longer necessary to stick to those external formalities. If a person observes cleanliness, remembers God in his heart, cares for the community, helps the poor, is moderate in eating and drinking, participates in patriotic activities, etc., he has no need to observe the five-daily prayers or fasting, or give Zakat, or perform the Hajj.

Others go to the other extreme and say that Muslims are obligated to follow the example of the Holy Prophet^{sas} down to the

smallest details. If, for instance, the Holy Prophet^{sas} wore a certain type of dress or kept long hair, we should all do the same.

Some Muslims were of the view that the Holy Prophet^{sas} had no right to command us to do anything because he was just a man like us, and that the only teaching we need to follow is that of the Holy Quran.

Others were adamant that they would not accept anything that goes against the saying of certain holy men and that people are bound to follow them without question.

These were the generalities, but when we delve into the details we find even greater chaos. Some Muslims believed that the learning of other languages was sinful. Others had outlawed the acquiring of modern education. In contrast, there were those who allowed for the practice of usury even though the Holy Quran categorically forbids it and says: ²⁹فَأَذِنُوا يَحْرِبُ مِنَ اللَّهِ That is to say, the taking of interest is like going to war against God.

There is so much contrast in the beliefs of different groups of Muslims regarding prayer, fasting, inheritance, etc., that the truth has become wholly obscured. They hold on to some trivial point and declare it to be the pivot of Islam and quarrel with those who disagree. People who call themselves Muslim are known to have broken the fingers of fellow Muslims because they raised their index finger for *tashabhud*, or put filth in their mouth for having said *āmīn* aloud during congregational prayers. Thus, the practical aspect of Islam has suffered as much distortion and disfigurement as the doctrinal aspect.

The Promised Messiah^{as} also corrected these misconceptions. He disproved the notion of permissiveness and said that intercession is for those who do their best to avoid sin but still have some

shortcomings. It is not for those who deliberately continue to sin in the hope of attaining intercession. The purpose of intercession was to eradicate sin, not to promote it.

He also clarified that even though the Shariah is not the objective in itself, total obedience to God is the objective and, therefore, we must follow His laws and commandments. Finding God is not a finite objective that can be attained, after which one no longer needs to worship. The Holy Prophet^{sas}, to his dying day, was commanded to pray: **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ** ‘Only You do we worship’ and **إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ** ‘Guide us on the right path’. How can anyone else claim that he does not need to pray anymore? Those who think in this way consider God to be a finite goal, like the bank of a river, and try to hide their impiety under such false beliefs.

The Promised Messiah^{as} also pointed out that the laws of the Islamic Shariah are the best means to help man attain perfection. These laws are equally beneficial to people of every age and every civilisation. Spiritual progress is not possible without them. It is misleading to say that the laws of Shariah are no longer applicable or that they can be replaced by other acts and deeds.

The Promised Messiah^{as} also clarified the distinction between religious obligations and cultural or national norms and traditions. He said that, aside from the religious obligations, it is not permissible to oblige people to follow the cultural norms and customs followed by the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Even the Companions of the Holy Prophet^{sas} differed about those norms but they never criticised one another for doing so.

The Promised Messiah^{as} also repudiated the opinion of some people that since the Holy Prophet^{sas} is only a mortal like us, we are not obliged to obey him. He said that God’s Prophets are

endowed with a special understanding of God's Word. Believers are obliged to accept their interpretations of the Divine Word, otherwise, they are liable to imperil their faith.

The Promised Messiah^{as} likewise rectified the misconception that we are obliged to follow whatever some saint or godly person has taught. It may be necessary for people who cannot understand things by themselves to follow some godly person of whose truth and piety and knowledge they have become aware. It does not, however, mean that everyone should do the same despite possessing the ability to judge and understand. Those who possess knowledge and discernment are duty-bound to become cognizant of the principles of the Quran and Hadith and act upon them to the best of their understanding.

The Promised Messiah^{as} also exposed the fallacy of turning worldly issues into religious ones. He explained that all languages come from God and that one should learn whatever language one finds useful. He said that acquiring any kind of knowledge that benefits man physically, morally, intellectually, culturally, politically and spiritually is not only essential but merits Divine reward if used in the service of the faith.

The Promised Messiah^{as} similarly urged Muslims to avoid the practice of usury and explained that this prohibition was based on great wisdom and should not be violated for the sake of paltry worldly gains.

The Promised Messiah^{as} also clarified that religious teachings are of two kinds: the fundamentals and the details. The fundamentals of Islam are established by the Holy Quran. No disagreement is possible about them and anyone who wants can fully comprehend them. The details, on the other hand, fall

into two categories. The first are those regarding which the Holy Prophet^{sas} himself has directed that they be carried out in such and such a manner and forbade that they are done in any other way. In such instances, it is necessary to follow the way of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. The second category is where we have two or more varying accounts of actions of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, so that, from the very beginning, some Muslims have followed one way and others have followed the other. Regarding such matters, one should rest assured that both ways are correct and in keeping with the practical example of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. If this had not been so, some among his Companions would not have adopted one way and others another. The truth of the matter is that the Holy Prophet^{sas} permitted certain duties to be carried out in different ways depending on the nature and ability of the questioner. In other cases, he himself adopted different ways of doing a thing so as to leave no doubt that both are acceptable. A case in point is the raising of the hands at the time of *takbīr* during the Salāt. The Holy Prophet^{sas} sometimes did it and sometimes did not. Likewise, on occasions, people said *āmīn* aloud during congregational prayer and at times they did not, and the Holy Prophet^{sas} did not object to either. He also showed that folding the arms while standing in prayer could be done in different ways. In such cases, anyone who prefers a certain way of doing these things is free to adopt it, but he has no right to criticise others who have chosen to adopt the other way because they too are following another example of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. By laying down these principles, the Promised Messiah^{as} at once resolved all of the conflicts related to *fiqh* that had arisen among the Muslims and revived memories of the time of the Companions of the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

This is a brief description of the reformation brought about by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}. If this subject were dealt with in detail, it would require a whole volume by itself. You can judge from this short account as to how the Promised Messiah^{as} removed the errors that had crept into Islam with regard to its doctrines as well as the practice of religious obligations. He presented Islam to the world in its pristine purity so that friend and foe alike are now being drawn towards it and its spiritual power is starting to manifest once more.

Looking at the above examples of the numerous misconceptions that have found their way among Muslims in this age, you can realize that, in the presence of a Divinely protected book like the Holy Quran, Islam could not possibly undergo any further deterioration. It would only deteriorate further if the Holy Quran itself were to undergo some kind of change—God forbid! It is, therefore, impossible for the condition of the Muslims to get any worse. And if the inner deterioration of Islam has reached its peak, has the time not yet come for the Promised Messiah to appear? Moreover, when the Promised Messiah^{as} has already corrected the errors into which Muslims had fallen and removed the dangers to which Islam had become exposed, what then is the need for anyone else to come? Since Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib^{as} has already accomplished all the tasks that were meant to be carried out by the Promised Messiah, can there be any doubt that he is the Promised Messiah? When the sun is at the zenith, it is futile to deny its existence. Similarly, in the face of such clear arguments, it is futile to deny the truth that Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} is the Promised Messiah.

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Argument 6—Divine Help

The sixth argument for the truth of the Promised Messiah^{as} comprises many sub-arguments. Divinely ordained Prophets and Messengers are beloved of God, hence, the truth of a Prophet or Messenger is established if God is seen to treat them like those He loves, otherwise, they are deemed to be false. God would never send someone as His representative without giving him signs of His love and support. Earthly kings support their deputies and messengers and provide them with whatever help they need. Why would God not do the same for His Messengers when His knowledge and resources are infinite?

If a claimant to Divine prophethood receives help and support from God, then He is indeed true and righteous, because God would never abandon a righteous person. Contrarily, He will surely hold to account a liar and mischief-maker who seeks to lead mankind astray and will never help and support him. The Holy Quran says:

كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَأَغْلِبَنَّ أَنَا وَرُسُلِي ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ¹

Allah has decreed: ‘Most surely I will prevail, I and My Messengers.’ Verily, Allah is Powerful, Mighty.

This means that, as an expression of His power and dominion, God has decreed that He will cause His Messengers to prevail against others. If this were not so, people would doubt God’s Power and Majesty. The Holy Quran also says:

إِنَّا لَنُصِّرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ²

Most surely We help Our Messengers and those who believe, both in the present life and on the day when the witnesses will stand forth.

وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَلِّطُ رُسُلَهُ عَلَى مَن يَشَاءُ¹ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ³

But Allah grants power to His Messenger over whomsoever He pleases; and Allah has power over all things.

It is evident from these verses that God causes His Messengers to prevail over others, whether physically and spiritually, or only spiritually. The Holy Quran also reveals that false pretenders to prophethood cannot escape God's punishment. Allah says:

وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقَاوِيلِ¹ لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ² ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ⁴

And if he had forged and attributed any sayings to Us, We would surely have seized him by the right hand, and then surely We would have severed his life-artery.

In other words, God does not help and support such a person and he faces ignominy and ruin. We also read in the Holy Quran:

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ¹ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ²

And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah or gives the lie to His Signs? Surely, the unjust shall not prosper.

If the unjust cannot prosper, then how can one who lies about God and thus commits the worst kind of injustice ever prosper?

These verses show that God has made a two-fold decree. (1) He helps His Messengers and grants them supremacy. (2) Those who deliberately attribute lies to God are not helped by Him and are destroyed. Thus, what I had said earlier on the basis of reason is also supported by the eternal practice of God.

If we consider the claims of the Promised Messiah^{as} in the light of God's eternal practice and laws, his authenticity becomes as clear as day. Looking at the success of his mission, there can be no doubt whatsoever that he is a Messenger of God.

Before I proceed to show the different ways in which God helped him, it is necessary to ask:

1. What were the circumstances in which he made his claim, and what were the factors that would have helped him to succeed?
2. What were the hurdles in his path?
3. What was the nature of his claim? Was it of such an appealing nature that its success could be counted upon in the prevailing circumstances?

The answer to the first question is that he belonged to a noble family and that this had to be so because the Messengers of God always come from respectable families so that it may be easy for people to accept them. The Promised Messiah's family, however, had lost most of its former prosperity and influence. It could not be called a poor family compared with the other families of the area, but it was poor compared to its past political power, wealth and influence. The family's estate and property were almost gone; the former having been confiscated by the Sikhs, the latter by the British. Therefore, the Promised Messiah^{as} did not have the kind

of political or financial superiority that would have made people accept him for their own vested interests.

Even though his father arranged for tutors to teach him at home, this education was nothing compared to school learning and he was not recognized by religious clerics and scholars within or outside of his locality. Therefore, it cannot be said that people accepted him because he was respected as a religious scholar.

He also did not come from a family of *pīrs* (hereditary saints) or sufis. Nor had he been appointed a successor to a sufi. Thus it cannot be said that he succeeded because of the people who revered his family or because of help from his fellow *pīrs*. Nor did the Promised Messiah^{as} hold any prominent government position that he might have used to get people to follow him.

The Promised Messiah^{as} was a person of a retiring nature. He led a life of solitude and was not known even to the people of his own village. The few he had contact with were mostly orphans or the needy with whom he would share his meals. At times he would give away all his food and go hungry. The only other acquaintances he had were a handful of people with an interest in religious learning. No one else knew of him. He would not meet with people and people had no need to meet him.

The answer to the second question is that all possible hurdles were placed in his path. Since the Promised Messiah^{as} claimed to have been appointed by God, accepting him would bring an end to the power that the clerics had enjoyed over the masses for hundreds of years. For this reason, they were naturally antagonistic towards him. They saw his success as their defeat and his progress as their decline. They knew that if someone stood up for the

reformation of the world after being informed by God, no one would listen to their conjectures anymore.

The hereditary *pīrs* were antagonistic towards him because if his influence were to spread they would be certain to lose their followers. Instead of posing as religious leaders and guides, they would now have to become followers of another person. Loss of followers would also mean loss of income and livelihood, as well as the licence and freedom which they considered to be their birthright.

Wealthy people were also against the Promised Messiah^{as} because he taught observance of Islamic injunctions which these people were not used to and were considered by them to be a tedious burden. Also, the Promised Messiah^{as} taught sympathy for and kindness towards all mankind, therefore, the affluent classes feared that with the spread of his teaching people would become free of the yoke of servitude to them and their influence would wane.

Followers of other religions were also hostile towards him because in his person they could sense the demise of their own religions. Just as a lamb is instinctively fearful of the tiger, so did people of other religions feel threatened by him and they sought to put a stop to him at the earliest.

The rulers also did not have any sympathy for him because they were wary of the titles 'Messiah' and 'Mahdi' in their historical context. They thought that the bearer of these titles could only bring about chaos and disorder. Even his affirmations of loyalty to the government would not satisfy them because they thought these were only strategic ploys and that he might abandon the path of peace when he gained power.

Common people, too, were averse to him, because, firstly, they are mostly under the influence of clerics or *pīrs* or pundits or priests; secondly, they are wont to oppose everything that goes against their habits and customs owing to their lack of knowledge and understanding. In their eyes, his was a novel claim that was causing division among the Muslims. Their opposition was partly at the behest of their leaders and partly due to their own ignorance.

All these different classes tried their utmost to destroy him. The clerics issued Fatwas of *kufir* against him and went as far as Mecca and Medina to obtain signatures to attest to them. True to their custom, they invented strange excuses for labelling him a *kāfir* and inciting people against him.

The Sufi class also set their followers against him by declaring his teachings to be contrary to past teachings and by exaggerating their own claims to spiritual knowledge and closeness to God. Some didn't even desist from spreading false rumours and fabricating miracles. Some went to the extent of telling their followers that even if Mirza Sahib^{as} happened to be true in his claim, they need not worry, for they would bear the sin of their followers for having denied him. Thus, they kept their followers in darkness.

Men of wealth and means fought against him with their money and influence. Even people of other religions helped the Muslims oppose the Promised Messiah^{as}. The rulers used their authority to frighten people away from him and warned those who wanted to accept him of their displeasure. The masses helped their leaders through boycotts and other mischief.

In short, all people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, came together to oppose him and helped one another in this purpose.

The answer to the third question is that his teaching was not in keeping with the trends of his age. Had his teachings conformed with the current tendencies, it could be said that his success was not a result of Divine help but because what he taught conformed to the prevalent thinking and people readily accepted them. Current tendencies can be of two kinds. They are either the tendencies of the majority or, even if they are not, they conform to the new discoveries. The first kind are easily propagated. The second kind may face opposition in the beginning, but since they conform with new discoveries, they find currency later on as that knowledge spreads.

The teachings of the Promised Messiah^{as} were contrary to both. They were neither in keeping with current tendencies nor in accord with the thought that was gaining momentum under the influence of modern secular knowledge. He had to battle against traditionalists as well as modern thinkers. While the former labelled him a heretic, the latter saw him as narrow-minded and conservative. On the one hand, he vociferously countered the beliefs of the traditionalists on matters such as the life of Jesus, their faith in false and superstitious tales, their misconceptions about angels and abrogation of parts of the Quran, their erroneous beliefs about Heaven and Hell, and their fundamentalist mindset; on the other hand, he stressed the importance of religious teachings, such as the prohibition of usury, the existence of angels, the efficacy of prayer, the truth of Heaven and Hell, and the validity of revelation and miracles. The result was that he agreed with neither the conservatives nor the modernists. Therefore, it would be wrong to assume that he gained popularity because he

represented the prevalent mindset or the mindset that was soon going to become popular.

The long and short of it is that his personal status was not such as would lead people to flock to him, nor was his path strewn with roses so that he could achieve his purpose effortlessly, nor did he represent the thinking of the people to whom he gave his teachings so that they would readily follow him. If he succeeded despite all these hurdles, it was definitely a result of Divine help and support and cannot be attributed to material circumstances.

I will now proceed to describe the successes achieved by the Promised Messiah^{as}. I have already described Allah's affirmation in the Holy Quran that He does not grant respite to anyone who deliberately attributes lies to Him. In the case of the Promised Messiah^{as}, we find that he lived for up to 40 years after claiming to be the Reformer of the age and he continued to receive all kinds of Divine help. If it were possible for an impostor to be given so much respite and be saved from ruin and even be helped by God, then we would have to allege that the criterion laid down in the Quranic verse, **وَكُنتُمْ أَكْثَرُ مُنْكَرٍ ۚ لَوْلَا رِزْقٌ مِّنَّا لَكُنْتُمُ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۗ لَآخِذْنَآ مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِيْنِ ۗ ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِيْنَ** "And if he had forged and attributed any sayings to Us, We would surely have seized him by the right hand, and then surely We would have severed his life-artery," was false and that it could not even serve as a proof of the truth of the Holy Prophet^{sas} himself—God forbid! If this assumption is wrong, and it most definitely is wrong, then in keeping with this criterion, the fact that the Promised Messiah^{as} lived a long life after publishing his revelations is proof that he was sent by God.

At the time when the Promised Messiah^{as} published his Revelations, he was hardly known to anyone. And yet, despite

strong opposition, he won such honour and esteem that even his enemies are now obliged to respect him and he is considered an important Muslim leader. The British Government, which initially opposed him and was suspicious of him, also started to accord him respect. His name spread to the furthest corners of the world and God has blessed him with devoted followers who are ready to give their lives for him. Even among the Europeans, who are hostile to Islam, many have become Muslims through him and love him ardently. One European gentleman wrote to me saying, 'I am indebted to the Promised Messiah^{as} for the gift of Islam. It has such a profound effect on me that I do not go to sleep without offering *durūd* upon the Holy Prophet^{sas}.' Had Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib^{as} been an impostor, he would never have received such love and devotion from people despite all the opposition.

When the Promised Messiah^{as} announced his claim, he was all alone, but even though the clerics and *pīrs*, pundits and priests, the rich and the poor, and even the government in the initial days, did their best to stop people from heeding his call, one by one they started to be drawn towards him. He found followers from among the rich and the poor, the clerics and the sufis, Muslims and non-Muslims, Indians and non-Indians, so that at the time of his death his followers numbered in the hundreds of thousands and they continue to increase to this day. Even in your own country of Afghanistan—where two of our devoted members were brutally killed merely for their faith at the instigation of the mullahs—our Community continues to grow and our members are found in almost every Afghan province, as well as in Arabia, Iran, Russia, Egypt, Africa, Australia, America, and Europe.

People belonging to the ruling powers came to pledge

obedience to one of their subjects and accepted a religion against which they had been prejudiced for generations. Surely, this could not have come about without Divine succour.

People tried to assassinate and poison the Promised Messiah^{as} and false lawsuits were lodged against him. Christians, Muslims and Hindus all joined ranks to somehow crucify this second Messiah, just as they had done with the first, but in every instance, it was he who came out safe and victorious, and signs of God's help and support for him continued to multiply.

The purpose of his advent was the revival and propagation of Islam. For these two great objectives, God gave him a sincere following as well as the required resources. Currently, the Community spends up to five hundred thousand rupees in the service of the faith each year. Newspapers and magazines are published to spread Islam in Punjab, Bengal, Ceylon, Mauritius and America. Hundreds of books have been written in his support. God inspires people to help him and reveals his truth to thousands through dreams, revelations and visions. Even in the face of severe opposition, God instilled his love in people's hearts.

In a nutshell, despite facing every kind of opposition and being most vulnerable, and despite the daunting nature of his task, the Promised Messiah^{as} succeeded in his mission. He created a Community whose members are spread all over the world and carry in their hearts the zeal to spread Islam. God also blessed him with honour and wealth and influence.

If the Divine law is true that a true claimant receives God's help and a pretender suffers disgrace and destruction, then there can be no doubt that Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib^{as} is true in his claim. If there are still doubts about his claim despite this argument,

then what, one might ask, is the proof of the truth of all the other Prophets?

Let me clarify that I am not saying that the Promised Messiah^{as} was true because he was weak and alone in the beginning and then acquired honour and fame, because such honour is achieved by many. For example, Nadir Shah was a shepherd and he became very famous, Napoleon had humble beginnings and he became a conqueror, and yet none of this proves that they were chosen by God or loved by Him. What I am saying is:

1. The Promised Messiah^{as} made the specific claim that he had been sent by God. Had he been false in this, he should have met with disgrace and even death, because it is God's eternal practice that he destroys those who attribute lies to Him.
2. There were no worldly means at his disposal through which he could have achieved success.
3. People from all walks of life and all religions were opposed to his claim and there was not one whose help he could count on to succeed.
4. He taught things that were alien to both the conservatives and the modernists.
5. Despite all the above, he succeeded in founding a Community and having his teachings accepted. He also remained safe from the attacks of his enemies and was continuously blessed with signs of Divine help.

These five qualities cannot be found in an impostor. Whoever possesses these qualities has to be from God and has to be righteous;

otherwise, there would be no way of proving the truth of a truthful claimant.

This criterion, however, does not apply to those who do not claim any spiritual status, such as Nadir Shah or Napoleon. It also does not apply to those who do not lay claim to a spiritual office but make other claims, such as the claim of being God, or similar insane assertions. Nor does it apply to those who regard their own speech to be the speech of God, such as the Shaikhiya sect. They thought that at all times there were men in the world who could be said to represent the will of the Mahdi, and that since the will of the Mahdi is the Will of God, whatever they spoke or whatever thoughts they had would be from God. 'Alī Muhammad Bāb, and Bahā'ullāh, the founder of the Bahā'i faith, both belonged to this sect. Since these people hold it as a matter of faith that whatever they say is from God, they cannot incur the penalty laid down by the *Quran* for people who deliberately ascribe lies to God.

Similarly, this criterion will not prove the truth of a claimant who attains temporary success because of personal influence, or because he is supported by some group or faction, or because he represents the views of the masses, or because he invites people to the modern way of thinking, or because he is not opposed by people for some other reason.

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Argument 7—Vanquishing of the Opponents

The seventh argument, which is also a composite of many arguments, is that God destroyed all the Promised Messiah's enemies, and this happened without the involvement of any human agency. We know that when someone hurts those near and dear to us, we fight them and punish them; when someone becomes an obstacle in our path, we remove them. Similarly, when God sends someone to this world, it is reasonable to expect that He should take measures to safeguard them, remove those who become obstacles in their path, humiliate those who try to humiliate them, and frustrate those who try to defeat them. If God did not do so, there would be no proof that He even cares for His Messengers, and thus their claims would forever remain in doubt. Even earthly kings and rulers, with their limited powers, stand by their friends and deputies and punish those who try to stand in their way and seek retribution from those who oppose them.

A study of the Holy Quran confirms the dictate of reason that the enemies of those who are sent by God must be held to account. The Holy Quran says:

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ^١

And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah or gives the lie to His Signs? Surely, the unjust shall not prosper.

This verse makes it clear that in the same way as those who forge lies against God can never prosper, so it is that those who oppose the teachings of those sent by God are bound to be frustrated. Again, the Holy Quran says:

وَلَقَدْ اسْتَهْزِئُوا بِرُسُلِ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ۝ قُلْ
سَيُرَوُّوا فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ انظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ ۝²

And surely have the Messengers been mocked at before you, but that which they mocked at encompassed those of them who scoffed. Say, 'Go about in the earth, and see what was the end of those who treated the Prophets as liars.'

There are so many verses to this effect in the Holy Quran that there is no need to stress this point any further. These verses clearly speak of the eternal Divine practice that He destroys those who oppose His Messengers so that they may serve as an example for others.

The Promised Messiah^{as} received the following revelation to this effect: 'I shall humiliate him who designs to humiliate you.'³ In keeping with this special promise, the fate of the Promised Messiah's enemies was such that the mention of them leaves people amazed.

I have already mentioned a renowned Maulawī and leader of the *Ahle-Hadīth* sect who had known the Promised Messiah^{as} from early childhood and had written a glowing review on his book *Barāhīn-e-Ahmadiyya*, describing his services for Islam to be without a parallel in the whole history of Islam. However, the

moment that Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} announced his claim of being the Promised Messiah^{as}, this same Maulawī became infuriated. He thought that his review had caused Mirza Sahib^{as} to become proud and to think excessively of himself. He went so far as to write that he was the one who had promoted Mirza Sahib^{as} and that he would be the one to bring him down.

With this intention, he travelled throughout India and had scores of clerics put their signatures to a Fatwa of *kufir* against the Promised Messiah^{as}. This Fatwa said that not only was Mirza Sahib^{as} *kāfir* but that his followers were also *kāfir*, that anyone who even talked to them was a *kāfir*, and that whoever did not consider them *kāfir* was also a *kāfir*. This Fatwa was printed and published throughout the country. Having done this, the Maulawī thought that he had succeeded in demeaning the Promised Messiah^{as}. Little did he know that in heaven angels were calling out:

فَوَاقِقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخَرُوا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ⁴

That which they mocked at encompassed those of them who scoffed.

أَنْتَ مُهَيِّنٌ مَّنْ أَرَادَ إِهَانَتَكَ⁵

I will humiliate him who seeks to humiliate you.

Not a long time had passed after the publication of this Fatwa when the popularity of this Maulawī started to wane. Previously, he had been held in such high esteem that when he passed through the streets of Lahore, everyone would stand up in

respect, including Hindus and people of other faiths. Everywhere he went he was greeted with reverence and even the Governor-General would receive him with courtesy. After the publication of the Fatwa, his status started to decline for no apparent reason. It ultimately reached the point where people of his own denomination, of which he had been a leader, abandoned him. I have myself seen him at a railway station carrying his heavy baggage under his arms and on his back and being shoved around by the crowd. No one cared who he was. People became so distrustful of him that tradesmen and shopkeepers refused to give him anything on credit and he had to make his purchases through other people. His private life was also in shambles. Some of his sons and wives refused to see him, while one of them left Islam and became an apostate. Before he died, this Maulawī had lost every vestige of honour and self-respect. Indeed, every moment of his final days was a testimony to the truth of the verse:

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ انظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكذِّبِينَ

Say, 'Go about in the earth, and see what was the end of those who treated the Prophets as liars.'

Another example of the ignominy suffered by his enemies is that of Chirāgh Dīn of Jummu. This man was among the followers of the Promised Messiah^{as}, but later claimed that he had himself been sent to reform the world. He published many books and articles against the Promised Messiah^{as}. Not being content with this, he prayed against the Promised Messiah^{as} and intended to have this prayer published. The prayer was as follows:

O God, this man [Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}] is the cause of grave mischief in Your religion. He warns people that the plague has come on account of him and that the earthquakes are the result of a denial of his claims. O God, prove him a liar. Remove the plague, so that the lie becomes evident, and cause the truth to become distinguished from falsehood.⁷

This prayer was sent for printing, but how the Hand of God seized him! The prayer had not yet been pressed on the printing stone when the plague—which had been described by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib^{as} as a Divine Sign, and for the disappearance of which this Maulawī had addressed this prayer to God—seized him and his family. First, his two sons, who were his only offspring, died. Then his wife ran away with another man. Then he himself fell a victim to the plague and died. His dying words were, ‘Now even God has abandoned me.’ The death of Chirāgh Dīn of Jammu is a powerful testimony to the fact that hostility towards men of God is no small matter, for sooner or later it brings Divine punishment.

There were scores of others who offered similar *mubāhalah* prayers against the Promised Messiah^{as} and were soon seized by God. One of these was Maulawī Ghulām Dastgīr of Kasūr, a renowned and influential scholar belonging to the *Hanafi* school of thought. He also prayed against the Promised Messiah^{as} and invoked Divine punishment upon whoever was the liar. Within a few months, this Maulawī died of the plague and became a warning for others.

Another example is that of Faqīr Mirza of Dulmial. He started saying that God had told him that Mirza Sahib^{as} would be dead by 27th of Ramadan, 1321 A.H. He put this into writing and handed copies of it to members of the local Community. The note said that if Mirza Sahib^{as} did not die by the date specified, or if his Movement did not come to an end, then he would be willing to suffer any punishment. He also had many people sign this statement as witnesses. This claim was made on the 7th of Ramadan. The 27th of Ramadan came and went but nothing happened, and no wonder, for the words of liars cannot affect the truthful. When Ramadan came the following year, the plague visited Dulmial and the first life it claimed was that of Faqīr Mirza's wife. Then he himself contracted the disease and died in great agony on 7th of Ramadan, 1322 A.H., exactly a year to the day he had made his announcement. A few days later his daughter also died.

Examples of this kind, if they were to be compiled, would run into thousands. There were indeed thousands of men who, having been defeated in argument, became adamant and started praying for the destruction of the Promised Messiah^{as}, and they were all held accountable by God. The strange thing is that these signs of disgrace and ignominy were manifested in many different ways. For example, those who prayed that the liar may die in the lifetime of the truthful one died during the life of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Others, who said that a longer life was no proof of truth and cited the example of Musaylimah al-Kadhhdhāb who lived long after the Holy Prophet^{sas}, such people were granted respite and ended up like Musaylimah, the pretender.

An example of this was Maulawī Thanāullāh of Amritsar, editor of the weekly *Able-Hadīth* and a recognized leader of the

Ahle-Hadīth sect, who exceeded all bounds in his opposition to the Promised Messiah^{as}. The Promised Messiah^{as}, therefore, challenged him to a *mubāhalah* (prayer duel) in keeping with the Quranic verse:

فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَابْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ۗ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ ۗ

Now whoso disputes with you concerning him, after what has come to you of knowledge, say to him, ‘Come, let us call our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, and our people and your people; then let us pray fervently and invoke the curse of Allah on those who lie.’

Maulawī Thanāullāh saw that this *mubāhalah* did to augur well for him and so he declined to accept it despite repeated invitations. The Promised Messiah^{as} then wrote out a prayer and proposed that the Maulawī Thanāullāh should publish it in his *Ahle-Hadīth* publication. In this prayer, the Promised Messiah^{as} invoked Almighty God to decide between him and the Maulawī in such a way that the liar should die in the lifetime of the truthful one. Even this was refused by Maulawī Thanāullāh. Instead, he started writing in his publication that this was no criterion for judging the truth of anyone. He said that even the Holy Quran says that the liar is given a longer respite and that Divine law also testified to this because Musaylimah lived on after the Holy Prophet^{sas}. The result of this announcement was that God held the Maulawī culpable by his own criterion. God gave him a long life so that he outlived the Promised Messiah^{as}. Thus, in keeping

with his own writing, every day that he lived was a testimony that he was akin to Musaylimah.

God destroyed or debased the enemies of the Promised Messiah^{as} according to the criterion they had accepted. Those who accepted the criterion that the liar dies in the lifetime of the truthful one were killed during the Promised Messiah's lifetime, while those who insisted that a liar can outlive the truthful one were given that respite. The fact that among the enemies of the Promised Messiah^{as} we find the likes of both Abū Jahl and Musaylimah shows the degree to which the Promised Messiah^{as} reflected the image of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. It also serves as proof that what befell the enemies of the Promised Messiah^{as} was a deliberate act of God and not mere chance or accident. Had all this been mere coincidence, how did everyone meet his end according to the criterion of his own choosing?

Aside from those who died as a result of *mubāhalah* or praying against the Promised Messiah^{as}, so many other afflictions befell those who opposed him that they have no parallel in history. This does not require much elaboration because every country and every nation has witnessed plagues, earthquakes, influenza outbreaks, famines, or wars, that have destroyed whole towns and regions.

Some of the calamities that befell individual opponents were of the kind whereby they fell victim to the same misfortune that they had wished on the Promised Messiah^{as}. For instance, those who claimed that the Promised Messiah^{as} suffered from leprosy, themselves fell victim to leprosy. Those who claimed that he had died or would die of the plague, succumbed to the plague. Dr Abdul Ḥakīm Khān of Patiala predicted that the Promised

Messiah^{as} would die of lung disease; it so happened that he himself died of tuberculosis. There are indeed hundreds of such examples. Anyone who honestly ponders over these signs of Divine wrath that were shown in favour of the Promised Messiah^{as} will come to have complete faith in God as being 'Severe in punishment'. He will also have no choice but to believe that the Promised Messiah^{as} was a true servant of God, which is why God demonstrated His concern for his honour and continues to do so to this day.

References

- ¹ *Sūrah al-An'ām*, 6:22
- ² *Sūrah al-An'ām*, 6:11–12
- ³ *Tadhkirah*, p. 27, 4th edition, 2004; English rendering, 2018, London, p. 43
- ⁴ *Sūrah al-An'ām*, 6:11
- ⁵ *Tadhkirah*, p. 27, 4th edition, 2004; English rendering, 2018, London, p. 43
- ⁶ *Sūrah al-An'ām*, 6:12
- ⁷ *Ḥaqīqatul-Wahī*, Rūḥāni Khazā'in, vol. 22, pp. 390–392; English rendering, *Ḥaqīqatul-Wahī*, London, 2018, pp. 476–479
- ⁸ *Sūrah Āl-e-Imrān*, 3:62

Argument 8—Adored by Angels

We know from the Holy Quran that God created Adam and commanded the angels to prostrate before him. Prostration (*sajdah*) is a form of worship and it is not permissible to offer it to anyone or anything other than God, neither to Prophets nor even to Muhammad, the Chief of the Prophets^{sa}. Not only is it not permissible, it is a mortal sin and anyone guilty of it is deprived of God's grace. Therefore, the word *sajdah* in this verse cannot mean 'to worship'. It is also wrong to say that this was permissible in earlier times and forbidden afterwards, because *Shirk* is not the kind of sin that can be allowed at one time and disallowed at another. *Tauhid* is the most fundamental of principles and it can never be altered. If we were to assume that it was allowed at that time and forbidden later, then Satan would be entitled to claim that God ultimately had to accept what he had been saying all along, which was that it is not permissible to prostrate to anyone other than God.

Since prostration to anyone other than God has never been and can never be permissible, the Divine command to the angels to prostrate before Adam has to have another meaning. According to the Arabic lexicon, another meaning of *sajdah* is 'obedience'. In the Arabic lexicon *Lisānul-'Arab*, we have:

He who shows perfect obedience to another may be said to have performed *sajdah*.¹

The command to angels to perform *sajdah* to Adam was but a

command to obey him. The obedience of angels to a man means that they help him in his objectives. Nor is this command specific to Adam, for it is given regarding every Prophet who appears in the world. Indeed, if angels are not given this command concerning a person, he cannot be accepted as a Messenger of God.

We find numerous instances in the life of the Holy Prophet^{sas} where angels came to help him succeed in his objectives. For example, in the Battle of Badr the enemy was struck with inordinate fear. When the Holy Prophet^{sas} threw a few pebbles at them, a fierce wind started to blow towards them. During the Battle of Aḥzāb, strong gusts of wind caused the fire of one of the enemy chiefs to blow out, causing the enemy to panic and flee. When a Jewish woman tried to poison the Holy Prophet^{sas}, he was given knowledge of this beforehand.

The help of angels usually comes through the laws of nature. Since angels are the first cause of all natural laws, they put these laws to work in favour of the Prophets when they are confronted with the enemy. This is why even when the apparent conditions are against the Prophets, the result is always in their favour. This serves as additional proof that these men are true in claiming that they have been sent by God.

The Promised Messiah^{as} was similarly blessed with help from the angels. They saved him from difficulties in extraordinary ways and employed the laws of nature to serve him. One day, the Promised Messiah^{as} was sleeping under the same roof with others belonging to various religions. He suddenly woke up and felt that the roof of the house was about to collapse, even though there was no apparent cause for such a concern. He woke up the others who were sleeping and told them to vacate the house, but they did

not listen to him and went back to sleep saying that there was no danger. After a while, the Promised Messiah^{as} again had the same feeling and this time he insisted that everyone vacate the house. They got up reluctantly and grumbled that he was troubling them for nothing. The Promised Messiah^{as} felt that the house was only waiting for him to vacate it before it collapsed. Therefore, he did not come out of the house until all the others had vacated it. No sooner had he stepped out than the roof came crashing down. All those present were filled with amazement and were deeply grateful to the Promised Messiah^{as} for having saved their lives.

It also happened sometimes that, when faced with an illness, certain drugs would appear before him in a kind of vision and make their effect known. Drugs are lifeless substances that cannot act on their own and it is the angels who, being the first cause, give medicines their efficacy. One day, when the Promised Messiah^{as} was severely ill and no medicine seemed to be working, a substance appeared before him in a vision and said, ‘Your servant, peppermint’² As soon as peppermint was administered, it resulted in an immediate cure.

Sometimes the enemies of the Promised Messiah^{as} plotted to assassinate him and sent men for that purpose. Often the Promised Messiah^{as} would be informed of their coming beforehand. At other times angels would strike the hearts of such men with fear—as happened with the infidels in the Battle of Badr—and they would end up pledging allegiance to the Promised Messiah^{as}. Like Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra}, those who had been enemies became devoted followers.

The greatest sign of help by angels appeared at the time of the plague. Later on, I will elaborate on how the plague came about

in keeping with the prophecies of the Promised Messiah^{as}, but for the moment I would like to say that the plague was shown to the Promised Messiah^{as} in the manner of an elephant wreaking havoc in the world;³ but after bringing about great death and destruction, the elephant came and sat respectfully before the Promised Messiah^{as}. This vision meant that the angels of the plague had been commanded to help the Promised Messiah^{as}. There were also other revelations to this end, such as: ‘Do not threaten us with fire, for fire is our servant and, indeed, the servant of our servants.’⁴

On receiving these revelations, the Promised Messiah^{as} declared that he and his followers would remain comparatively immune from the deadly effects of the plague. It might affect some individuals, but their case would be like that of the handful of Muslims who were martyred fighting the infidels at the time of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, while the enemy suffered far greater losses. The Promised Messiah^{as} also declared that, compared to other towns and villages, Qadian would remain safe from the ravages of the plague and that his own household would remain immune from it.⁵

After these announcements were made, the plague spread throughout India wreaking great havoc and killing hundreds of thousands every year. Even though the Promised Messiah^{as} had forbidden his followers from getting inoculated against the plague—which was considered to be the only remedy against the deadly epidemic—his followers suffered far fewer fatalities as compared to others. This went on for several years and people could not help but wonder how the virus would spare Ahmadis while infecting others. Thousands accepted the Promised Messiah^{as} as a result. In fact, the great majority of those who became Ahmadis

during the life of the Promised Messiah^{as} did so after witnessing this sign. They were amazed at how the virus could distinguish between those who believed in Mirza Sahib^{as} and those who did not.

Many of the Promised Messiah's arch-enemies died of the plague but his own Community remained largely safe. Even though the plague continued to spread in the land for many years, the followers of the Promised Messiah^{as} remained safe, which shows that the angels of the plague had been commanded to work for him and against his enemies in keeping with the above-mentioned vision and the revelation, "Fire is our slave, even the slave of slaves." In this manner, the angels continued to fulfil their obligation towards the Prophets.

Qadian also experienced far fewer instances of the plague than other towns. It only affected Qadian for three years while in other places it lasted for up to ten years or more.

In the case of his household, the protection of the angels was most evident. For three years the plague continued to strike the neighbours to the right and the left and both sides suffered fatalities, but his household which consisted of about a hundred individuals, remained safe. Let alone the members of his family, not even a mouse was killed within his household, even though mice are the first to die in this kind of plague. This is an extraordinary sign that should be sufficient for every reasonable person. If the angels were not helping him, then what was it that caused the laws of nature—which even kings cannot control—to help and serve the Promised Messiah^{as}? Doctors who adopted all kinds of precautionary measures continued to fall victims to the plague. Those who lived in clean suburban areas could not escape it. Even those

who got inoculated were not immune to it. Yet, the members of his household remained safe, even though they had adopted no precautionary measures and did not leave their houses to live in open spaces. Even the animals living in the house were not affected. The household was not a small one, to begin with, but during the plague, many more people had sought shelter within its walls.

If the plague had not appeared in Qadian at all or had not affected his neighbourhood, all this could have been put down to chance, but the fact that the plague appeared in Qadian and affected the Promised Messiah's^{as} neighbourhood but did not affect any person or even a creature living in his household, and the fact that all this happened after he had announced the prophecy that angels would make the plague subservient to him, undeniably proves that angels had been commanded to obey him and to help him and that they employed all the natural causes under their control to protect him.

That natural causes were made subservient to him is established through many other examples but I believe the above instances will suffice to open the reader's eyes to the truth of these miracles and to the fact that one who is granted such help and protection can never be a liar and impostor.

References

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- ² *Tadhkirah*, p. 443, 4th edition, 2004; English rendering, 2018, London, p. 719
- ³ *Tadhkirah*, p. 352, 4th edition, 2004; English rendering, 2018, London, p. 584
- ⁴ *Tadhkirah*, p. 324, 4th edition, 2004; English rendering, 2018, London, p. 537
- ⁵ *Kashtī-e-Nuh*, Rūḥāni Khazā’in, vol. 19, pp. 4–5; English rendering: *Noah’s Ark*, London, 2018, p. 2

Argument 9—Gift of Special Knowledge

The ninth argument, which is also a compendium of many arguments, is that God revealed to the Promised Messiah^{as} extraordinary knowledge that is beyond the power of man to attain on his own. Prophets are sent to the world to lead mankind to the fountain without which spiritual life cannot be sustained. Their purpose is to establish a link between man and God—the Source of all life. But this cannot be achieved without spiritual knowledge. Only he can attain nearness to God who has spiritual knowledge, is cognizant of the paths that lead to God, and has deep insight into the nature of God and His attributes. Only he can guide others in spiritual matters who himself has substantial knowledge of them.

No one can make good his claim of having been sent by God unless he partakes of God's limitless knowledge and God Himself nurtures him and grants him wisdom and understanding. Let us now use this criterion to judge the claim of the Promised Messiah^{as} and see what knowledge God blessed him with. The Holy Quran says:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا^١

And He taught Adam all the names.

'Names' here means Divine attributes, for knowledge of Divine attributes encompasses all knowledge. Divine knowledge means

the knowledge of Divine attributes as it pertains to observation and experience. This knowledge is given to all who are sent by God. We read of the Prophet Lot:

وَلُوطًا آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا²

And to Lot We gave wisdom and knowledge.

And of David and Solomon:

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا³

And We gave knowledge to David and Solomon.

And of Joseph:

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا⁴

And when he attained his age of full strength, We granted him judgment and knowledge.

And of Moses:

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَاسْتَوَىٰ آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا⁵ وَكَانَ لَكَ نَجْمُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And when he reached his age of full strength and attained maturity, We gave him wisdom and knowledge; and thus do We reward those who do good.

Of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, we read:

وَعَلَيْكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُنْ تَعْلَمُ⁶ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا

And He has taught you what you knew not and great is Allah's grace on you.

And then God promises to bestow knowledge and teaches the prayer:

وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

O my Lord, increase me in knowledge.

What all these verses show is that Divine Messengers are granted special Divine knowledge. Accordingly, the Promised Messiah^{as} was also blessed with knowledge from God. The only difference is that while past Prophets were only blessed with spiritual knowledge, the Promised Messiah^{as}—in his capacity as a servant of the Holy Prophet^{sas}—was blessed with both implicit and explicit knowledge. In other words, he was not only gifted with spiritual knowledge but also with the ability to communicate it eloquently. God so distinguished him that no one could surpass him in either attaining spiritual knowledge or in communicating it.

Of the two kinds of knowledge, I will first take up explicit knowledge. The only person who was given this miracle before him was the Holy Prophet^{sas}, and it was not given to any other Prophet. Allah says the following regarding the Revelation that descended upon the Holy Prophet^{sas}:

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ ۚ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِمَّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ⁸

And if you are in doubt as to what We have sent down to

Our servant, then produce a Chapter like it, and call upon your helpers beside Allah, if you are truthful.

This verse describes the Holy Quran as being unique and peerless. One of its unique qualities is the beauty of its language and its eloquence, which Allah also points to in the verse:

كُتِبَ أَحْكَمَتْ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُضِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ ٩

This is a Book whose verses have been made unchangeable and then they have been expounded in detail. It is from One Wise, and All-Aware.

That is to say, this Book comes from God who, being All-Wise and All-Aware, could only reveal a Book that was full of wisdom. He is also All-Knowing, which means that He is aware that the age of reason is about to dawn and that it would require intellectual miracles. For these reasons, He made the Holy Quran an eloquent Book that explains itself and is a witness to its own excellence.

Since the Promised Messiah^{as} was like a disciple and a reflection of the Holy Prophet^{sas} and partook of his master's light, Allah also blessed him with the gift of eloquence. I have already stated that the Promised Messiah^{as} did not have any formal education. He was home-schooled by some regular tutors who taught him portions of the textbooks that were current at the time. He never travelled to Arabia or lived in cities where Arabic was in vogue. He only acquired as much knowledge as would be possible in a rural area while studying common books.

Then, when the Promised Messiah^{as} announced his claim and sought to bring about a reformation, the first thing his critics

thought of was to attack his lack of learning. They described him as a *munshī*, or a half-educated scribe who, having gained some experience in writing and scholarship and having written some articles that had won him some acclaim, now thought that he was somebody and had started making lofty claims. They wasted no opportunity of telling people that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} did not know Arabic and, therefore, was not qualified to give an opinion in religious matters. However, this assertion that the Promised Messiah^{as} did not know any Arabic was completely wrong because he had studied the standard Arabic textbooks, even though it was true that he did not study Arabic at any recognized institution or have a formal degree in the language and could not be counted among its notable scholars or bear the title of Maulawī. When this criticism had spread far and wide and the mullahs started trumpeting it in and out of season, God taught the Promised Messiah^{as} 40,000 root words of Arabic in a single night and blessed him with the miraculous ability to write books in Arabic. God also promised him such eloquence in Arabic that no one would be able to compete with him in this regard. Accordingly, the Promised Messiah^{as} wrote an article in Arabic and published it along with his book *Ā'inā-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām*. He then challenged his critics to produce something better if they could, but no one came forth. He then went on to write about 20 books in Arabic. In some of these books, he promised rewards of up to Rs. 10,000 to anyone who could write something equal to them in eloquence. Still, no one took up the challenge. Some of the books were addressed to Arabs but even they fled from the field. One of them was addressed to Syed Rāshīd Razā, editor of *Al-Manār*, and he was given the same challenge, which he refused to accept.

Indian clerics showed their defeat by claiming that these books had not been written by the Promised Messiah^{as} at all and that some Arab secretly wrote them for him. This made it clear that they did not doubt the quality of Arabic work, only they didn't believe that the Promised Messiah^{as} could have written it himself. In response to this, the Promised Messiah^{as} said that his opponents could get help from Arabs or Syrians and write something of equal merit but no one took up the challenge and the books remain without parallel to this day.

Besides these written Arabic works, the Promised Messiah^{as} was once commanded through revelation to deliver a sermon in Arabic, even though he had never made a speech in Arabic.¹⁰ *Eīd-ul-Adhā* was due the next day and, in keeping with this revelation, the Promised Messiah^{as} delivered a lengthy sermon in Arabic which has been published under the title *Khuṭbah Ilhāmīyyah*. This sermon was so eloquent that Arabs and non-Arabs marvelled at it. It contained truths and verities that further increased its magnificence.

This intellectual miracle was outstanding, first, because this kind of miracle is superior to those that only impress the immediate beholders; secondly, because it was admitted even by the opponents. This miracle shall last as long as the world lasts. Like the Holy Quran, it will forever shine bright as a testimony against the opponents.

Some critics, when they find no way of rejecting this miracle, allege that such a miracle is derogatory to the Holy Quran which claims that its own language and eloquence is without parallel. Therefore, to say that God gave Mirza Sahib the ability to write books that were without parallel is to undermine the Holy Quran

and its claim of being peerless. This objection is based on sheer prejudice. If they gave even the slightest thought to the matter, they would realize that the fact that the Promised Messiah^{as} wrote books that were without parallel does not at all detract from the superior and peerless status of the Holy Quran, rather it enhanced it. Superiority is of two kinds: absolute and relative. Absolute superiority stands by itself and needs no comparison. Relative superiority is only in comparison with other things. An example of this is found in the Holy Quran which says of the Israelites:

وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ¹¹

I exalted you above all peoples.

And then concerning the Muslims, it says:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ¹²

You are the best people, raised for the good of mankind.

In the first instance, it declares the Israelites to be superior, and in the second it gives superiority to the Muslims. This appears to be a contradiction but there is no contradiction. In the first instance, the superiority is only over the people of that particular age, while in the second instance the superiority is above all ages, past and future. In the same way, the superiority of the books of the Promised Messiah^{as} is in relation to the works of human beings, whereas the superiority of the Holy Quran is above all human works and above all other divinely revealed works—which include the books and sermons of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Thus, the unique nature of the Holy Quran is absolute, while the

uniqueness of the books of the Promised Messiah^{as} is relative. Therefore, while this miracle is a powerful sign and argument, it does not in any way detract from the glory of the Holy Quran.

I have said that the miracle of the writings of the Promised Messiah^{as} has reinforced the miracle of the Holy Quran. This may be explained as follows. Uniqueness can be of different levels. One level of uniqueness is whereby a piece of writing may be superior to others but the difference may not be too significant. For example, a horse might win a race by an inch or by several yards. In the same way, a literary work that claims to be unique might be superior to others to a greater or lesser degree. If writings can be found that are superior to other human writings but are inferior to the Holy Quran, this will establish the superiority of the Holy Quran above all other books. Since the Promised Messiah^{as} surpassed all others with his writings but the Holy Quran surpasses even his writings, this incontrovertibly establishes the Holy Quran as vastly superior to all literary works.

Besides the gift of mastery of the Arabic language, the Promised Messiah^{as} was also blessed with the unique insight that Arabic is the mother of all languages. This was a great and amazing discovery because at that time European scholars, after laborious research, were pointing to either Sanskrit or Pahlvī as the source of all languages. Some scholars thought that the original language had become extinct and that Sanskrit and Pahlvī were branches of that language. This was the prevalent opinion among European scholars. The Arabs, on the other hand, were completely unaware of the uniqueness of their own language and, in deference to European scholars, were looking at other languages as the source language. It was in these circumstances that the

Promised Messiah^{as} was informed by God that Arabic itself was the root of all languages. It was a strange discovery indeed but it came clear after deliberation that the Holy Quran testified to this, for one good reason: since the Holy Quran is addressed to the whole world, it should have been revealed in a language which, being the source of all languages, would be the language of the whole world. Allah says:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رُسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهِ¹³

And We have not sent any Messenger except with the language of his people.

Since the Holy Prophet^{sas} was a Prophet to all humankind, the guidance received by him should have been in a language which, being the mother of all languages, could be called the language of the whole world. Since the Holy Quran was revealed in Arabic, Arabic has to be the mother of all languages.

In support of this discovery, the Promised Messiah^{as}, having been informed by Allah, laid down some general principles which prove that Arabic is indeed the mother of all tongues and that no other tongue can claim this distinction. The Promised Messiah^{as} had intended to write a book on the subject but, unfortunately, it remained incomplete. He did, however, lay down the basic principles through which the world can become cognizant of this truth. God willing, I will write a book based on the principles laid down by the Promised Messiah^{as} and prove the truth of this claim with detailed arguments. I will also show how this claim is supported by the science of language developed by European linguists and also where they have been mistaken. This is such a unique discovery

about the Arabic language that it will completely transform people's view of Islam and bring glory to this great religion.

Besides these intellectual gifts which the Promised Messiah^{as} received so abundantly from God, he also received the spiritual gifts that are the special prerogative of Prophets. In this respect, too, his opponents could not compete with him. As I have said, the Promised Messiah^{as} did not bring a new Shariah. He only came in fulfilment of earlier prophecies to serve and propagate the religion of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. To teach and spread the Holy Quran was his mission. No new knowledge can come from heaven after the Holy Quran, for it encompasses all knowledge. There can be no new teacher after the Holy Prophet^{sas}, for anyone who comes after him will only come to renew his teachings. A revelation of the Promised Messiah^{as} says:

كُلُّ بَرَكَتٍ مِّنْ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَتَبَارَكَ مَنْ عَلَّمَ وَتَعَلَّمَ¹⁴

All of this blessing is from Muhammad, on whom be the peace and blessings of Allah. Greatly blessed is he who taught this servant of God, and greatly blessed is he who was taught.

The revelation describes the relationship between the Holy Prophet^{sas} and the Promised Messiah^{as}, the master and the disciple.

As the final word on spiritual truths has been revealed in the Holy Quran, those who are now appointed to any spiritual office can only have the gift of special knowledge of the Holy Quran itself, and no other. Their authenticity will be gauged by the fact that God will grant them a vast knowledge of the Holy Quran. Such knowledge will not be based on reasoning and deduction

but will be distinguished by insights into the attributes of God and the many stages of spiritual development. The Promised Messiah^{as} received such abundant knowledge of the Holy Quran that it would not be an exaggeration to say that the Holy Quran was revealed once again in his time. Indeed, it would be in accord with a Hadith wherein the Holy Prophet^{sas} says:

لَوْ كَانَ الْإِيمَانُ مُعَلَّقًا بِالنُّجُومِ لَنَا لَهُ رَجُلٌ مِنْ فَارِسٍ¹⁵

If ever the faith disappears to the Pleiades, a man of Persian origin will bring it back.

This Tradition relates to the Promised Messiah^{as} who was Persian by descent.

I will first address that aspect of the knowledge of the Holy Quran given to the Promised Messiah^{as} which so profoundly helped Islam against other religions that, all at once, the victors became vanquished and the vanquished became the victors. The Holy Quran, that had hitherto been considered a dead book, came alive and the enemies dispersed at the sight of its brilliance.

Before the advent of the Promised Messiah^{as}, Muslims generally believed that the truths of the Holy Quran had been explained once and for all by earlier Muslim scholars and commentators of the Holy Quran. It was thought that nothing new could now be derived from it and that it was futile, and even dangerous, to reflect on the Holy Quran anymore. The Promised Messiah^{as}, however, was assured by God that just as the material world bears infinite secrets, so does the Word of God contain infinite knowledge and wisdom. If the housefly, which might be categorized as one of the most humble of creations, has secrets that continue to

reveal themselves in every age and we learn more and more about its physical properties and behaviour, and the same is true of the tiniest of plants, why should the Word of God be so limited that new knowledge and wisdom could be derived from it only for a limited time before its treasures became exhausted?

God's Word should possess far greater depth and meaning than His physical creations. If the world is discovering new knowledge every day, science and philosophy are constantly expanding their horizons, and new sciences, such as geology, archaeology, physiology, botany, zoology, astronomy, political science, political economy, sociology, psychology, ethics, etc., are being discovered or have progressed exponentially compared to past ages, then is it possible that the Word of God should fail to give its readers new knowledge and insights and remain stagnant for hundreds of years?

The current lack of interest in religion and in God and His teaching results, directly or indirectly, from the progress of modern science and philosophy. If the Holy Quran is, in fact, the Word of God, then, alongside the progress of science and philosophy, it should have revealed new insights that would either show the error of these sciences with befitting arguments or prove that the doubts created by them are only due to lack of deliberation and understanding.

Having laid down this general principle, the Promised Messiah^{as} established with arguments that the Holy Quran speaks about the progress and conditions of this age and even focuses on some specific aspects of it. Muslims of past ages, being unaware of the discoveries of this age, did not understand these prophecies and thought that they were descriptions of the Day

of Judgement. For instance, the following verse contains many signs of this age:

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ ۖ وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ ۖ وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ ۖ وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ
عُظِّلَتْ ۖ وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ ۖ وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ ۖ وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ ۖ وَإِذَا
الْبُوعُودُ سُيِّدَتْ ۖ بِأَيِّ ذُنُوبٍ قُتِلَتْ ۖ وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ نُشِرَتْ ۖ وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ ۖ وَإِذَا
الْجَحِيمُ سُعِّرَتْ ۖ وَإِذَا الْجَنَّةُ أُزْلِفَتْ ۖ¹⁶

1–2: When the sun is wrapped up; And when the stars are obscured;

3: And when the mountains are made to move. (Innovations will be made through which mountains will be cut down and tunnels will be built through them.)

4: And the she-camels, ten months pregnant, are abandoned. (The time will come when new modes of transport will be introduced and the camels will no longer be valued as before.)

5: And when the beasts are gathered together. (People will become like beasts owing to their lack of religious knowledge. Likewise, it means that people who had previously been considered barbarians—such as the Europeans were up to about 700 years ago when the Asian civilisations were more advanced—will spread out and take over the nations of the world. It also means that some barbarian nations (such as the natives of Australia and America) will become almost extinct.

6: And when the seas are made to flow forth, one into the other. (Canals will be made to flow from the seas.)

7: And when the people are brought together. (Such means of communications will appear that people living in far off

countries will come in close contact with one another. For instance, people living thousands of miles apart can talk to each other through the telephone, and innovations like the railway train, telegram and postal services have made the whole world like a single city.)

8-9: And when the girl-child buried alive is questioned about the crime for which she was killed. (It will not be permissible to bury a person alive. Laws will not allow such practices to continue and religious edicts in this regard will not be accepted.)

10: And when books are spread far and wide. (The publication of books and magazines in this age is indeed mind-boggling.)

11: And when the heaven is laid bare. (Secrets of the heavens will be revealed through astronomy as well as through the understanding and spread of the knowledge of the Holy Quran.)

12: And when the fire of hell is set ablaze. (With the advent of new knowledge and sciences, people will become averse to religion and their hearts will become devoid of faith. Easy access to luxury and means of pleasure-seeking will also corrupt people's hearts.)

13: And when the Garden is brought near. (God's grace will also be in full flow and Paradise will be brought closer to mankind. This means that at a time when sin and mischief are rife, God will bring about the means to replenish people's faith and to reveal the beauty and excellence of His religion. It will thus become easier for people to do the deeds that will earn them Paradise.)

Are not these signs of our own time? Is it possible to apply these signs to any other age or era? Just because the first verses speak of the wrapping of the sun and the obscuring of the stars does not mean that all these events will come about on Doomsday. Many of the signs that follow have no connection to Doomsday at all. The chapter goes on to say that when that time comes, she-camels will be abandoned. Can this be a sign peculiar to Doomsday? No, because on that day not only camels but everything (animals, human beings, near and dear ones, father, mother, sons, daughters, wives, brothers, sisters) will be abandoned. Likewise, what does the splitting of oceans, or the meeting of seas, or the questioning about the girls who were buried alive have to do with Doomsday? We know that the Reckoning will take place after the raising of the dead and not at the time of universal chaos and destruction. The verses which follow the verses already quoted also indicate that all the events that have been foretold will take place in this world:

وَاللَّيْلُ إِذَا عَسَّسَ ۖ وَالصُّبْحُ إِذَا تَنَفَّسَ ۗ¹⁷

And I call to witness the night as it passes away and the dawn as it begins to breathe.

This is a description of the alternation of night and day. If the first verse regarding the wrapping of the sun referred to Doomsday, then what would be the meaning of the alteration of day and night? In short, none of the signs in this chapter refers to Doomsday. Instead, they accurately depict the state of the world today with the prevalence of sin and materialism, as well as God's great blessings. These prophecies, and how they have come to be

fulfilled word for word, refresh the faith of a believer and remove all doubts and misgivings.

This is just one example of the Quranic prophecies about the current age that were revealed to us by the Promised Messiah^{as} or have been derived by his followers in keeping with the principles taught by him; otherwise, the Holy Quran is full of so many prophecies regarding the upheavals of the present time that even the most hardened critic, if he studies them closely, would admit that the Holy Quran is the Word of God and that nothing of the past, present or future is hidden from it. However, going any further into these examples will cause us to deviate from the purpose of this epistle and unnecessarily prolong it.

The second fundamental discovery about the Holy Quran that we owe to the Promised Messiah^{as} is that the Holy Quran never makes a claim without providing arguments thereof. This discovery opened a new door to the understanding of the Holy Quran. When the Holy Quran was studied with this principle in mind, it was discovered that thousands of its claims—that had hitherto been accepted on trust because they were the Word of God—actually came with their own reasoning and arguments. The result was that the human mind which, owing to advances in knowledge and science, was no longer ready to accept anything on authority, became excited at the fact that the Holy Quran also provided rational arguments for its claims. Instead of viewing it as something that had been imposed on them, they now saw it as a friendly guide. With the same principles, the Promised Messiah^{as} derived from the Holy Quran such powerful arguments for the existence of God that even modern science could not reject them.

As a result, many educated atheists are returning to the belief in God.

Similarly, the Promised Messiah^{as} answered all the objections against the angels on the basis of the Holy Quran. The need for Prophets and the criteria for their authenticity, proof of the Day of Judgment, the purpose and value of good deeds, the hazards of sinful ways and the need to keep away from them, and other important subjects were addressed by the Promised Messiah^{as} with the help of rational and historical arguments from the Holy Quran. He proved that modern science and philosophy cannot undermine the Word of God. He told us that God's Word and His creation could never contradict one another. Anything that contradicts God's creation cannot be His word, and the Word that is His can never contradict His creation.

The result of these discoveries by the Promised Messiah^{as} is that today his Community is the only one that is not only fully committed to acquiring modern knowledge but also has the strongest faith in the principles and teachings of the Holy Quran. Nor is this faith rooted in political expediency or ancestral affiliation or obeisance to tradition; it is rooted in the deepest conviction. His followers can prove the truth of the teachings of the Holy Quran through reason and argument, whereas people belonging to other Muslim sects, being unaware of these principles, have either rejected modern knowledge to save their faith or have been so overawed by it that they have practically given up their faith. They may outwardly profess faith but their hearts are full of doubts and misgivings regarding the teachings of Islam.

The third fundamental discovery about the Holy Quran which we owe to the Promised Messiah^{as} is that if human reason

casts any doubt or suspicion on any part of it, the answer lies within the Holy Quran itself. The Promised Messiah^{as} explained this principle at great lengths and gave answers to all kinds of objections about the teachings of the Holy Quran. He didn't just say that something was wrong because it had been rejected by the Holy Quran, rather he proved his point with arguments which, though derived from the Holy Quran, were rational and intellectual in nature so that people of all faiths and denominations had to accept them.

The fourth principle revealed to the Promised Messiah^{as} regarding the Holy Quran was its superiority above all other Divine scriptures. Whereas this claim had always been made by Muslims, they had not been able to prove it with any arguments. The Promised Messiah^{as} proved it, once again, through the Holy Quran itself, and he did it so comprehensively and convincingly that one's heart involuntarily goes out to the Holy Prophet^{sas} through whom mankind received this precious gift.

The fifth principle that was revealed to the Promised Messiah^{as} regarding the Holy Quran was that it had different levels of meaning. Whatever the intellectual level or understanding of the readers, they will find in the Holy Quran the teaching that is true and relevant for them. The words are the same but the meaning is different for different people. A man of ordinary understanding will discover in those words a teaching so simple and convincing that he will not find it at all hard to understand and believe. One endowed with average intellect will find in the same words a meaning appropriate to his understanding and experience. One of higher intellect will find in it a higher meaning. Those of low intellect will not find the Holy Quran beyond their understanding,

nor will those of high intellect find it uninteresting or incapable of fulfilling their higher intellectual needs.

The sixth principle revealed to the Promised Messiah^{as} regarding the Holy Quran was that, in addition to spiritual knowledge, it also imparts necessary knowledge about the material realm. As this knowledge is being revealed more and more with time, people's faith also continues to be revived and strengthened in every age.

The seventh principle imparted to the Promised Messiah^{as} was one through which we can interpret the Holy Quran without falling into error. When these principles are employed, they reveal new insights into the teachings of the Holy Quran and the reader experiences a new ecstasy each time he reads the Word of God.

The eighth basic principle imparted to the Promised Messiah^{as} was regarding all the stages of spiritual progress that have been described in the Holy Quran. People had discovered some of this knowledge through their own study and reflection but sometimes they would be mistaken. The Promised Messiah^{as} was given knowledge of them from the Holy Quran and it was revealed to him that the Holy Quran has enumerated all the stages of spiritual progress, from the lowest to the highest, and that by following these steps anyone can reach God and enjoy the fruits of faith along the way. This knowledge was not available to the people of the past because, even though they derived some of this knowledge from certain verses of the Holy Quran, they were not holistically aware of all the steps of spiritual progress described in the Holy Book.

The ninth principle disclosed to the Promised Messiah^{as} was that the whole of the Quran—its every verse, chapter, and

sentence—was revealed in perfect order. Such is the perfect arrangement of its contents that other books and scriptures pale in comparison. Other books are arranged only with the view that one subject should follow another in an orderly manner. The arrangement of the Holy Quran, on the other hand, is such that not only are its contents perfectly ordered but they remain so even when they are viewed from various angles. One may start a commentary from any valid point of view and the whole text will go along with that. This quality is never found in the works of mortals.

The tenth principle revealed to the Promised Messiah^{as} was that the Holy Quran contains a systematic account of the various degrees and stages of good and evil. The Holy Book tells us what virtues lead to what other virtues, and what vices lead to what other vices. Knowledge of this kind is of inestimable value in reforming one's morals. With the gradual increase in knowledge one is able to acquire virtues and get rid of bad habits in a way that had not been possible before. The good life grows by stages and each stage can be defined and described. Thus the Promised Messiah^{as} revealed yet another miracle of the Holy Quran in that it informs man of the fountains from which good and evil flow, so that he can quench his thirst or avert a deluge that would inundate him.

The eleventh point revealed to the Promised Messiah^{as} was that *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* contains a complete summary of the Holy Quran and lays down its basic teachings in a nutshell. He wrote many detailed and comprehensive commentaries on this short chapter and derived amazing and faith-inspiring points from it. He thus made the task of the defence of Islam much easier,

because when one gets lost in the details it is easy to find guidance by going back to the synopsis. The Promised Messiah^{as} proved that this chapter alone was enough to counter all other religions of the world and that it reveals to us all the stages of spiritual development.

These are some of the basic principles regarding the Holy Quran that were revealed to us through the Promised Messiah^{as}. In addition to these, a twelfth principle pertains to the translation and meaning of various verses in keeping with the requirements of the current age. If these are to be described in detail, they would fill many volumes. These fountains of knowledge prove that the Promised Messiah^{as} had a special relationship with the All-Knowing One who is the Source of all knowledge and regarding whom the Holy Quran says:

وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ¹⁸

And they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He pleases.

Man can never acquire such knowledge through his own intellect, but when we read the Holy Quran with these principles in mind, we discover limitless oceans of knowledge.

The Promised Messiah^{as} repeatedly drew the attention of his opponents to the verse:

لَا يَمَسُّهَا إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ¹⁹

None shall touch it [the Holy Quran] except those who are purified.

He said that if he was an impostor then why was it that he had been blessed with such deep knowledge of the Holy Quran? He invited all the great religious scholars of his time to match their understanding of the Holy Book against his. He suggested that an arbitrator draw a passage out of the Holy Book and hand it to him and to whoever comes forward to compete with him. The two should then write a commentary on the verses that conforms to the latest advances in knowledge. In the end, the arbitrator should decide who had been helped by God in this writing. Despite repeated calls, no one dared take up the challenge. Nor could they do so, for they cannot even compete with his followers when it comes to knowledge of the Holy Quran. It would appear that the Holy Quran now exclusively belongs to us.

Before concluding this topic, I will produce here a few Persian verses of the Promised Messiah^{as} in which he invites people towards the delights of the Holy Quran:

از نور پاک قرآن صبح صفا دمیدہ بر غنچہ ہائے دلہا باد صبا وزیدہ
*The holy light of the Quran has ushered in the dawn of a
 bright morning,*

*The fresh morning breeze is blowing over the blossoms of the
 heart.*

لے روشنی و لمعال شمس الضحیٰ ندارد دلے دلبری و خوبی کس در قر نیدہ
*No one has witnessed such light, such brilliance, even in the
 midday sun,*

*Nor has anybody beheld such charm and beauty in any moon-
 lit night.*

یوسف بقعر چاه مجوس ماند تنها دلائل یوسفی که تن با از چاه برکشیده
Yūsuf [Joseph] fell into the well all alone,
But this Yūsuf [i.e., the Quran] has rescued countless souls
from the pit [of misguidance].

از مشرق معانی صدها دقائق آورد قرّ بلال نازک زان نازکی خمیده
The Quran has brought with it hundreds of verities from the
Source of Truth,
The fragile new moon is bowed down to show its respect.

کیفیت علومش دانی چه شان دارد؟ شہد یست آسمانی از وحی حق چمیدہ
How would you know the true grandeur of the Quran's
teachings,
It is the heavenly honey that drips down from Divine
Revelation.

آل نیز صداقت چوں رو بعالم آورد ہر بوم شب پرستے در کج خود خزیدہ
Ever since this sun of truth rose in the world,
The owls who worship darkness hid away in their holes.

روئے یقین نہ بیند ہرگز کسے بدنیہ الا کسے کہ باشد با رویش آرمیدہ
No one sees the face of certainty,
But he who loves the face of the Beloved.

آں کس کہ عالمش شد، شد مخزن معارف داں بے خبر ز عالم کیں عالمے ندیدہ
He who acquires the knowledge of the Quran, himself becomes
a treasury of knowledge,
He who has not seen this teacher knows nothing of this world.

بارانِ فضلِ رحمن ، آمد بمقدم او بد قسمت آنکه، از وے سوتے دگر دودیدہ
The rain of divine grace comes to guide such a person,
But wretched is he who runs away from it.

میلِ بدی نباشد، الا رگے ز شیطان آل را بشر بدانم، کزہر شرے رہیدہ
The inclination towards evil is a satanic trait;
A true human, I say, is one who is delivered from all evils.

اے کان دلربائی ، دانم کہ از کجائی تو نورِ آں خدائی، کیس خلق آفریدہ
O treasure of beauty, I know whence you came,
You are the light of God, who created all creation.

مسلیم نمائد باکس محبوب من تویی بس زیرا کہ زالِ فغاں رس نورت بما رسیدہ
I have forsaken all else, you alone are now my beloved,
For you are the light that has come to us from the Lord who
answers our supplications.²⁰

References

- ¹ *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:32
- ² *Sūrah al-Anbiyā'*, 21:75
- ³ *Sūrah an-Naml*, 27:16
- ⁴ *Sūrah Yūsuf*, 12:23
- ⁵ *Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ*, 28:15
- ⁶ *Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:114
- ⁷ *Sūrah Tā Hā*, 20:115
- ⁸ *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:24
- ⁹ *Sūrah Hūd*, 11:2
- ¹⁰ *Al-Ḥakam*, May 1, 1900, p. 5, vol. 4, no. 16
- ¹¹ *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:48
- ¹² *Sūrah Āl-e-Imrān*, 3:111
- ¹³ *Sūrah Ibrāhīm*, 14:5
- ¹⁴ *Tadhkirah*, p. 194, 4th edition, 2004; English rendering 2018, London, p. 897
- ¹⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābut-Tafṣīr, Hadith no. 4897
- ¹⁶ *Sūrah at-Takwīr*, 81:2–14
- ¹⁷ *Sūrah at-Takwīr*, 81:18–19
- ¹⁸ *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:256
- ¹⁹ *Sūrah al-Wāqī'ah*, 56:80
- ²⁰ *Barāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya*, Rūḥāni Khazā'in, vol. 1, pp. 304–305; English rendering: *Barāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya (Part III)*, London, 2018, pp. 244–246

Argument 10—Prophecies

The tenth argument, which is also a compendium of thousands of arguments, is that God granted to the Promised Messiah^{as} abundant knowledge of His secrets, which proves that he had been sent by God because Allah says in the Holy Quran:

فَلَا يُظهِرُ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِي أَحَدًا إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ¹

He reveals not His secrets to any one, except to him whom
He chooses, namely a Messenger of His.

A person who is constantly apprised of matters of the unseen, and receives clear and pure Revelation that is free from all ambiguity, and is blessed with luminous signs, and is given knowledge of momentous events before they happen, has to be from God. To reject such a person amounts to denying the Holy Quran which gave us this criterion, as well as all the Prophets who presented this criterion as proof of their claim. Even the Bible says that the sign of a false prophet is that what he claims to have been told by God does not come true.² When we examine the claim of the Promised Messiah^{as} in the light of this criterion, his truth shines forth like the noonday sun. He was favoured by knowledge of the unseen so abundantly and so consistently that, excepting the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sas}, the prophecies of other Prophets pale in comparison. Of these prophetic signs, I will now cite 12 examples.

The prophecies of the Promised Messiah^{as} were of many kinds. They related to political changes, social developments, cosmic events, religious affairs intellectual activities, continuation or

cessation of progenies, terrestrial upheavals, relations between nations, relations between rulers and their subjects, the success of his mission, the defeat and destruction of his enemies, the nature of things to come, and much more. An exhaustive list would be too long indeed.

I will now describe 12 of these prophecies that have already been fulfilled. The first relates to Afghanistan.

(1) Afghan Martyrs

The martyrdom of Sahibzadah Syed Abdul Latif and Maulawī Abdur Rahman of Afghanistan and the events that followed.

Your Majesty! May God keep you under His protection and save you from the negative consequences of actions in which you played no part. About forty years ago, the Promised Messiah^{as} received the following revelation:

شَاتَانِ تُذْبَحَانِ وَكُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ³

Two goats will be slaughtered, and there is no one on the earth who can avoid death.

The word *shatān* (two goats) can be interpreted in two ways: it can either mean women, or it can mean loyal and obedient servants. If we take it to mean women, this makes little sense in the context of being slaughtered. The only other meaning then is that two men—who would be extremely loyal to their King and would not be guilty of any offence against the State and certainly not

deserving the death penalty—would be put to death and that this would be followed by death and destruction in the land. Even though the revelation does not mention the country in which this will take place, the words clearly make the following points:

1. It will not take place under the dominion of the British but rather in a country where even law-abiding citizens are liable to be killed if they incur people's wrath.
2. The men who would be thus killed would be from among the followers of the one making the prophecy; otherwise, there would be no point in specifying two victims.
3. The killing would be unjustified and not a penalty for any political crime.
4. As a result of this unjust killing, a general calamity would visit the land.

These four points make the prophecy very different from ordinary prophecies. No one can say that the prophecy is vague as it does not specify the name of the country. The four points which the prophecy entails prove its authenticity because they cannot all come about just by coincidence.

For about twenty years after this prophecy was published, there were no signs of it coming true, but soon events started to unfold that brought about its fulfilment in a phenomenal way. It so happened that someone took some books of the Promised Messiah^{as} to Afghanistan and gave them to a renowned religious scholar, Sahibzadah Syed Abdul Latif of Khost, who was held in his esteem by all classes in Afghanistan, and was revered for his piety and purity by devoted friends and followers, among

them members of the ruling family. After studying the books, Sahibzadah Sahib concluded that the Promised Messiah^{as} was true in his claim and sent one of his disciples to Qadian to make further enquiries and authorized him to pledge allegiance to the Promised Messiah^{as} on his behalf. The name of the disciple was Maulawī Abdur Rahman. He travelled to Qadian and took the oath on his own and his mentor's behalf. He then returned to Afghanistan with more books of the Promised Messiah^{as} and decided to first visit Kabul where he could convey the message to the King.

As soon as Maulawī Abdur Rahman reached Kabul, some naive and mischievous individuals incited Amir Abdur Rahman Khan against him. They said that this man was an apostate who had abandoned Islam and deserved to be put to death. They coaxed the Amir into signing an edict of death and Maulawī Abdur Rahman was killed in the cruelest manner. Abdur Rahman had loved his King so much that, instead of returning to his own home, he had come to convey to him the glad-tidings of the coming of the Messiah, but was rewarded by being strangled to death. This had been destined because God had foretold of it twenty years earlier. He thus became the first of the two men mentioned in the prophecy.

A couple of years later, Sahibzadah Syed Abdul Latif left Afghanistan with the intention of performing the Hajj. Having already pledged allegiance to the Promised Messiah^{as}, he decided to visit Qadian and from there to proceed to Mecca. However, when he came to Qadian, he found much more than he had learned from the books, and his pure heart was so drawn towards the Promised Messiah^{as} that he gave up his intention of going for

the pilgrimage to Mecca and instead stayed on in Qadian. He returned to Afghanistan a few months later intending to share the great gift with the King. Reaching Khost, he wrote letters to four prominent courtiers in Kabul. After receiving these letters, the courtiers set Amir Habib Ullah Khan, Your Majesty's father, against Sahibzadah Sahib. They made many false allegations and persuaded the Amir to arrest Sahibzadah Abdul Latif. Accordingly, orders were sent to Khost and Sahibzadah Sahib was arrested and brought to Kabul. He was then handed over to the mullahs but they could not find anything against him. Then some individuals, more selfish than patriotic, told Amir Habib Ullah Khan that if Sahibzadah was set free and his influence was allowed to spread, people would lose their ardour for Jihad and this would harm the state of Afghanistan. Consequently, Sahibzadah Sahib was ordered to be stoned to death. Amir Habib Ullah Khan, out of feeling for the Sahibzadah, repeatedly asked him to recant his faith and save himself but Sahibzadah Sahib replied that, having found true Islam, he could not now become a disbeliever. He said that he would never turn back from that which he had accepted as true. When it was seen that Sahibzadah Sahib would not recant, he was taken out of the capital and stoned to death before a large crowd.

A loyal and self-sacrificing subject became the victim of self-serving intriguers. They had deceived the Amir when they told him that if the Sahibzadah survived he would be a danger to his country. The truth is that men like the Sahibzadah are a shield for their country. For their sake, God averts many calamities from their homeland. These cruel advisers told the Amir that the Sahibzadah's influence would dampen the passion for Jihad, but

they failed to tell him that the Community to which Sahibzadah Sahib belonged believed in complete loyalty to the rulers of whichever country they dwell in. This teaching, had it been allowed to spread, would have put an end to Afghan civil wars and made its people loyal and patriotic, ready to stand by their leaders in all circumstances. Nor did they tell the Amir that Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib^{as} preached against intrigue, corruption, deceit and hypocrisy. They did not tell him that Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib^{as} not only taught but insisted on the observance of these teachings. If these teachings had been allowed to flourish, they would have ushered in an era of peace and progress for Afghanistan. Nor did they tell the Amir that the Jihad which Sahibzadah Syed Abdul Latif had learnt to deny was the Jihad that forces Islam on non-Muslims through war and violence. Sahibzadah Sahib was against this kind of Jihad and not against the Jihad that was waged by the Holy Prophet^{sas} in self-defence, nor against the political wars that are fought by nations against others for their survival. What Sahibzadah Sahib believed was that Islam was against making war on any people in the name of Jihad or Islam, as long as those people did not interfere with the religion of Islam. Waging such wars would amount to harming Islam and misrepresenting its teachings and ideals. If wars need to be waged for political reasons, such wars should not be termed as Jihad. A victory that tarnishes the name of Islam is worse than a defeat that safeguards its honour.

In short, the Amir was deceived into ordering the execution of Sahibzadah Syed Abdul Latif. The first part of the prophecy was now fulfilled and two of the followers of the Promised Messiah^{as}, who were loyal and devoted subjects of their King, were slaughtered. There now remained the second part of the prophecy that

foretold death and destruction in the land, and it did not take long to manifest. Hardly a month had passed after the stoning of Sahibzadah Sahib when Kabul found itself in the grip of a cholera epidemic. The population was overwhelmed with fear and it was generally felt that the pestilence had come as punishment from God for the foul murder of an innocent man. An impartial observer, Frank A. Martin, who was for many years Engineer-in-Chief to the Government of Afghanistan, wrote in his book, *Under the Absolute Amir* (1907),⁴ that this epidemic was quite unexpected. Considering earlier epidemics in Afghanistan and the rate at which they had followed one another, a new epidemic could have been ruled out for several more years. The sudden outbreak of cholera was, thus, a special sign of God, the news of which he had already given to His Messenger 28 years earlier. The wonder of it is that, in order to reinforce the prophecy, God had informed Sahibzadah Syed Abdul Latif of it beforehand, and he had told people that he saw a great calamity coming after his martyrdom. The epidemic touched every household in Kabul. It spared neither the poor nor the rich, nor those who adopted all kinds of preventive measures. It particularly targeted the people who had played a part in the stoning of Sahibzadah Sahib and their close relatives.

In this manner, after many years, God's revelation was fulfilled word for word. He demonstrated the truth of His Messenger with terrible signs and opened the way for the insightful to believe. The question is, could it be the work of a man to foretell these events at a time when he had no followers whatsoever, and to claim that a time would come when he would have a large following that would spread to other countries, and that two of his law-abiding

followers would be killed merely for their faith, and that their martyrdom would be followed by a terrible affliction upon the land that would kill many people? Surely, no man can make such a prophecy. If it were possible for anyone to foretell such things, then what would be the difference between the Word of God and that of man?

There might be a possible misunderstanding here that I wish to remove. The prophecy says ‘all who live on the earth will perish’, but not all people in Afghanistan died and many were saved. I need only say that كل in Arabic could mean ‘all’ or it could mean ‘some’. Here, it seems, كل means ‘some’. In the Holy Quran, we read that God revealed to the bee:

ثُمَّ كُلِّي مِنْ كُلِّ الشَّيْءِ⁵

Then eat of every kind of fruit.

Everybody knows that not every bee lands on every kind of fruit. Therefore, كل in the prophecy means ‘some’ or ‘many’. Similarly, we read in the Quran regarding Queen Sabā:

وَأُوْتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ⁶

And she has been given everything.

This is the description of a Queen who was the ruler of a small territory. What the verse means is that the Queen had a large share of the blessings of this world. The word كل does, however, denote generality or a significant number, both of which apply to the cholera epidemic that broke out in Kabul soon after the stoning of the Sahibzadah Sahib, as it struck terror into the people at large

and a good number out of them met their death by it; so much so that a European writer, who was unaware of the prophecy, made particular mention of it in his book.

A second difficulty that may be raised about the prophecy is that it contains the words *tuzbahān*, i.e. two would be slaughtered, but it so happened that one was strangled to death and the other was stoned. The description, therefore, would seem not to apply to their deaths. Such objections arise from a lack of thought and deliberation. The Arabic word ذبح means to cause the death of something regardless of how it may come about. In the Holy Quran, we have many examples of this use of the word ذبح. In the narrative of Ḥaḍrat Mūsā^{as}, the Holy Quran says:

يَذِيحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ⁷

[Pharaoh's people] slaying your sons and sparing your women.

It is evident from history that the Egyptians did not slaughter the Israelite males. Instead, the midwives were ordered to kill all male children born in Israelite homes, and when the midwives hesitated to do so, the Pharaoh ordered the children to be thrown into the river.⁸ Moreover, the Arabic Lexicon *Tājul-'Urūs* says that at least one meaning of ذبح is 'to destroy'.⁹ Hence, it is wrong to object that Sahibzadah was stoned and not slaughtered, because the word ذبح applies to killing regardless of the method employed.

(2) Revolution in Iran

The second prophecy, out of the many made by the Promised Messiah^{as}, relates to the King of your neighbouring country of Iran. On January 15, 1906, the Promised Messiah^{as} received the revelation:

تزلزل در ایوان کسری فتاد¹⁰

The palace of Chosroes has been shaken.

As was the practice, the revelation was published in all the Urdu and English newspapers and periodicals published by the Ahmadiyya Community. At the time of its publication, the King of Iran was in a very secure position. In 1905, he had accepted his people's demand for the establishment of a Parliament and the country was rejoicing over this. The King, Muzaffarud-Din Shah, was growing in popularity. Everyone praised him for giving representation to his people without any bloodshed. The rest of the world looked hopefully towards Iran because this experiment in democracy was new for Asia, with the exception of Japan. The world was, however, unaware of the pitfalls it entailed. This is why the publication of the Promised Messiah's^{as} prophecy at this time seemed too improbable, and yet all things are minor in the eyes of God. Iranians were still celebrating their newly gained freedom when, in 1907, the King died at the age of 55. He was succeeded by his son, Mirza Muhammad Ali. Even though the new King confirmed the constitutional changes and the continuation of the Parliament, the world soon started to see signs that pointed

to the fulfilment of the Promised Messiah's^{as} prophecy. A tussle ensued between the King and the Parliament, with the King refusing to accept some of the Parliament's demands. Ultimately, on the insistence of the Parliament, he agreed to dismiss certain of his officials who were thought to be at the root of the mischief. At the same time, the King decided to leave Tehran which caused grave tensions to arise between the Nationalists and the Cossacks who formed the King's bodyguard. The revelation of the Promised Messiah^{as} was partially fulfilled when the Iranian House of Representatives was shelled and destroyed. The King then abolished the Parliament and a general rebellion ensued in many parts of Iran. Laristan, Labudjan, Akbarabad, Bushehr, Shiraz and practically the whole of the south of the country became involved. Governors and officers of the old regime were dismissed and the administration was assumed by nationalists and democrats. Iran was in the grip of internecine warfare. Seeing the precarious state of his country, the King started moving his treasures and personal effects to Russia. Despite his best efforts to quell the rebellion, it continued to spread. By January 1909, it had spread to Isphahan and the Bakhtiari chief also joined the nationalists. The royal troops suffered an ignominious defeat. The King was forced to proclaim that he would reinstate and defend the representative form of government and promised not to continue the old autocratic rule, but Divine promises can never be averted. Things continued to get worse for the King and, ultimately, even the Cossacks, the Shah's prided body-guards, joined the revolutionaries. The Shah and his family left the palace and took refuge in the Russian Embassy. This was on July 15, 1909, two-and-a-half years after the publication of the revelation, 'Tremors in the

palace of Chosroes'. Autocracy disappeared from Iran and a new experiment at democracy began. During June and July, great fear and anxiety reigned in the King's palace.

For people of insight, this is a great sign of the truth of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Alas, few take heed.

(3) Abdullah Ātham

The third example of the Promised Messiah's^{as} prophecies relates to his Christian opponents and is meant to serve as a sign for the Christian world at large.

I do not know if you are aware of the extent to which Christian missionaries are wont to attack the person and character of the Holy Prophet^{sas} by making use of the false beliefs held by Muslims. The severity of these attacks about 30 to 40 years ago was such as cannot be imagined today. Seeing that the opponents had crossed all limits, the Promised Messiah^{as} decided to fight back. The result was that the Christians, unable to defend themselves against him^{as}, gave up the kind of rhetoric that they had adopted in those days. One of the Christians who used the most unbecoming language against the Holy Prophet^{sas} was a man known as Deputy Abdullāh Ātham. It so happened that Christians and Muslims arranged a debate to be held between the Promised Messiah^{as} and Abdullāh Ātham at Amritsar. Despite all his devices, Abdullāh Ātham suffered an ignominious defeat. Since the subject of miracles had also been raised during the debate, God did not let the debate go without a miracle and revealed the following words to the Promised Messiah^{as}:

Whichever of the two parties in this debate is deliberately adopting a false stand and deserting the True God and deifying a humble man will be severely afflicted within the number of months that correspond to the number of days of this debate. That is to say, within fifteen months he will be greatly humiliated unless he turns to the truth.¹¹

This prophecy consisted of two parts. (1) Abdullāh Ātham (who sought to prove the divinity of Jesus) would die and go to hell because of his obduracy, bigotry and vilification. (2) However, if he should express penitence and realize his error, he would be saved from this punishment.

If he did not change his attitude and persisted in hostility and fault-finding, and yet escaped punishment, the prophecy would be considered untrue. And if he did repent and still met his death within fifteen months, the prophecy would still be false. The words of the prophecy indicated that Ātham would live longer than fifteen months and that he would die within fifteen months only if he persisted in his hostility. A little reflection would show that the two steps of the second alternative lend greater weight to the prophecy than the two steps of the first alternative. The two steps of the first alternative were that if Ātham persisted in hostility, he would die within fifteen months. For Ātham to persist in hostility and opposition was natural and easy. He was a Christian scholar who had written books in support of Christianity and against Islam. He held a high social status and enjoyed valuable contacts with the British. In that particular debate between Christians and Muslims, he had been selected as the Christian exponent in preference to other padres and preachers, and renowned Christian

missionaries acted as his assistants. Such a man would be expected to continue to hold fast to all his Christian beliefs. Having done so much for the publicity of Christianity and having played the role of an exponent and advocate, one would not expect that he would, even for a moment, recant his belief in the godhead of Jesus or be impressed by the miraculous power of Islam. That he would die within fifteen months would also be a grand prophecy, but considering that Ātham was a sixty-five-year-old man, it could be said that he had died because he had completed the span of his life. On the other hand, consider the even more wonderful alternative that, were Ātham to retreat from bigotry and hostility, he would be safe from death for fifteen months. For Ātham to repent of his behaviour would be a far greater sign than for him to persist in his beliefs because it was far more difficult for him to retreat from his confirmed and settled attitude against Islam than to persist in it. While death can be brought about by human hand, a guarantee of life for fifteen months cannot be given by anybody. Therefore, in the event of the second alternative coming true, the prophecy would be far more grand and impressive. God, for whom nothing is impossible, chose the second alternative and instilled fear in Ātham's heart. The first sign of this was that Ātham stood up during that very debate, touched his ears as a sign of repentance, and swore that he had never referred to the Holy Prophet^{sas} as the Antichrist.

After the publication of the prophecy, the whole country was intrigued and waited for the outcome, but God did not make people wait for fifteen months. Right from the moment the prophecy was made, Ātham's condition changed and he stopped writing books and articles in support of Christianity. It was not a small

matter for a well-known preacher and author to at once fall silent. It was proof that in his heart he knew Islam to be true and was afraid that he had made a mistake in opposing it. His ordeal did not end with his silence, for he was thrown into a spiritual hell and suffered great mental anguish thinking that he had made a grave error. This thought became so ingrained in his mind that he started to have hallucinations. According to what he told his relatives, at times he would see snakes or rabid dogs or spear-wielding men about to attack him. These were not real experiences because snakes and dogs cannot be trained to do such things, nor are people in India free to move around carrying arms. This was an inner torment that was caused by his guilt for supporting Christianity and being hostile towards Islam. This was a substitute for the greater Hell to which he would have been consigned had he remained adamant. If his faith in Christianity had been intact and he still considered Islam to be false, why would he suffer from such hallucinations where he was being chased by imaginary snakes and dogs? If he did not feel that God was against him, why did He see all creatures as his mortal enemies, and why did he stop speaking and writing on behalf of Christianity and run from town to town?

In short, the second part of the prophecy relating to Ātham repenting and turning to God—which was seemingly more improbable than the first one—was also fulfilled in an amazing way, so that he began to doubt the divinity of Christ and started to realize the truth of Islam. Even though his inner torment had brought him close to death, God caused him to remain alive for fifteen months so that the prophecy which said that he would be saved if he repented would be fulfilled.

This was a powerful prophecy that was enough to open people's

eyes. If, however, things had ended there, it might have been claimed that Ātham never repented. Therefore, to further clarify the prophecy, God caused a group of Christians and Muslims to start claiming that the prophecy had been false because Ātham had not died within the specified time. It was explained to them that the prophecy admitted of two outcomes and that the second outcome had come to pass, but they did not agree with this and remained adamant that Ātham had never repented. At this point, the Promised Messiah^{as} invited Ātham to declare on oath that his Christian and Muslim supporters were right and that in all this time he did not have thoughts about the truth of Islam and the falsity of his Christian faith. Ātham, however, refused to take an oath to this effect. Instead, he published an announcement, without taking an oath, that he still considered the Christian faith to be true. However, God, who has power over all hearts and minds, caused him to also write that he did not consider Jesus to be God, as other Christians did. If you can refer back to the prophecy, it said that the person who sought to deify a mortal would be consigned to hell, but here Ātham admits that he did not consider Jesus to be God. Notwithstanding this declaration, Ātham was again asked if he would make a declaration on solemn oath that during those fifteen months he had entertained no doubts whatever about the truth of his religion and had not become cognizant of the truth of Islam. The Promised Messiah^{as} said that if Ātham affirmed this statement on oath and did not meet with Divine punishment within a year, then he (the Promised Messiah^{as}) would admit that he was false in his claim. The Promised Messiah^{as} also offered Ātham Rs. 1,000 in cash if he made that statement on oath. In response, Ātham said that taking an oath was not permitted by his

religion. This was strange because in the New Testament the disciples are said to have made all kinds of oaths. In Christian nations, nobody is appointed to high office without taking an oath. Even the King has to take an oath. Judges, MPs, high civil and military officers, all have to take oaths. Witnesses in court have to take an oath. In fact, Christian courts restrict oath-taking to Christian witnesses while non-Christian witnesses only say, 'I declare before the ever-present and ever-seeing God,' etc. Hence, this excuse on the part of Ātham was ridiculous and was only meant to avoid taking the oath, for he had already witnessed fearful sights that had convinced him that if he took the oath he would be destroyed. That Ātham refused to take the oath using lame excuses becomes clearer from the fact that, among Christians, no important religious office is given to anybody unless he takes the oath of loyalty. Protestant Christians (Ātham was a Protestant) have to take two oaths, one of loyalty to the Church and another of loyalty to the State. All this was put before Ātham but he offered no reply. The cash reward offered to Ātham was raised from Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 4,000, and even the condition of a year of waiting was dropped and Ātham could claim the cash reward as soon as he took the oath, but he could not do it when he knew in his heart that for fifteen months he had been concealing the true state of his mind out of fear of his fellow Christians. He did not take the oath and spent the rest of his days in silence. He gave up speaking or writing against Islam and stopped preaching Christianity. In this manner, the truth of the Promised Messiah's^{as} prophecy became clearer than ever. Ātham recanted his belief in the godhood of Jesus and his views about the truth of Islam were made abundantly clear by his refusal to take the oath. (This was despite the fact that during

the debate in which the prophecy had been made, Ātham had tried to prove that Jesus was God and possessed all the Divine attributes in his person.)

The grandeur of this prophecy boosts the faith of every honest person. In it, one can see the working of the Hand of God. Ātham was a sworn enemy of Islam, a leader of an important community and its advocate in controversy with another, and he had spent all his life preaching and propagating his religion and disparaging the other. For such a person to start to entertain thoughts against his own religion, to have extraordinary hallucinations appear to him, and for him to be safe from death for fifteen months in consideration of his repentant demeanour, all this is beyond the power of man to bring about.

(4) An American Impostor

This prophecy relates to the downfall of Dowie, an American impostor. It constitutes a sign for Christians in general and the people of America in particular.

Alexander Dowie was a well-known name in America. He was Australian by birth and had later moved to America. In 1892 he started giving religious lectures and soon claimed that he had the power of healing, which brought him a lot of popularity. In 1901 he claimed that he was like Elijah and a forerunner for the Second Coming of Christ. Since the signs of the Second Coming of the Messiah had already been fulfilled, religious people were already waiting for his return. Hence, this claim by Dowie found a lot of followers. He then bought some land and founded a town called

Zion and declared that Christ would descend in that town. Many wealthy people, eager to have the first glimpse of Christ on his Second Coming, paid large sums to buy land and build houses in Zion where Dowie lived like a king. Soon his followers exceeded 100,000 and missionaries were appointed in all Christian countries. Dowie was a staunch enemy of Islam and always had something nasty to say about it. In 1902 he published a prophecy saying that unless all Muslims accepted Christianity, they would meet with death and destruction. When the Promised Messiah^{as} learnt of this, he at once responded by publishing an announcement in which, after enumerating the beauties of Islam, he said that it was quite unnecessary to destroy millions of people just to prove the truth of Christianity. Instead, he, as the Promised Messiah^{as}, was willing to enter into a prayer-duel with Dowie, which would easily distinguish between the true religion and the false one and help people to determine the truth.¹² This announcement was published in September 1902 and was publicised so widely that newspapers in Europe and America kept writing about it from December 1902 to the end of 1903. About forty of them sent their copies to Qadian. Such wide publication meant that the news of prayer-duel reached about two-and-a-half million people.

Dowie, instead of responding to the challenge, started cursing and attacking Islam even more vehemently. On February 14, 1903, he wrote in his paper, 'I pray to God that Islam will soon disappear from the world. O God, accept this prayer of mine. O God, destroy Islam.' On August 5, 1903, he wrote in his paper: 'The black spot on the mantle of man [Islam] will meet its end at the hands of Zion.'

Seeing that Dowie was in no mood to give up his hostility, the

Promised Messiah^{as} published another announcement in 1903, entitled 'Prophecies about Dowie and Piggott'. In this announcement, he wrote that God had sent him in this age to re-establish belief in the Oneness of God and to put an end to idolatry. He said that he had been given a specific sign for America, and it was that if Dowie entered into a prayer-duel with him or, directly or indirectly, confronted him, then 'before my very eyes, he will leave this world in pain and anguish'. The Promised Messiah^{as} went on to say that he had previously invited Dowie to a prayer-duel but he had given no reply. Dowie was now being allowed another seven months. He then wrote, 'Be sure, calamity is due to befall Dowie's Zion.' In the end, without waiting anymore for Dowie's reply, he prayed, 'God, ordain that the falsehood of Piggott and Dowie may soon become apparent to all people.' This announcement, too, was published widely in Western countries and was commented on in several newspapers, such as *The Glasgow Herald* in Britain and *New York Commercial Advertiser* in America. Thus, millions became aware of its contents.

When this announcement was published, Dowie's star was at its zenith and the number of his followers was on the rise. They were so rich that they gave Dowie presents worth hundreds of thousands of dollars every New Year. Dowie also owned several industrial establishments and his bank balance amounted to about 20 million dollars. His retinue of servants was larger than that of the richest in the land. He was in excellent health and attributed this to his own miraculous healing powers through which he claimed to be able to heal anyone. In short, he had an abundance of money, health, followers and power.

Upon the publication of the second pamphlet by the Promised

Messiah^{as}, Dowie was asked why he did not respond to it, to which he replied:

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

Thus, despite refusing to take up the challenge, Dowie unwittingly accepted it. He forgot that the Promised Messiah^{as} had written that if he, directly or indirectly, confronted him, he would leave the world in great pain and anguish. Having described the Promised Messiah^{as} as a worm and saying that he could trample him under his foot, Dowie came into direct confrontation with the Promised Messiah^{as} and invited God's punishment.

Dowie's vanity and egotism did not stop here. A few days later he described the Promised Messiah^{as} as 'foolish Muhammadan Messiah'. He also wrote, 'If I am not a messenger of God on this earth, then no one is.' In December 1903, he openly confronted the Promised Messiah^{as} and said that an angel had told him that he would be victorious over his enemies. This was practically a counter-prophecy of the death of the Promised Messiah^{as}. The contest was slowly becoming clear. After this last attack by Dowie, the Promised Messiah^{as} stopped writing about him and waited for God's decision in keeping with the Quranic injunction, 'So turn away from them, and wait. They are also waiting.' God, who is slow in punishment but very firm when He comes to it, caused

Dowie's feet to be paralysed so that he could not even rest them on the ground. These were the same feet with which he had threatened to trample the Promised Messiah^{as}. He recovered from this but two months later, on December 19, had a second attack which completely prostrated him. Finding himself completely disabled, he left his work to his deputies and went to live in an island whose atmosphere was thought to be good for paralytics. Divine Wrath followed him even there, for God wished to prove to him that he, and not the Promised Messiah^{as}, was the worm. God wished to debase him through the very things because of which he arrogantly said those words. He continued to grow worse and soon his followers started to ask why he could not heal himself when he claimed to be able to heal everyone else? When they searched his rooms where nobody had been allowed to go, they found bottles of wine. His wife and son confessed that Dowie drank even though he had prohibited his followers from drinking or using any kind of intoxicant or even smoking. His wife said that he had remained faithful to him through adversity but she was now devastated to find out that he had declared it lawful to marry more than one wife just so that he could marry a rich old woman. She produced letters which this woman had written in reply to Dowie's. His followers became infuriated and they decided to have the accounts audited, which revealed that Dowie had misappropriated about 1.5 million dollars. It also appeared that he had given presents worth thousands of dollars to various young women in the town. Upon these disclosures, Dowie's leading followers decided to depose him and sent him a telegram as follows: 'Unanimously the organization seriously objects to your expensive habits, hypocrisy,

misstatements, exaggerations, and ill-temper. Therefore, you are hereby deposed from your office.’

Dowie could not refute these charges and all his followers turned against him. He finally decided to return and personally address their concerns but only a few came to receive him at the railway station and no one gave any weight to what he had to say. He turned to the law courts but they refused to give him control over the funds of the organisation and only allowed him a little stipend. He was reduced to such helplessness that his servants had to carry him from room to room and he lived in pain and anguish. The handful of friends who continued to associate with him advised him to see a doctor but he refused to do so as he had always advised others against receiving conventional treatment. While previously he had over a hundred thousand followers, he was now left with barely two hundred. He was frustrated in the courts and his ailment continued to grow. Unable to bear all this, he practically lost his sanity. One day he appeared before his followers covered all over with bandages. He said that his name was Jerry, that he had been battling with Satan the whole night, and that his general had been killed in the battle while he himself had incurred some injuries. This confirmed to his remaining followers that he had indeed lost his mind and so they too abandoned him.

Finally, on March 9, 1907, the prophecy of the Promised Messiah^{as} was fulfilled word for word and Dowie left this mortal world ‘in great pain and anguish’. At the time of his death, he had only four men left with him and his assets amounted to about thirty rupees! A worse picture of pain and anguish cannot be imagined. Dowie’s death was a lesson and a sign for the people of the West. Many newspapers were forced to admit that the

prophecy of Ḥaḍrat Mirza [Ghulam Ahmad] Sahib^{as} had been fulfilled. Here I will quote a few:

‘Ahmad and his adherents may be pardoned for taking some credit for the accuracy with which the prophecy was fulfilled a few months ago.’¹³

‘The Qadian man predicted that if Dowie accepted the challenge ‘he shall leave the world before my eyes with great sorrow and torment. ‘If Dowie declined’, the Mirza said, ‘the end would only be deferred; death awaited him just the same, and calamity will soon overtake Zion.’ That was the grand prophecy: Zion would fall and Dowie would die before Ahmad. It appeared to be a risky step for the Promised Messiah^{as} to defy the restored Elijah to an endurance test, for the challenger was by 15 years the older man of the two and probabilities in a land of plagues and famines were against him as a survivor, but he won out.’¹⁴

‘Dowie died with his friends fallen away from him and his fortune dwindled. He suffered from paralysis and insanity. He died a miserable death, with Zion city torn and frayed by internal dissensions. Mirza comes forward frankly and states that he has won his challenge.’¹⁵

These quotations from the American newspapers show that the prophecy made an impression not only on Christians but also on free-thinking editors of the American newspapers. They had been so impressed by the grandeur of the prophecy that they felt

obliged to write about it. They could not deny its truth or its significance. In the presence of these newspapers, whenever the sign of the death of Dowie will be presented before Western audiences, they will be forced to admit that Islam is the true religion and that salvation is not to be found outside Islam. Consequently, they will give up their prejudices and old beliefs. They will enter Islam and declare their faith in the Holy Prophet^{sas} and in his servant, the Promised Messiah^{as}. Indeed, the signs are already here and several hundred Americans have already joined the Ahmadiyya Community.

(5) Death of Lekh Rām, a Sign for the People of India

I now turn to another prophecy, one of many that were meant to establish the truth of Islam in the eyes of the people of the Indian subcontinent. The fulfilment of these prophecies convinced hundreds of thousands of the truth of Islam and led many to confess that Islam was the true religion, and they continue to do so to this day.

The background to this prophecy is that late in the 19th century there appeared a new Hindu sect called the Aryā Samāj. Seeing that Islam was in a sorry state, they conceived a plan to convert Muslims to Hinduism. To this end, Aryā Samāj leaders launched the most scurrilous attacks on Islam. The most foul-mouthed and vituperative of these leaders and writers was a Pundit by the name of Lekh Rām. The Promised Messiah^{as} had many dialogues with him and tried to convince him of the truth of Islam but to no

avail. Lekh Rām produced such distorted translations of verses of the Holy Quran that it was hard for any decent person even to read them. He held the foulest views about the Holy Prophet^{sas} and the Holy Quran. The Best of Mankind was to him the worst of mankind; the Best Book in the world, the worst. Indeed, a diseased eye cannot stand to see the light. This was the case with Lekh Rām. As the debate progressed, he continued to utter invectives against the Holy Prophet^{sas}. He even ridiculed the Promised Messiah^{as} and asked why he didn't show him a sign. When the Promised Messiah^{as} prayed regarding Lekh Rām, it was revealed to him that this man would die soon. The Promised Messiah^{as} offered to withhold publication of the prophecy if Lekh Rām had any objections, but Lekh Rām said he had nothing to fear from such prophecies and that Mirza [Ghulam Ahmad] Sahib^{as} could go ahead and publish it. Since the earlier revelations did not specify a time and Lekh Rām insisted on a time limit, the Promised Messiah^{as} withheld the publication of the prophecy until he received more knowledge from God. Finally, after being informed by God that Lekh Rām would die within six years counting from February 20, 1893, the Promised Messiah^{as} published the prophecy. He also published an Arabic revelation relating to Lekh Rām:

عَجَلٌ جَسَدٌ لَهُ نُحُورٌ - لَهُ نَصَبٌ وَ عَذَابٌ¹⁶

That is to say, this man is like Sāmiri's golden calf that makes noises and has no part in spiritual life. Nothing awaits him but calamity and chastisement. The Promised Messiah^{as} wrote:

I now announce to people of all faith that if within six

years from today, February 20, 1893, this man does not meet with punishment from God, which is unusual in its poignancy and tragedy and which inspires Divine awe, then let everybody think that I am not from God.¹⁷

Sometime later the Promised Messiah^{as} published another prophecy that further elaborated on the predicted death of Lekh Rām:

وَبَشِّرْ نَبِيَّ رَبِّي وَقَالَ مُبَشِّرًا - سَتَعْرِفُ يَوْمَ الْعِيدِ وَالْعِيدُ أَقْرَبُ¹⁸

And God gave me the tidings that I will witness a day of Eid, and this day will be adjacent to that of Eid.

He went on:

وَمِنْهَا مَا وَعَدَنِي رَبِّي وَاسْتَجَابَ دُعَائِي فِي رَجُلٍ مُفْسِدٍ عَدُوِّ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ الْمُسْتَمَى
لِيكْهْرَامِ الْفِشَاوَرِيِّ وَأَخْبَرَنِي رَبِّي أَنَّهُ مِنَ الْهَالِكِينَ - إِنَّهُ كَانَ يَسُبُّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ وَيَتَكَلَّمُ
فِي شَأْنِهِ بِكَلِمَاتٍ حَبِيبَةٍ فَدَعَوْتُ عَلَيْهِ وَبَشِّرَنِي رَبِّي بِمَوْتِهِ فِي سِتِّ سَنَةٍ إِنْ فِي ذَلِكَ
لَايَةٌ لِلطَّالِبِينَ

And among the blessings of God which I have received is that He has accepted my prayers relating to one Lekh Rām and has informed me that he will soon meet his end. This man vilified the Holy Prophet^{sas} and I prayed against him, so my God informed me that this man will die within six years. There are many Signs in this for seekers after truth.

Later, after reaching more knowledge about it, the Promised Messiah^{as} published the following announcement on the title page of his book *Barakātud-Du'ā* under the heading 'A further prophecy about Lekh Rām of Peshawar':

Today, on the morning of 2nd April 1893, which is 14th of the month of Ramadan 1310 Hijrah, in a state of slight drowsiness, I saw myself sitting in a large house with some friends, when a robust and frightful man, who seemed to be in a terrible rage, appeared before me. I looked up and saw that he was a man of an unfamiliar creation and disposition. He seemed not a man but one of the terrible and awe-inspiring angels, and his terror seized the hearts. As I looked at him, he asked, 'Where is Lekh Rām?' He also named another person and asked about his whereabouts. It was then that I realized that this man had been appointed for the chastisement of both Lekh Rām and the other person whose name I do not recollect.¹⁹

The Promised Messiah^{as} also referred to Lekh Ram in his Persian verse contained in his book *Ā'ina-e-Kamālāt-e-Islām*:

الا اے دشمن نادان و بے راہ بترس از تیغِ بَرّانِ محمدؐ
*Foolish and misguided foe,
 Fear the sharp sword of Muhammad.*

الا اے منکر از شانِ محمدؐ ہم از نورِ نمایانِ محمدؐ
*Denier of the greatness of Muhammad,
 And of the luminous light of Muhammad!*

کرامت گرچہ بے نام و نشان است بیا بنگر ز غلمانِ محمدؐ
*Miracles may seem a thing of the past,
 Come yet and see one through the devotees of Muhammad.*

Put together, the prophecies relating to Lekh Rām foretold that:

1. Lekh Rām his death.
2. This calamity would take place within six years.
3. It would be on a day close to Eid, right before or after.
4. Lekh Rām would meet with the fate of the Calf of Sāmīrī, i.e., dismemberment and death and dispersion of his ashes into a river.
5. His death would be carried out by a ruddy person with blood-shot eyes.
6. Lekh Rām would be a victim of the sword of Muhammad.

These signs are so clear and determinate that nobody can have any doubt about their meaning and content.

Five years after the publication of these prophecies, people started to taunt the Promised Messiah^{as} saying that the time limit had passed and yet the prophecy had not been fulfilled. However, in the afternoon of the day next to Eid-ul-Fitr, which was a Saturday, an unknown person stabbed Lekh Rām in the belly with a sharp knife and he died of his wounds the following day. Thus the prophecy came to be fulfilled exactly as had been foretold. The prophecy had said that he would die within six years, so he died within six years. The prophecy said the fatal event would occur on a day close to Eid and it would prove to be a day of Eid for the believers, so he died on the day next to Eid. The prophecy said that Lekh Rām would meet his end at the hands of a terrifying man with bloodshot eyes, and so it happened. Lekh Rām was to be a victim of the sword of Muhammad, so he died of a stab wound. The prophecy said that Lekh Rām would meet a fate similar to the

fate of the Calf of Sāmirī. Just as the calf was dismembered on a Saturday, burnt to ashes, and the ashes dispersed in a river, so did it happen with Lekh Rām, for, being a Hindu, he was cremated and his ashes thrown into a river.

The story of Lekh Rām's murder is as follows: A man came to Lekh Rām claiming to be a Muslim and wanting to convert to Hinduism. It is said that the man had bloodshot eyes. People tried to dissuade Lekh Rām from letting this man stay with him but he did not listen to them. Lekh Rām started to trust him and appointed the fateful Saturday as the day when he would be converted to Hinduism. Lekh Rām was busy writing when he asked the man to hand him a book. The man, pretending to give Lekh Rām the book, slipped a knife into his belly and turned the knife round and round so as to cut the entrails thoroughly. Then, according to the statements of Lekh Rām's family, the man disappeared. Lekh Rām was on the upper floor of the house and many people were gathered at the entrance on the ground floor but no one saw him leave. Lekh Rām's mother and wife were certain he was still in the house and yet he could not be found despite a thorough search. Lekh Rām died in great agony on Sunday, and it was on a Sunday that the Promised Messiah^{as} had seen in a Vision this ferocious-looking person with bloodshot eyes who had asked for the whereabouts of Lekh Rām. Lekh Rām died and his death served as proof of the truth of the Promised Messiah^{as} and as a warning to those who vilify the noble person of the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

(6) Prince Duleep Singh

I now move on to a prophecy that was a sign for Sikhs and demonstrated to them the truth of Islam and the authenticity of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

It so happened that when the British annexed Punjab they decided, for obvious political reasons, to send away to England the young heir to the Sikh throne, Prince Duleep Singh. He was to stay there until British rule became established in Punjab. After the mutiny of 1857, however, the last vestiges of the Mughal power in Delhi disappeared and everything seemed safe for the British. After this, Raja Duleep Singh expressed his intention to return to his homeland and the rumour spread that he was about to come back. The Promised Messiah^{as}, however, had a revelation that the Prince would not be able to return.²¹ He told many people about this, including many Hindus. In one of his announcements, he predicted that a returning Prince of Punjab was going to have problems.²² At the time of the publication of this prophecy, nobody imagined that the Prince would be stopped from returning home since his return was eagerly awaited. However, the government soon realized that the Prince's return could prove dangerous for its rule. As the news of his return spread, the Sikhs started recalling their days of power and independence, and the British authorities became fearful of riots if the Prince was allowed to return. Therefore, the Prince was stopped when he arrived at Aden. The news that he had been stopped came when people thought that he had already entered Indian waters. This was a great disappointment for the Sikhs but it also demonstrated the might and power

of God who knows people's thoughts even before they are themselves aware of them.

(7) The Plague

I have related prophecies of the Promised Messiah^{as} about Afghanistan and its neighbour Iran, and I have also described four prophecies that served as signs for three major religions. I now proceed to cite a prophecy that was a sign aimed at all communities of India and, through them, the whole world. This prophecy has proved that God has power over every cause, no matter how big or small, and that He employs it in the service of His Messengers. Many such prophecies of the Promised Messiah^{as} have already been fulfilled while others await fulfilment. As an example, I present his prophecy regarding the onset of the plague. This prophecy has an added importance in that the Holy Prophet^{sas} also foretold about the outbreak of an epidemic in the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}.²³

When, according to a prophecy of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, a lunar eclipse occurred on the 13th of Ramadan and a solar eclipse on the 28th of the same month, the Promised Messiah^{as} was informed by God that if people did not heed this important Sign and did not accept him, a general calamity would fall upon them. The Promised Messiah^{as} wrote:

وَحَاصِلُ الْكَلَامِ أَنَّ الْكُسُوفَ وَالْحُسُوفَ آيَاتَانِ مُحَوِّفَتَانِ وَإِذَا اجْتَمَعَا فَهُوَ تَهْدِيدٌ
شَدِيدٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ وَإِشَارَةٌ إِلَى أَنَّ الْعَذَابَ قَدْ تَقَرَّرَ وَأُكِّدَ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِأَهْلِ الْعُدْوَانِ
The lunar and the solar eclipses were two grave warnings

from God. Their occurrence in the same month should serve as an admonition and point to the divine punishment which those who persist in hostility must receive.²⁴

Sometime later, as a step towards the fulfilment of the prophecy, God moved his heart to pray for a pestilence. In one of his Arabic poems (1894), he said:

فَلَمَّا طَعَى الْفَسْقُ الْمُبِيدُ بِسَيْلِهِ تَمَّتَّيْتُ لَوْ كَانَ الْوَبَاءُ الْمُبْتَرِ
*When iniquity and ungodliness rose to a deadly height; even
 as flood reaches its dangerous level, I wished from God that a
 pestilence should come and destroy;*

فَإِنَّ هَلَكَ النَّاسِ عِنْدَ أُولَى النَّهْيِ أَحَبُّ وَأَوْلَى مِنْ ضَلَالٍ يُدْمَرُ²⁵
*For, according to the wise, it is better for people to die than to
 become involved in fatal disbelief and misguidance.*

Then, in 1897, in his book *Sirāj-e-Munīr*, he quoted a revelation of his:

يَا مَسِيحُ الْخَلْقِ عَدْوَانَا²⁶
 O Messiah who has been sent for human welfare; help us
 to avert the plague.

Commenting on this he wrote:

دیکھو یہ کس زمانے کی خبریں ہیں اور نہ معلوم کس وقت پوری ہوں گی، ایک وہ
 وقت ہے جو دعا سے مرتے ہیں اور دوسرا وہ وقت آتا ہے کہ دعا سے زندہ ہوں گے۔

Wait and see how and when these warnings are fulfilled. There are times when prayers bring death, and times when they bring life.

When this last prophecy was published, the plague had only broken out in Bombay and had stopped spreading after a year. People were relieved that the doctors had stopped its spread but Divine warnings hinted otherwise. When general complacency had been induced by the belief that the disease had come and gone, and when Punjab, except for one or two villages, seemed quite safe, and when its ravages had been more or less halted in Bombay, the Promised Messiah^{as} published the following announcement:

I am constrained to write about an important matter and this owing only to overwhelming sympathy. I know that those devoid of spirituality will tend to ridicule my statement, nevertheless, out of sympathy for humankind, it is my duty to warn people. The warning is as follows. Today, February 6, 1898, Monday, I saw in a dream that God's angels were planting black seedlings in different parts of Punjab. The seedlings looked ugly, black, menacing, and stunted. I asked some of the angels about them and was told that they were the seedlings of the plague which was about to spread in the country.²⁷ It was not clear to me whether it was to break out in the winter of this year or the next. But what I saw was quite terrifying. I have already received a revelation about the plague in the past. It said, 'Verily Allah does not change the lot of a people unless they first change their hearts.'²⁸ This means that until sin,

which is the plague of the hearts, does not abate, the physical plague shall also not abate.

At the end of this warning, the Promised Messiah^{as} wrote some verses in Persian:

گر آل چیزے کہ می بینم عین دال نیر دیدندے ز دنیا توبہ کردندے بچشم زار و خونبارے
*If my friends could see that which I see,
 Tears of blood would they shed and say good-bye to the world.*

خور تاباں سیہ گشت است از بدکاری مردم زمیں طاعون نہی آرد پیے تحویف و اندارے
*The bright sun has become dark for the sins of men,
 The earth has thrown up the plague to frighten and warn.*

بہ تشویش قیامت ماندیں تشویش گر مینعی علاجے نیت بہر دفع آل بجز حُسن کردارے
*If you but knew, you would liken this calamity to the calamity
 of Doomsday,
 There is no cure for it but the cure of good deeds.*

من از ہمدردی ات گفتیم تو خود ہم فکر کن بارے خرداز بہر لیں روز است اے دانا و مشیارے
*I say all this out of sympathy for you: It is for you to think over,
 Use then your wisdom today, you who are wise and alert.²⁹*

It is apparent from these prophecies that the Promised Messiah^{as} foretold about a general calamity in 1894 and then specifically predicted the outbreak of the plague. Later, when the plague started to spread in India, he issued a special warning to Punjab against the impending calamity and described it as akin to doomsday.

He also said that the plague would not abate until people had reformed themselves.

What happened after this is terrible beyond words. The plague started in Bombay and it was expected to be the worst-hit area, but it recovered and Punjab became the centre. So deadly was the outbreak that up to 30,000 people died in a week and several hundred thousand died in a year. Hundreds of doctors were appointed and all kinds of treatment were tried but to no avail. With every coming year, the plague reappeared with added virulence so that the government became a helpless onlooker. Many then started to realize that this plague was the consequence of denying the Promised Messiah^{as}. As a result of witnessing this terrible sign, hundreds of thousands accepted the Promised Messiah^{as}. The plague did not abate until the Promised Messiah^{as} was told by God, 'The plague is over, only fever remains.' After this, the plague started to decline steadily. According to some other revelations, the plague might break out again in this country and in others. May Allah protect His humble servants.

This prophecy is so clear that it compels friend and foe alike to admit to its truth. It is unfortunate if someone still refuses to believe. Anyone who has eyes to see will agree that:

1. The warning about the plague was given a long time before its occurrence and at a time when it was impossible to predict the outbreak of epidemics.
2. When the plague made its first appearance, people were warned that the epidemic would appear annually.
3. People were also warned that the plague would hit Punjab

most forcefully. Accordingly, Punjab was the most affected region and experienced the greatest number of fatalities.

4. Doctors assured the people again and again that the epidemic was now under control but the Promised Messiah^{as} declared that it would not abate until God permitted it to do so, and so it continued to wreak havoc for a full nine years.
5. At long last, God Himself took pity and promised that it would abate. The Promised Messiah^{as} was told, 'The plague has disappeared; only fever remains.' After this revelation, the worst of the plague ended, but a serious malaria epidemic broke out in Punjab and not a single household remained immune from it. Official reports labelled this outbreak as something out of the ordinary.

(8) A Great Earthquake

This prophecy was a sign for people of all religions and it proved that, just as God has dominion over everything on the surface of the earth, so does He rule its depths. This prophecy relates to the great earthquake that shook Punjab on April 4, 1905. The Promised Messiah^{as} had published the following prophecies regarding this earthquake:

زلزلہ کا دھکا^{۳۰}

Shock of earthquake.

عَفَّتِ الدِّيَارُ مَحَلُّهَا وَمَقَامُهَا³¹

That is, a terrible earthquake will strike which will wipe out temporary and residences and permanent ones.

These revelations were immediately published in the Ahmadiyya journals. Their literal fulfilment was considered extremely improbable and it was thought that perhaps it alluded to the severity of the plague, but God had willed something else. There was a volcano at Kangra that had long been dormant and only served the purpose of receiving offerings from superstitious Hindus. Geologists thought that it would not erupt again and was completely harmless. It was surrounded by ancient temples that were visited by thousands of pilgrims. This seemingly harmless volcano was commanded by the Lord of Might and Power to become active again and testify to the truth of the who had sent by Him.

As the words of the revelation show, the earthquake was to severely affect temporary habitations, such as hotels, motels, military camps, and barracks. The words *mahalluhā* (temporary accommodations) precedes *maqāmuhā* (settled places) which means that temporary residences would be particularly affected by the earthquake. Such temporary dwellings exist only in cantonments, holiday resorts and places of pilgrimage. Therefore, the earthquake mentioned in the prophecy would primarily affect such an area.

On April 4, 1905, quite a while after the publication of these revelations, when the morning prayers were hardly over, the volcano came alive and shook the land for hundreds of miles. Kangra, its temples and its motels were destroyed. Eight miles away in the cantonment of Dharmasala, military barracks were

razed to the ground. Holiday resorts built by the British were reduced to rubble. Cantonments at Dalhousie and Bakloh were also destroyed. Many towns and villages were affected and about twenty thousand people perished. Geologists were left scratching their heads as to the cause of the earthquake. Little did they know that the earthquake was the result of the denial of the Promised Messiah^{as} and that it had come to alert people to the importance of his claim. Scientists sought the cause of the earthquake within the earth but its cause was above ground. The silent volcano of Kangra was only doing the will of God.

In addition to this, the Promised Messiah^{as} foretold many other earthquakes which took place in their time, and more are yet to come.

(9) The Great War of 1914–18

This prophecy was about the Great War which proved that just as God has dominion over all material things, so does He have power over the minds of the people who, in their arrogance and being intoxicated with power, think that God has no power over them.

This prophecy was a sign for the whole world. It proved that the dominion of God extends over the hearts and minds of rulers and leaders just as it extends over common men and women. It was published in 1905 and foretold the Great War of 1914–18 which bewildered the whole world and has not yet completely died out.

The literal words of the prophecy seem to speak of an earthquake but it actually points to another calamity, as is supported

by other revelations. Here I quote the revelations containing the prophecy:

تازہ نشان۔ تازہ نشان کا دھکا۔³²

A fresh sign. Shock of a fresh sign.

زَلْزَلَةُ السَّاعَةِ۔ قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ۔ نَزَلْتُ لَكَ۔ لَكَ نُرِي آيَاتٍ وَ نَهْدِمُ مَا يَعْمُرُونَ۔ قُلْ
عِنْدِي شَهَادَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنُونَ كَفَفْتُ عَنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ۔ إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ وَ
هَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا كَانُوا خَاطِئِينَ۔³³

An earthquake resembling Doomsday. Save your lives. I descended for your sake. We will show many Signs for your sake. We will destroy whatever the world is building. Say, 'I have God as my witness—will ye believe?' I have saved Israel from detriment. The Pharaoh and Hāmān, the armies of both, are in the wrong.

فخ نمایاں، ہماری فتح۔³⁴

Prominent victory; Our victory.

إِنِّي مَعَ الْأَفْوَاجِ أَتِيكَ بَعْتَةً۔³⁵

I shall come to you suddenly with My hosts. (This revelation has been repeated again and again.)

پہاڑ گرا اور زلزلہ آیا۔ آتش فشاں۔³⁶

A mountain fell; and came an earthquake! A Volcano!

مَصَالِحُ الْعَرَبِ۔ مَسِيئَةُ الْعَرَبِ۔³⁷

Setting right the affairs of the Arabs. Journey among Arabs.

عَفَتِ الدِّيَارُ كَذِكْرِي۔ أُرِيكَ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ۔ يُرِيكُمْ اللهُ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ۔ لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ
الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ۔³⁸

Houses will disappear even as all thought of Me has disappeared. You will see the earthquake of the appointed day. Allah will show you the earthquake of the appointed day. Dominion on that day will be for the One, Supreme God.

The ‘earthquake’ mentioned in the prophecy was described by the Promised Messiah^{as} in some detail in an Urdu poem according to which the earthquake was to bring destruction to human beings, habitations and fields. A man caught naked will not have time to dress. It will be particularly hard on travellers. Many will stray far from their appointed routes to escape the terrors of the earthquake. Depressions will be produced on the earth. Streams of blood will flow. Streams of water running downhill will become red with blood. The calamity will involve the whole world. All men, great and small, all governments, will break under its impact, and the Czar, in particular, will be reduced to a state of misery. Even birds will lose their senses and forget their songs.

It was also revealed to the Promised Messiah^{as} that ‘Boats sail that there may be duels,’ and ‘Raise the anchor.’³⁹ The Promised Messiah^{as} wrote that all this would happen in about sixteen years. An earlier revelation hinted that the calamity was to take place in his lifetime but then he was taught the prayer, ‘O God, do not let me see this earthquake.’ Hence, the Great War took place within sixteen years of the publication of the prophecy but not within his lifetime.

As I said earlier, the prophecy uses the word ‘earthquake’ but it in fact refers to the Great War, for the following reasons:

1. The word 'earthquake' is often used for war and indeed for every great calamity. The Holy Quran itself uses it in this sense:

إِذْ جَاءَوكُمْ مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنكُمْ وَإِذْ زَاغَتِ الْأَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ وَ تَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ الظُّنُونَا ۝ هُنَالِكَ ابْتُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَزُلْزِلُوا زِلْزَالًا شَدِيدًا⁴⁰

When they came upon you from above you, and from below you, and when your eyes became distracted, and your hearts reached to the throats, and you thought diverse thoughts about Allah. There and then were the believers sorely tried, and they were shaken with a violent shaking.

Since the Arabic *dhildhāl* can be used for any great calamity, and the Holy Quran itself uses it to denote war, the words of the prophecy can rightly be said to point to something other than a literal earthquake.

2. When the Promised Messiah^{as} published this prophecy, he appended to it a note which said:

It is possible that it may not be a common earthquake but some other dire calamity, which would be an example of Judgment Day, the like of which has not been witnessed before, and which would bring about great destruction of life and property.⁴¹

Thus, prior to the event, the mind of the one to whom the prophecy was revealed was drawn to the idea that the earthquake could refer to some other calamity. The critics insisted that he should

not give the earthquake any meaning other than the literal one, but the Promised Messiah^{as} reiterated that the word could not be confined to one meaning when Divine revelation had used it as a metaphor for various calamities. The greatness of this prophecy is that it foretells signs that would be impossible for any man to tell before the event. It also tells the time of the occurrence and highlights the fact that it would be without parallel in history.

3. The very words used in the prophecy make it clear that it refers not to a literal earthquake but some other kind of calamity, because:
 - i. The prophecy says that the calamity would envelop the whole world whereas earthquakes do not occur in the whole world at the same time.
 - ii. The prophecy says the calamity will prove very hard on travellers who will lose their way and stray far from their routes. Earthquakes do not affect travellers in this way. They are more deadly for those living in houses and habitations. A calamity that creates problems for travellers can only be a war that stops them from crossing certain lines and their safety is not ensured.
 - iii. The prophecy points out that the calamity would impact farms, fields, orchards, etc. These, again, are not impacted by earthquakes but by wars in the course of which they might suffer from shelling or be destroyed under a 'scorched-earth' policy.
 - iv. The prophecy also says that the calamity would have harmful effects on birds who would forget to sing and lose their senses. This does not happen in an earthquake, but in a war,

- the not-stop bombing and shelling and the destruction of trees do cause birds to become extinct or to lose their senses.
- v. The prophecy contains the revelation 'I have saved the Israelites from detriment'. This indicates that the calamity would entail some advantage for the Jews, which could not result from an actual earthquake. This, too, was a sign of the Great War that came to be fulfilled. I will explain later how this prophecy is also mentioned in the Holy Quran.
 - vi. The prophecy points to war because it says that 'the Pharaoh and Hāmān and their hosts are in the wrong'. This is an obvious reference to the German Kaiser who thought he was God's Deputy, just as the Pharaoh in the time of Moses thought he was 'God of his people and Mighty'. Hāmān in the revelation refers to the Emperor of Austria, the Kaiser's ally, who had little power of his own and was obedient to the German warlord. If the prophecy meant a literal earthquake, the words 'Verily Pharaoh and Hāmān and their hosts are in the wrong' would have no meaning.
 - vii. The revelations repeatedly promise 'I will come suddenly with my armies.' This also points to war rather than an earthquake.
 - viii. The revelations speak of a volcano the eruption of which will bring advantages for the Arabs and they will venture out of their homes. The description cannot apply to an earthquake. Here the eruption of the volcano means a violent expression of political discontent which may be precipitated by some passing event. The Arabs, realizing that it was against their interests to remain passive, would

venture out of their homes and try to take advantage of the situation.

- ix. The revelations foretell that on that day all dominion will belong to God. This shows that worldly powers will become weak and God will assert His Power with powerful signs.
 - x. One revelation says, 'A mountain fell and came an earthquake.' Even schoolchildren know that earthquakes are not the result of falling mountains; it is the other way round. This also shows that the prophecy does not apply to a literal earthquake but is a metaphorical description of some major calamity that would wreak havoc in the world and nations would start warring against one another.
4. The fourth reason why the word 'earthquake' is indicative of some other calamity is that other revelations of the Promised Messiah^{as} also pointed to a great war. For example, he received the revelation, 'Raise the anchor', which means that every nation would order its navy to be prepared at all times. He also received the revelation, 'Boats sail that there be duels'. This meant that warships would move in all directions seeking naval encounters.

After showing that the earthquake mentioned in the prophecy referred to the Great War of 1914–18, I wish to describe in greater detail how several parts of the prophecy were fulfilled during the Great War.

The first point we must remember in this connection is that, according to the prophecy, war was to result from some catastrophe that would shake the world and cause the war. Accordingly,

the assassination of the heir-apparent of Austria-Hungary and his wife became the cause of the war and not some disputes between nations.

The second feature of the war foretold in the prophecy was that it would impact the whole world. Never before had there been a calamity that impacted the entire world in this way. Europe was already at the centre of the war. Asia quickly became involved, followed by China, Japan and India. A German battleship attacked Indian shores from the Indian Ocean. Iran was the scene of fighting between British and Turk forces. Iranians had trouble with the German Consulate. Fighting took place in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Siberia, and in many parts of Africa. South Africa attacked German West Africa. There was upheaval in South Africa itself. German colonies were attacked in East Africa. On the West coast, fighting took place in the Cameroons. Conflict erupted on the border between Egypt and Tripoli. A German battleship attacked parts of Australasia before being finally cornered. There was fighting in New Guinea. British and German navies encountered each other near the American coast. Canada and the United States entered the war. South American states declared war on Germany. In short, no part of the world remained uninvolved in the war.

Another description given in the prophecy was that mountains and cities would be destroyed and fields would be devastated. This is what transpired. Many hills disappeared because of bombings or the use of mines, and many cities were reduced to rubble. Germany had to pay huge reparations for rebuilding these cities and is still paying them. The damage done to farms and fields was beyond reckoning. Wherever foreign forces advanced,

they destroyed all the green fields and pastures. Artillery lines that were spread over thousands of miles also caused untold damage.

Another feature of the prophecy was that birds would lose their senses, and so it happened that birdlife became extinct in areas where fighting was taking place.

Another sign mentioned in the prophecy was that the surface of the earth would undergo a great upheaval. In France, Serbia and Russia, excessive bombardment produced huge depressions, such that water gushed out from some of them. The fighting involved digging of massive trenches so that the countries that were involved in the fighting became full of these dug-outs. Looking at the landscape no one might think that they were deserted lands.

Another sign was that the waters of streams would become red with blood. This happened exactly as foretold. So much blood was shed that at times rivers and streams turned red for miles. There was so much fighting on different fronts that there were literally streams of blood flowing.

Another sign was regarding the difficulties experienced by travellers and wayfarers and how many would lose their way. This also came true. On the land, because of warring armies and their movements, normal routes became blocked. On the sea, owing to submarine warfare, boats carrying passengers were constantly in peril. When the war started, several hundred thousand people were stranded in enemy countries. Many of them had to reach their own countries by circuitous routes. Troops had to travel by longer routes, shorter routes being under enemy occupation. British soldiers serving in France often lost their way. To prevent this, British soldiers were ordered to wear the names of their regiments and their stations round their necks.

Another sign was that the structures which Europe was trying to build would be demolished. It so happened that, apart from destruction from the physical structures, European culture was also shaken to its core. Europeans are trying to rebuild on those foundations but all efforts seem to fail. The world will see that the pre-war European and Western culture will no longer work and they will be replaced by new values and traditions that will ultimately draw the people of the West towards Islam. This has been decreed by God and nothing can stop it.

Another important sign mentioned in the prophecy was that the people of Israel would be saved from their tribulations. This, too, was fulfilled. During this war, and as a consequence of it, Mr (later Lord) Balfour declared that the people of Israel who had been without a 'homeland' would be settled in their ancient 'homeland' of Palestine. Allied nations promised to do away with all the injustices that the people of Israel had to face in the past. Accordingly, Palestine was taken from Turkey and declared the home of the Jews. The governance of Palestine is being shaped in a way that will make it easy for Jews to make it their homeland and Jews from all over the world are being gathered there. Thus, an old demand of the Jews—that conditions promoting their national cohesion be created for them—has been met.

The strangest thing about this part of the prophecy is that references to it are also found in the Holy Quran. In *Sūrah Bani Isrā'īl*, we read:

وَقُلْنَا مَنْ بَعْدَهُ لَبِئْسَ إِسْرَائِيلَ اسْتَوُوا الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ جِئْنَا بِكُمْ لَفِيفًا⁴²

And after him (the Pharaoh) We said to the children of Israel, 'Dwell ye in the land; and when the time of the

promise of the latter days comes, We shall bring you together out of various peoples.'

Commentators of the Holy Quran take 'the land' to mean Egypt, while some think that it refers to Doomsday. Both interpretations are wrong because the Israelites were commanded to live in the Holy Land and not in Egypt. Similarly, 'promise of the latter days' cannot mean the Doomsday because Doomsday has no relation to living in the Holy Land. The correct meaning is that they were commanded to live in the Holy Land and that when the 'promise of the latter days' comes they will once again be gathered there. This means that there would come a time when they would have to leave the Holy Land, however, at the time of the 'promise of the latter days', (the second coming of the Messiah), they would be gathered once again.

In the commentary *Fathul-Bayān* we are told that the time of 'the promise of the latter days' marks the descent of Jesus from heaven.⁴³ Also, the chapter of the Holy Quran just quoted divides the history of the Jewish people into two major periods. Of the second period, it says:

فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ لِيَسُوءُوا وُجُوهَهُمْ وَلْيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَ لِيَتَّبِعُوا
عَلَوَاتٍ تَنْبِيئًا⁴⁴

So when the time for the latter warning came, We raised a people against you to cover your faces with grief, and to enter the Mosque as they entered it the first time, and to destroy all that they conquered with utter destruction.

It appears from this verse that the 'promise of the latter days'

relates to the time in Jewish history subsequent to the first coming of the Messiah. Since we know that Jews were not gathered but were dispersed, therefore, in verse 17:105 the warning of the latter days relates to the period after the second coming of the Messiah. The words 'shall bring you together' refer to the present influx of Jews into Palestine. Jews from different countries are offered facilities to travel to Palestine and live there. The revelation of the Promised Messiah^{as} 'I will relieve the children of Israel' indicated the end of the opposition of the world to an independent Jewish homeland.

An important part of the prophecy was that the war would start within sixteen years, and it happened likewise. The revelations about the war were received in 1905 and the war started nine years later in 1914.

Another sign of the war was that nations would keep their navies on standby. Accordingly, we find that both combatant and non-combatant nations had to keep their naval forces ready lest some other nation violated their waters and they were unnecessarily drawn into the war. They also needed to protect their sovereignty.

One important sign of the war was the movement of ships for sea warfare. The prophecy pointed not merely to preparations and readiness for naval combat but also to the movements of vessels. Hence, in this war, so many sea vessels were used that they have no parallel in history. Vessels of small size, destroyers, submarines, etc., were used on a scale completely unknown before. The word 'boats' in the revelation shows that smaller vessels would be used much more than big ones.

Another sign was that the war would start unexpectedly.

The suddenness with which this war broke out is known to all. Statesmen later admitted that though they were expecting a war, they did not imagine it would break out so soon. The assassination of the Austrian archduke and his wife proved to be a fuse that sparked a worldwide conflagration.

Another sign of the war was the advantages it was to bring to the Arab nations and how they would make use of this opportunity to go out to war. For a long time, Arabs had entertained the idea of Arab independence. Therefore, when they heard that the Turks had entered the war, they thought the time for their freedom had come. They at once stood up to fight against Turkey and ultimately gained their freedom.

Another sign was, 'I will obliterate habitations much as they have obliterated My name.' It is generally agreed that Eastern France was the worst part of Europe in terms of promiscuity. This area supplied wine to the whole of Europe and pleasure-seekers from Western countries would flock to its beaches. Per the prophecy, this area suffered the greatest destruction. The pleasure resorts were wiped out just as God's name had been wiped out from the hearts of the people.

Another sign mentioned in the revelations was 'Our victory'. This indicated that the side which had the support of the Community of the Promised Messiah^{as} would come out victorious. Since the Promised Messiah^{as} had prayed for Britain, God helped that nation out of this terrible calamity. British statesmen might attribute their victory to their strategies but a careful observation of the crucial phases of the war shows that the British owe their victory to some extraordinary coincidences. This proves that

British victory was due to special Divine help and not merely to human planning.

There were several prophecies implied in this one prophecy. One was that until the 'calamity' appeared, no harm would come to the Czar, and that the harm would only come as a result of the 'calamity'. And yet the harm would not be such as to cause the death of the Czar. Instead, he would be subjected to grave suffering and hardship. The prophecy also implied the end of the Czar dynasty as it did not name any individual but alluded to the Czar as a title. Let us look at how all these prophecies were fulfilled.

Before the Great War, many conspiracies were hatched against the Czar, but none succeeded. However, when the war came and the time appointed by God for the end of Czar arrived, he was taken down so suddenly that it left everyone astonished. It appears that when the revolution of 1917 broke out, the Czar was out of the capital inspecting troops on the borders. When he had left, there had been no sign of any upheaval, but then, because of some indiscretion on the part of a Governor, people became enraged. Such occurrences are common and do not lead to the sudden fall of established states but on this occasion the Hand of God was at work. The Czar, on hearing of this unrest, sent instructions to the Government to put down the dissent with a strong hand, which had the contrary effect of further fuelling public anger. The Czar then replaced the Governor and started back for the capital hoping that his presence would cool sentiments. However, he was advised that the situation was getting worse and that he shouldn't return to the capital at this time. The Czar did not heed this advice thinking that there could be no turmoil in his presence. He had not gone very far when he learnt that a revolution was afoot

and that the revolutionaries had taken possession of the State Secretariat and a popular government had been set up. On March 12, 1917, in a single day, the greatest and most powerful monarch in the world, designated the Czar (literally ‘one who rules over everyone, and is ruled by none’) was deposed from his mighty throne and reduced to being a subject of his people. On March 15, under duress, he signed a declaration that he and his family would never again lay claim to the Russian throne. Thus, in keeping with the Promised Messiah’s^{as} prophecy, the rule of the Czars ended forever, but some parts of the prophecy remained to be fulfilled.

The Czar, Nicholas II, imagined that by surrendering the throne he could save his own life and the lives of the Czarina and their children and they would be able to live as private citizens. This was not to be. He surrendered the throne on March 15. On March 21, he was taken prisoner and sent to Skosilo. On March 22, America recognized the revolutionary government, followed by England, France and Italy on March 24, thus extinguishing the Czar’s last hopes. He could now see that the powers on whose help he had relied and who were his allies in the war against Germany did not take more than a week to recognize a government set up by his disloyal subjects and did not raise even a feeble voice in his support. There were still other pains for him to endure. To fulfil the prophecy, his condition was to become truly pitiful. The Czar was a prisoner but the reins of government were still in the hands of a member of the royal family, Prince Dilvao. The good offices of this prince assured the Czar’s kind treatment in captivity so that the Czar and his family had more or less settled into gardening and other occupations appropriate to an ex-monarch. In July, this prince also had to surrender and the reins of government passed

into the hands of Kerensky. The life of the royal prisoners now became harder, though still bearable. On November 7, Bolshevik revolutionaries dismissed the Kerensky government and the condition of the Czar became so pitiful as to make the stoutest heart flinch. The Czar was removed from internment in the Royal Palace and moved from place to place. Finally, to remind him of the atrocities he committed on his subjects by imprisoning them in Siberia, he was taken to Ekaterinburg, a small town is to the east of the Urals, fourteen hundred miles from Moscow. This was where that machinery that was used in Siberian mines was manufactured and Russian political prisoners were made to work in these mines. The scenes around his new prison reminded the Czar of the atrocities he had perpetrated on his subjects.

The pitiful condition of the Czar was not to be measured by these mental tortures alone. The Bolshevik government reduced his rations and ordinary comforts. His sick child was beaten by ill-mannered guards in front of his parents and his daughters were also mistreated, but even these tortures did not satiate the revolutionaries. They invented new penalties and new pains. One day the virgin daughters of the Czar were raped by the soldiers and the Czarina was forced to watch. Witnessing these brutalities and enduring more pains and poignancies than could have been endured by any mortal, the Czar, at last, met his end. He was shot dead on July 16, 1918, along with the entire royal family. The prophecy 'Even the Tsar at that hour, will be in a pitiable state'⁴⁵ was fulfilled literally.

The war was over. The Czar died a pitiful death. The rulers of Germany and Austria had surrendered their crowns. Cities had been laid waste. Hills had disappeared. Millions of men had

died. Rivers of blood had flowed and destruction had stalked the land. Alas, the world still asks for signs and arguments to prove the authenticity of the Divine Messenger! God's resources are limitless. His punishment is as ready to come as His forgiveness. Blessed are they who understand while there is still time and, instead of warring with their Lord, hasten to make peace with Him. They heed His Signs and do not pass by them as though they did not see them. They draw the Compassion of God, receive His blessings and become a source of blessing for the world.

(10) Expansion of Qadian

Thus far I have narrated prophecies that contained warnings, or warnings as well as glad-tidings. Now I wish to cite prophecies that bore only gave glad-tidings. As an example, I will present three prophecies that had such a broad scope that witnesses to them can be found among friend and foe alike. From the moment that God made them known to the Promised Messiah^{as}, they were reproduced repeatedly in his books and journals.

The first of these three prophecies relates to the expansion of Qadian. The Promised Messiah^{as} was informed that the village of Qadian would grow from year to year and in time would become a large city, like Bombay or Calcutta, with a population of about a million. It would expand towards the North and East as far as the river Beas, which is located nine miles from Qadian.⁴⁶ When the prophecy was published, the population of Qadian was barely two thousand souls. Except for a few houses made of baked brick, most dwellings were made of mud. Rents were extremely

low so that one could have a house for about four or five *annas* a month. The land was so cheap that a plot for building a decent house could be had for about ten or twelve rupees. Hardly any shops existed. The market was so small that it was hard to get two or three rupees worth of flour at a time. Since most people were related to agriculture, they would ground their own flour to make their bread. There was only one primary school and its teacher also served as a postman for an extra allowance. Mail arrived twice a week. Houses in the village were enclosed within the village wall. Thus, there was no apparent reason to believe that such a prophecy could come true.

Qadian was eleven miles from the nearest railway station and only a dirt road connected it to the railway. Towns that are directly connected to the railways are the ones that can be expected to grow. Qadian did not have any local industry that might help it to develop. It was not a district or sub-district. It did not even have a police post. There was no market for any kind of products or goods. At the time when the prophecy was made, the followers of the Promised Messiah^{as} did not number more than a few hundred and the town could not expand even if they were all instructed to come and live in Qadian. It may be said that because of his claim he might have expected his followers to come and live in Qadian and thus cause it to grow, but who could have said that the Promised Messiah^{as} would get such a large following? How often do followers of a spiritual leader give up their vocations and homes to permanently live near their leader? Jesus was born in Nazareth and Nazareth is still a village. Great Saints like Shahāb ad-Dīn Suhrawardī, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindī and Bahā ad-Dīn Naqshbandī (mercy of Allah be on them) were born in villages,

but those villages have remained villages. If they at all grew, it was because of the natural process of growth. The growth of towns or cities is not easy. Towns that are founded by Kings without regard for economic conditions often do not prosper. From an economic standpoint, Qadian was very poorly situated. It was far from the railway line but not so far that it might be adopted as an economic hub in its own right. Nor was it situated on the banks of a river or canal that could help boost trade and development.

Against all odds and in the absence of any apparent means, the Promised Messiah^{as} made the prophecy that Qadian would grow exponentially. With the publication of this prophecy, God caused the Community to start increasing and inspired its members with the desire to come and live in Qadian. Without any formal appeal being made, members began leaving their own towns and villages to settle down in Qadian. The prophecy is yet to be fulfilled to its full extent but the degree to which it has already been fulfilled is truly amazing. At the moment, the population of Qadian is four-and-a-half thousand, which is more than twice the original population. The old village wall has disappeared and the town has expanded far beyond its boundaries. At present, houses can be seen at least a mile out of the old village. Some big brick buildings and wide roads have been added so that what was once a village is now a town. The bazaars too have grown and purchases worth thousands can be made at a time. Where there was only one primary school, there are now two high schools and a theological college. The post office, which received mail only twice a week and was run by the local schoolmaster, now requires a staff of seven or eight. Telegraph facilities are being introduced. A twice-weekly newspaper, two weekly journals (Urdu and English), one

bi-monthly journal, and two monthly journals are also published from Qadian. It has five printing presses, one of them a machine press, and many books are published every year. The name Qadian is firmly installed on the postal map. Bigger towns may lose their mail but not Qadian. In short, even under unfavourable circumstances, Qadian has grown in a way that has no parallel in the world. Its unusual growth is against normal economic laws and is proof of the truth of Divine revelation. Those who have known Qadian in its previous state, whatever their religious affiliations may be, are forced to admit that its growth is an exceptional coincidence. If only they could ask themselves why these coincidences keep happening around the Promised Messiah^{as}!

(II) Financial Support

The second example of glad-tiding given to the Promised Messiah^{as} was the promise of financial support. This prophecy was made in unusual circumstances and in an unusual manner. In fact, this was the first of the Promised Messiah's^{as} greatest prophecies. It happened as follows. The Promised Messiah's^{as} father was taken ill and up until that time the Promised Messiah^{as} had not experienced any Divine revelation. One day, when it seemed that his father had more or less recovered, the Promised Messiah^{as} received the following revelation:

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ⁴⁷

By the Heaven and by the Night-comer.

Since the word *tāriq* means ‘that which comes at night’, the Promised Messiah^{as} understood that the revelation foretold the time of his father’s death and that it had come as a commiseration from God for his impending grief and sorrow. Since many sources of family income were connected with his father, such as the pension he received and the various properties he owned and managed, the Promised Messiah^{as} experienced some anxiety at receiving the news of his father’s impending demise and wondered how the family would fare without him. As soon as these thoughts entered his mind, he received a second revelation that contained a grand prophecy. It said:

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ⁴⁸

Is not God sufficient unto His servant?

Since this revelation promised that God would look after him and meet all his needs, the Promised Messiah^{as} communicated it to several Hindu and Muslim gentlemen so that they would be witnesses to it. He even requested one Hindu friend (who is still alive) to go to Amritsar to have a stone ring made with the revealed words engraved on it. Thus, hundreds of people came to know about the prophecy.

The importance of the prophecy became more evident when, under Divine providence, there arose disputes within the family concerning the inheritance. His elder brother was managing the family matters and differences arose between him and other relatives. The Promised Messiah^{as} advised his brother to be more compassionate towards the relatives, but his brother did not listen to him and the matter finally went to court. The brother

requested Ḥaḍrat Mirza Sahib to pray for a favourable outcome, but when the Promised Messiah^{as} prayed it was revealed to him that his brother would lose and the relatives would win. And so it happened that more than two-thirds of the family property went to other contestants and very little remained with the two brothers. Even though the inheritance the Promised Messiah^{as} received was enough for his own needs, it was too insufficient for the great work he was about to embark on. At that time, the Promised Messiah^{as} was writing his book *Barāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya* which was destined to bring about a revolution in the religious world, and its publication would require significant funds. Even in these desperate circumstances, God inspired the hearts of people, some of whom were not even interested in religion, to contribute towards the publication of the book. Only four parts had been published when it became evident that more funds would be required. The published parts had fulfilled the purpose of diverting attacks on Islam and the Holy Prophet^{sas} but people had now started turning their guns against the Promised Messiah^{as} himself. Hindus, Christians and Sikhs, all joined in to attack him and to ridicule his revelations and prophecies. The object of their propaganda was to mitigate the impact of the Promised Messiah's^{as} books on people's minds and to save their religions from defeat at the hands of Islam. Even some Muslims joined them out of envy. Thus, the Promised Messiah^{as} was attacked from all sides. It is easy to imagine the challenges that would be faced by someone who is targeted by friend and foe alike. To repulse these attacks and to uphold the glory of Islam, further resources were required, and God provided them as well.

Then came the third major change in the life of the Promised

Messiah^{as} when he was informed by God that he was the Promised Messiah and that Jesus, the first Messiah, had died like all mortals. When this claim was announced, many who had up until then sided with him turned away and only 40 persons pledged allegiance to him. The Promised Messiah^{as} was now practically fighting on all fronts. Those who had hitherto supported him now turned against him. There was the need to publish answers to the objections of the opponents, to make public his claim and the arguments in support of it, and to spread leaflets in all countries to inform them of his claim. All of this entailed huge expenses. God, on the other hand, demonstrated His power by opening the door to still greater expenses. He instructed the Promised Messiah^{as} to establish a guest-house in Qadian and to invite people to come and visit him to increase their knowledge and remove their doubts or misgivings. The loss of old friends and helpers, the greater need for printing and publishing, and now the building of a guest-house and catering for the guests, all these challenges might well have jeopardised the whole Movement. Hosting a stream of visitors amounted to a huge liability. However, Allah so motivated the hearts of his handful of followers (none of whom could be called rich) that they endured hardships and privations but did not let the interests of faith suffer. In truth, it was not their perseverance that was at work, it was the Hand of God who had promised 'Is not Allah sufficient unto His servant?'

This was the time when the Ahmadiyya Community faced persecution from all sides. The clerics had issued Fatwas to the effect that it was permissible to kill Ahmadis, dispossess them of their properties, and marry off their women without the formality of a divorce. They said that these acts were not only permissible

but praiseworthy. Mischievous and criminal-minded people started to look for ways to act on this Fatwa to appease their selfish and carnal desires. Ahmadis were being turned out of their homes and dismissed from work. Their properties were being forcefully usurped. Many Ahmadis found themselves with no choice but to migrate, and the only place they could migrate to was Qadian. This also increased the expenses of hospitality. The Community now numbered about two thousand and each member was the target of hostility. It was amazing indeed that a couple of thousand people, who were in constant fear for their lives and honour and property, and were engrossed in religious debate day and night, should still be able to provide enough money for the propagation of Islam throughout the world, for the hospitality of visitors who came to Qadian for learning, and for the requirements of their brothers who had migrated to Qadian because of persecution.

Hundreds of people had their meals twice a day at the guest-house of the Community and various provisions had to be made for the poor and needy. Because of the increasing numbers of migrants, every home had become a guest house. Every room in the Promised Messiah's^{as} own home accommodated visitors or migrant families. The financial burden was far beyond human capacity to bear. Every morning and every evening brought with it new challenges and new responsibilities, but the Divine promise 'Is not Allah sufficient unto His servant?' carried away all troubles. The clouds that seemed to threaten the very foundation of the Community would soon bring welcome rain and each drop would echo God's promise: 'Is not Allah sufficient unto His servant?'

I believe the people of Afghanistan can relate to the difficulties of these early years because Afghanistan itself recently experienced a large influx of refugees, even though Afghanistan had an established government to cater for their needs, many of the refugees were able to pay their own expenses, and the number of hosts was far greater than the refugees (ten million Afghans had to entertain one or two hundred thousand refugees). One can thus understand how much pressure was faced by the small Community of about two thousand when they were tasked with feeding and housing hundreds of visitors and poor migrants while at the same time financing the propagation of Islam and fighting for their own survival.

The requirements of the Community were not for a couple of days or months or years. They continued to grow with every year and God continued to provide for them by His grace. In 1898, perceiving the need to impart religious education to the youth of the Community, the Promised Messiah^{as} opened a high school, thus greatly increasing the expenditure. He then started two monthly journals, in English and Urdu, which required even more funds. God continued to provide for it all. Today, the Community runs a high school, a theological college, a girls' school, and several primary and middle schools. There are also many Indian missionaries working in different countries. Missions of the Community have been established in Mauritius, Ceylon, England and America. Several departments oversee publication, instruction and education, general administration, arbitration, adjudication, etc. The budget of the Community amounts to about three to four hundred thousand rupees. All this is provided for by the grace of

Allah in keeping with His promise ‘Is not Allah sufficient unto His servant?’

Our Community consists mainly of the poor. It is the eternal Divine practice that it is the poor who initially believe so that people look at them say:

مَا تَرَكْنَاكَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَرَادُوا بِأَيْدِي الرَّأْيِ⁴⁹

We see that none have followed you but those who, to all outward appearance, are the meanest of us.

The wisdom behind this is so that no person would claim that the Divine Community spread because of his support, and no opponent would raise such an objection. A small and poor community could not have borne such burdens without Divine help. Members of the Community pay government taxes just like everyone else; they pay revenue assessed on their lands; they pay for transport and health services. In addition to all this, they also contribute towards the propagation of Islam and have continued to do so for the last 35 years. More affluent and distinguished people have joined the Community of late but at the same time the financial obligations have increased manifold. It may seem strange that while others who are richer and more prosperous grumble over their private expenses, Ahmadis continue to spend hundreds of thousands of rupees in the way of Allah year after year. Many of them, by the grace of Allah, would willingly give away everything they possess if they were asked to do so. How did all this come about? Surely, the one who revealed ‘Is not Allah sufficient unto His servant?’ brought about this revolution in people’s hearts. What other power could have made such a promise at a time

when the Promised Messiah^{as} felt anxious about minor expenses, and then fulfilled it?

There are tens of millions of Muslims in the world but how much do they contribute towards the propagation of Islam? If other Muslims in India were to make financial contributions for the propagation of Islam at the same rate as members of the Ahmadiyya Community, they should be able to collect up to Rs. 90,000,000 every year for this purpose (supposing that their economic level was the same as that of Ahmadis). But since Indian Muslims include many extremely rich princes and traders, they should be able to contribute more than Rs. 150,000,000 for the propagation of Islam. In effect, they do not even spend Rs. 200,000, compared to the Rs. 500,000 contributed by our Community. The reason for this disparity is that we are helped by God's promise 'Is not Allah sufficient unto His servant?'

(12) Expansion of the Community

As another example of glad-tiding received by the Promised Messiah^{as}, I will present the prophecies related to the spread of the teaching that he had been sent to convey, i.e., the knowledge and wisdom of the Holy Quran that people had become oblivious to and forgotten. This prophecy was witnessed by hundreds of thousands of people and was made at a time when there were no visible means for its fulfilment. The words of the prophecy were:

میں تیری تبلیغ کو زمین کے کناروں تک پہنچاؤں گا۔⁵⁰

I shall cause your message to reach the ends of the earth.

میں تیرے خالص اور دلی محبوں کا گروہ بھی بڑھاؤں گا اور اُن کے نفوس و اموال
میں برکت دوں گا اور ان میں کثرت بخشوں گا۔⁵¹

I will cause an increase of your true and sincere friends
and shall bless their lives and their properties and they will
grow in number.

He, God, will make it [the Ahmadiyya Community] grow, so that
its size and influence begins to seem strange.

يَأْتُونَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ۔⁵²

They [visitors to Qadian] will come to you by every dis-
tant track. Meaning, people from every country will join
you.

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ۔⁵³

Verily We will grant you increase of everything.

Some revelations were received in English, such as:

*I shall give you a large party of Islam.*⁵⁴

Another revelation said:

ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَ ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ۔⁵⁵

A party out of the first and a party out of the latter
[peoples].

This also means that a large number of the members of the
Ahmadiyya Community would be drawn from the followers of
earlier Prophets as well as from Muslims. Another said:

يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ كُنْتُ لَا أَعْرِفُكَ⁵⁶

O Prophet of Allah, I did not recognise you.

These words were spoken by the earth, as it were, which means that people would generally be remorseful at their failure to believe in the Promised Messiah^{as}.

Yet another revelation was:

إِنَّا نَرِثُ الْأَرْضَ نَأْكُلُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا⁵⁷

We shall inherit the earth and shall keep eating into it from its boundaries.

Many of these revelations were received and published at a time when the Promised Messiah^{as} did not have even a single follower. Others were received when the Community had been established but was still in a nascent stage. Therefore, it was not a small matter for the Promised Messiah^{as} to publish the revelation that a time would come when he would have a large following; that he would have followers not just in India but in the whole world; that people from all religions would leave their own faiths and join him; that Allah would so increase their numbers that no country would be left that did not receive his message. Is the human mind capable of predicting such events based on mere suppositions?

This is the age of knowledge and people are abandoning the religions in which they were brought up. Christians are no longer Christians, Hindus no longer Hindus, Jews no longer Jews, Parsis no longer Parsis. Old religious beliefs have been replaced by rationalism wearing the garb of religious traditions. The names differ but the outlook of people around the world is becoming

similar. In these circumstances, the Promised Messiah's^{as} claim that people who are abandoning their own religions to follow reason and nature would come to accept his message, seemed quite far-fetched.

Also, the Promised Messiah^{as} did not speak any languages other than Urdu, Persian and Arabic. He was a resident of India and, until recently, Indians had been looked down upon by Arabs and Persians. No one could have believed that the inhabitants of Arabia, Iran, Afghanistan, Syria and Egypt would pledge allegiance to an Indian. No one could have believed that British-educated Indians who believed that the Holy Quran was the word of the Holy Prophet^{sas} (not of God) would end up believing that God speaks to His servants—even to those who do not know English, because not knowing English was like a sin in the eyes of the English-educated Indians. The Promised Messiah^{as} was completely ignorant of European languages, sciences, customs and institutions. He had never stepped out of his home province. Only once did he go as far as Aligarh. Nobody would have thought that such a man would address himself to Western countries and gain followers. Nobody would have thought that modern European minds would pay any attention to the teaching of an Asian, much less accept it. Nobody would have imagined that people in isolated parts of Africa would accept the teachings of a man from India. These insuperable difficulties were challenged by the Word of God, and the Word of God came true.

This was a man who walked alone in the small yard of his house writing down the revelations from God as he received them and giving glad-tiding of his global acceptance at a time when he was barely known in his own locality. Despite all the hurdles, he rose

and thundered like a cloud and spread all over the sky to the dismay of hostile and jealous onlookers. The cloud spread and rained over India, Afghanistan, Arabia, Egypt, Ceylon, Bokhara, East Africa, Mauritius, South Africa, parts of West Africa (Nigeria, the Gold Coast, and Sierra Leone), Australia, England, Germany, parts of Russia, and America. Today there is not a continent in the world where the Community of the Promised Messiah^{as} is not to be found and there is no religion of which it has not partaken. Christians, Buddhists, Parsis, Sikhs, Jews, have all joined its ranks. Europeans, Africans, Americans, and Asians are among its members.

If what the Promised Messiah^{as} had foretold beforehand was not the Word of God, then how did it come true? Is it not strange that while Europe and America had been decimating Islam until recently, today—through the Promised Messiah^{as}—Islam is overcoming them? Several hundred people in England and America have accepted Islam already, as have many individuals from Russia, Germany and Italy. Islam that was suffering defeat after defeat at the hands of other religions is now triumphing over them in every field because of the prayers of the Promised Messiah^{as}. ‘Praised be Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.’

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Argument 11—Love of God and the Holy Prophet^{sas}

After mentioning some of the prophecies of the Promised Messiah^{as}, I will proceed to the eleventh argument for the truth of his claim. The Holy Quran says:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِيْنَا لَنَهْدِيَهُمْ سُبُلَنَا¹

And as for those who strive in Our path—We will surely guide them in Our ways.

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ²

Say, ‘If you love Allah, follow me: then will Allah love you.’

These two verses teach us that true love for God and the Holy Prophet^{sas} will inevitably draw man closer to God and make him His beloved. Therefore, a criterion to judge the truth of the people of this ummah is that their hearts should be filled with the love of God and they should be completely obedient to the Holy Prophet^{sas}. From this standpoint, too, the truth of the Promised Messiah^{as} is as evident as day.

I need not elaborate on the subject of love, because poets all over the world have described it through the ages, and all religions consider it to be the basis of faith and nearness to God. The most comprehensive description of love, however, is to be found in the Holy Quran:

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا
وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِينُ تُرَضُّونَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي
سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرٍ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾

Say, if your fathers, and your sons, and your brethren, and your wives, and your kinsfolk, and the wealth you have acquired, and the trade whose dullness you fear, and the dwellings which you love are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah comes with His judgment; and Allah guides not the disobedient people.

According to this passage, perfect love of God is the willingness to sacrifice everything for His sake. If a person is not prepared to sacrifice everything for God, his profession of love is in vain. Many would assert that they love God and His Prophet. In fact, no Muslim can be found who would say he does not love God and the Holy Prophet^{sas}. But does the love they profess have any visible expression? Does it influence their lives, their speech, their everyday conduct? Many profess deep love for the Holy Prophet^{sas} and compose or listen devotedly to panegyrics in his praise, but they do not pay any heed to what he taught and valued. Love of God is on their lips but they do nothing at all to please Him and to acquire nearness to Him. When someone dear to us comes to visit, we lay aside everything to meet him. When we have a chance to meet our loved ones, we are pleased beyond measure. When we receive attention from a ruler, we feel proud and elated. Yet, people who profess to love God do not even care to offer the daily prayers. And even those who do offer them do so half-heartedly, bowing and prostrating without knowing what they are

doing. Their prayers are devoid of fervour and longing. The same is true of fasting. The reward of fasting, says the Quran, is God Himself; yet, those who profess the love of God do not seek His nearness through obligatory and voluntary fasting. Many profess the love of God but continue to usurp the rights of others, tell lies, make false accusations, and do not desist from back-biting. They say they love God but do not care to read the Holy Quran or try to ponder over its meaning. The way most people treat the Holy Quran is not the way they treat messages from friends. Who would leave unopened a letter received from a friend and not try to comprehend its meaning? The mere claim of love is not the same as true love. True love is always accompanied by action and sacrifice. In this age, such love can only be witnessed in the person of Promised Messiah^{as} and in his followers.

Ever since the Promised Messiah^{as} attained the age of consciousness, he was filled with love for God and the Holy Prophet^{sas}. From his earliest years, he was observant of the laws of the Shariah and was inclined to solitude. After his early education, his father wanted him to get employment, but the Promised Messiah^{as} was averse to worldly pursuits and wanted to focus on the remembrance of God. He belonged to a noble family and could have been offered a respectable official position, as his elder brother had been, but the Promised Messiah^{as} was not inclined to it. It cannot be said that this was because of laziness or laxity because his subsequent life shows that few people could be as hard-working and diligent as he was.

An old Sikh resident of Qadian, despite his religious differences, used to relate the following incident with tearful his eyes: 'One day Mirza Sahib's father sent me to persuade him to see some

high officials for appointment as a revenue officer. I found Mirza Sahib in his cloister, absorbed in study. When I asked him why he did not go with his father who wanted to find a respectable position for him, he looked at me and said, "Please convey to him with all due respect that I have already found the One I want to serve. I had better be left alone."

In those days, he was absorbed in a study of the Holy Quran, Hadith, and *Mathnawi Rumi*. His only visitors were some needy people and orphans with whom he would share his meals. Often he would give away all his food and be content with some roasted grams. Retiring and self-effacing, he was easily forgotten, so much so that at times his brother's family would forget to send him his meals.

At one time, the Promised Messiah^{as} left Qadian and went to Sialkot hoping that his father would forget about wanting to get him a job. In Sialkot, he took up a small position to provide for his basic needs. This job did not hinder him from his worship and devotion to God. It was in Sialkot that he realized for the first time that Islam was in a precarious state and that other religions were all out to destroy it. Sialkot was a centre for Christian missionaries who routinely proselytized in the streets and squares. They would attack Islam and rouse feelings against it. The Promised Messiah^{as} was surprised that no one came forward to answer them. Christianity was seen as the religion of the state and people did not want to confront Christian missionaries. With very few exceptions, Muslim clerics were afraid to contradict the critics, and even those who did so were easily defeated because they did not have true knowledge of the Holy Quran. Seeing this state of affairs, the Promised Messiah^{as} resolved to counter the Christian

missionaries and started debating with them vociferously. Later, he extended his scope to the Hindus and people of other religions.

Sometime later, his father asked him to return to Qadian. Seeing that his son had already been in employment, he thought that he would now be ready to accept a permanent position and again tried to persuade him to this end. However, the Promised Messiah^{as} continued to decline. He did realize that his father was going through a lot of difficulties and, therefore, took upon himself the task of pursuing the various court cases the family was involved in. During his attendance at the courts, the Promised Messiah's^{as} love for God became even more evident. One day, while he was outside the courtroom waiting for the proceedings to start, the time came for prayer. The Promised Messiah^{as} went outside to pray even though people insisted that he should stay as the proceedings might start at any time. While the Promised Messiah^{as} was praying, the case was taken up and he was summoned but he only returned after he had finished his prayer. By rights, the case should have gone against him, but God so loved the action of the Promised Messiah^{as} that he caused the attention of the judge to be diverted and, ignoring the absence of the Promised Messiah^{as}, he decided in his favour.

A life-long friend of the Promised Messiah^{as} relates that one day the Promised Messiah^{as} came to Lahore to pursue an appeal in the highest court. The case was such that if the appeal was lost, it would be a great setback for the Promised Messiah's^{as} father and, consequently, for himself. The friend relates that when the Promised Messiah^{as} returned from the court, he seemed very happy, which made him think that he had won the case and, therefore, congratulated him. The Promised Messiah^{as} said that

he had in fact lost the case but was happy because he would now have time to remember God in solitude.

When the Promised Messiah^{as} got weary of these court cases, he wrote a letter to his father asking to be relieved of the duties. I reproduce the letter below to demonstrate how averse the Promised Messiah^{as} was to worldly endeavours even in his youth, and how he loved to spend time in the remembrance of God. The Promised Messiah^{as} wrote this letter in Persian, as was customary at that time:

حضرت والد مخدوم من سلامت! مراسم غلامانہ و قواعد فدوانہ بجا آورده، معروض حضرت والا میکنم، چونکہ دیریں ایام برای العین مے بینم و پچشم سر مشاہدہ میکنم کہ در ہمہ ممالک و بلاد ہر سال چنان وبائے مے افتد کہ دوستاں را از دوستاں و خویشاں را از خویشاں جدا میکند۔ و بیچ سالے نمے بینم کہ لیں نازہ عظیم و چنینی حادثہ الیم در آل سال شور قیامت نیکنند۔ نظر بر آں دل از دنیا سرد شدہ است و زو از خوف جاں زر دو اکثر لیں دو مصرعہ شیخ مصلح الدین سعدی شیرازی بیادے آیند واشک حسرت ریختہ میشود۔

مکن تکلیف بر عمر نا پائیدار مباحس اسمن از بازی روزگار

و نیز لیں دو مصرعہ ثانی از دیوان فرخ (حضرت اقدس کا ابتدائی ایام کا تخلص ہے) نمک پاش جراحی دل میشود۔

دنیائے ڈول دل مہندائے جواں کہ وقت ابل مے رسد ناگہاں

لہذا می خواہم کہ بقیہ عمر در گوشہ تنہائی نشینم و دامن از صحبت مردم بچینم و بیاد او سبحانہ مشغول شوم، مگر گزشتہ را عذرے و مافات را تدارکے شود۔

عمر بگذشت نماندست تجویایم چند بہ کہ دریاؤ کسے صبح کنتم شامے چند

کہ دنیا را اسے محکم نیست و زندگی را اعتبار سے نے۔ وَالْكَیِّسُ مَنْ خَافَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ
مِنْ أَفْئَةٍ غَيْرِهِ۔ وَالسَّلَام۔

My master and father, Peace!

With tender obeisance and due humility, I submit that I can see with eyes wide open that every year some calamity overtakes countries and towns and separates friend from friend and relation from relation. Alas, these calamities, these tragedies, produce not the wail and woe they should. Seeing all this, my heart has turned cold towards the world and my face has become pale with fear. Often do I remember the two lines from Sheikh Muşliḥ ad-Dīn Sādi of Shīrāz and my tears flow when I do so:

Depend not on this transient life;

Think not you are safe from the sport of passing time.

The two lines out of the verse of Farrukh of Qadian [a pen-name used by the Promised Messiah^{as} in his early years] also act as salt for my wounded heart:

Young one, set not thy heart on this mean world;

The moment of death may come suddenly.

Therefore, I desire to spend the rest of my life in solitude,

to shun the company of men and remain occupied in the worship of God that this may atone for past neglect and guard against possible disasters.

*Life has run its course and nothing is left but a few steps;
Better, therefore, that I keep awake a few nights in remembrance of Someone.*

This world has no firm foundation and life here is not dependable. 'Wise is he who learns from the example of others.' And peace.

When his father passed away, the Promised Messiah^{as} withdrew from everything and busied himself in religious study, prayer, fasting, and nights spent in worship. He would refute the attacks of the enemies of Islam through newspapers and magazines. While people fought over pennies, the Promised Messiah^{as} handed over all his property interests to his elder brother, who provided his daily meals and clothing. The Promised Messiah^{as} did not take any share of the property nor did he undertake any responsibilities related to it. He urged people to pray and expounded upon the beauties of Islam. He looked after the poor and needy. With little else to give, he shared his meals with them, while he himself lived on a few ounces of food a day or nothing at all. Nor was his share of the property so small that he would be content with meagre sustenance, for he shared a whole village with his brother and there was additional income from other properties.

At this time, the Promised Messiah^{as} started praying for

Islam, given its precarious state, and was guided to write the book *Barāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya*. He said that this book would consist of 300 arguments in proof of the truth of Islam and prove to be a formidable weapon in refuting objections against the existence of God and the truth of the Holy Prophet^{ṣas}. Even though the book remained incomplete, it drew tributes from friend and foe alike. Many eminent religious scholars expressed their opinion that it had no parallel in the 1300-year history of Islam. This was no light praise considering the stature of the scholars in the golden days of Islam. The Promised Messiah^{as} also wrote in various newspapers and periodicals about the greatness and truth of Islam and rebutted the objections of the opponents. Soon, people of all religions turned against him but he remained resolute.

At this time, foul attacks were being made on the person and character of the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} by Christians and Aryā Samājists alike, and yet the Indian ulema were busy issuing edicts of *Kuḥf* against one another. Islam was on the verge of being trampled as the clerics debated whether or not it was lawful to raise the two hands with *takbīr*, where to place the folded arms to rest while standing, and whether the congregation of worshippers should say ‘*Āmīn*’ aloud or silently. They had no time for anything else. The Promised Messiah^{as} alone stood up in defence of Islam and impressed upon Muslims the importance of good deeds. Instead of siding with the Ḥanafīs or the Ahle-Ḥadīth, he insisted that people sincerely act upon what they believe to be true and shun ungodly behaviour.

The Promised Messiah^{as} stood up against Pundit Dayānand, the founder of the Aryā Samājists. He also debated with Lekh Rām, Jiwan Dās, Murlī Dhar, and Inder Mun, and continued

to pursue them until they either stopped attacking Islam or met their end. Among Christian missionaries, the Promised Messiah^{as} debated with Fateḥ Masīḥ, Ātham Martin Clarke, Howell, and Ṭālib Masīḥ. He then had his leaflets translated into English and sent thousands of copies to Europe and America. Whenever he heard of someone being interested in Islam, he would write to him and invite him to the true religion. The famous American convert, Alexander Russell Webb, was a fruit of the Promised Messiah's^{as} efforts. Webb was a very respectable man and had at one time served his country as an ambassador. When the Promised Messiah^{as} heard of his interest in Islam, he held a written correspondence with him as a result of which he accepted Islam. He then resigned from his post in order to serve his new faith.

In short, the Promised Messiah^{as} was completely and at all times filled by the desire to spread the message of the Oneness of God and the truth of the Holy Prophet^{ṣas}. Later, when he announced his claim of being the Promised Messiah^{as}, the scope of his work grew far wider. There was no enemy of Islam whom the Promised Messiah^{as} did not challenge. When he heard about Dowie, the American impostor already mentioned, he countered him from across the oceans. When Piggot made his claim from England, the Promised Messiah^{as} at once challenged him. If there was an enemy of Islam anywhere in the world, the Promised Messiah^{as} was sure to confront him and not let go until the opponent either retreated or met his fate.

The Promised Messiah^{as} lived to the age of 74 years and each and every hour of his life was spent in the service of Islam. At times, he would spend months engrossed in writing and seemed to have no sleep at all. He was so full of love for God and the

Holy Prophet^{sas} that he saw the mission of serving Islam as his own, and would be personally grateful to anyone who did any service to Islam. He would work endlessly night after night and if someone helped him in comparing or correcting proofs, or sat up with him for a night or two, he would express such gratitude and indebtedness to him as if he had done him a great personal favour. Despite ill health and physical weakness, he wrote more than 80 books and hundreds of leaflets, and delivered hundreds of lectures. Aside from this, he had his daily visitors with whom he held discourses about the merits of Islam. Such was his dedication that if his doctors advised him to rest, he would tell them that his rest lay in spreading Islam and countering its opponents. Right to the day of his demise, he remained busy in the service of Islam. The day before he died, he had been busy completing a book inviting Hindus to an understanding of Islam. All this is proof of the passion and fervour he had for demonstrating the glory of God and establishing the truth of the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

As I have said before, true love cannot be known by the mere professions of love. However, if someone demonstrates his love through his every action and every deed, then expressions of love by such a person are a true reflection of his innermost feelings. Expressions of love by a true lover are powerful and inspire the hearts of others. Here I will cite two poems by the Promised Messiah^{as}, one expressing his love for God and the other for the Holy Prophet^{sas}:

قربان توست جان من اے یادِ محسنم بامن کدام فرق تو کردی کہ من کنم
My Beneficent Lord, my life is but a humble offering to Thee,
What hast Thou grudged me that I should grudge Thee
anything?

ہر مطلب و مراد کہ می خواستم زغیب ہر آرزو کہ بود بخاطر معینم
Every desire and every wish for which I prayed to the Invisible,
Every longing that my heart determined to ask

از جود دادہٴ ہمہ آں مدعائے من واز لطف کردہٴ گذرِ خود بمسکنم
Has been achieved through Thy Magnanimity,
Indeed Thou hast honoured this humble dwelling with Thy
Gracious visit.

ہیچ آگہی نبود زعشق و وفا مرا خود ریختی متاعِ محبت بدامنم
Nothing did I know of love or loyalty,
It is Thou Who hast filled my bosom with the wealth of Thy
love.

اِس خاکِ تیرہ را تو خود اکسیر کردہٴ بُود آں جمال تو کہ نمود است احسنم
Thou Who hast turned this base clay into gold,
It was Thy Beauty that lent beauty and grace to me.

اِس صیقلِ دلم نہ بڑہد و تعبد است خود کردہٴ بُلطف و عنایات روشنم
The refulgence of my heart is not due to my piety or penance,
It is Thou Who hast illumined me with Thy favours and Thy
gifts.

صد منت تو بہت بریں مشت خاک من جانم رہن لطف عمیم تو ہم تم
*Hundreds of Thy favours have been showered on this mortal
 frame of clay,*

My soul and my body owe gratitude to Thy unflinching kindness.

سہل است ترک ہر دو جہاں گر رضائے تو آید بدست اے پنے و کہف و مانم
*Easier is it to renounce the two worlds if Thy pleasure
 Can be had by me, O my refuge, my shelter, my peace!*

فصل بہار و موسم گل ناہم بکار کاندہ خیال زوئے تو ہر دم بہ گلشنم
*Of what avail are the spring and flowers to me?
 I am ever in the garden contemplating Thy Face.*

چوں حاجتے بود باذیب دگر مرا من تربیت پذیر ز رب مہینم
*Would I care for anyone who can teach?
 I have received tuition from my Lord and Protector.*

زاناں عنایتِ ازلی شد قریب من کاندہ ندائے یار زہر کوئے و برزمن
*The eternal benevolence has drawn so near to me,
 That the Voice of the Lord reaches me from every nook and
 corner.*

یارب مرا بہر قدم استوار دار واں روز خود مباد کہ عہد تو بشکنم
*O God, make me firm at every step.
 May the day never dawn when I should fail in my bond to
 Thee!*

در کوئے تو اگر سر عشاق را زند
 اؤل کسه که لاف عشق زند منم
*If Thy lovers have to lose their heads for daring in Thy name,
 Then I would be the first one to proclaim his love for Thee.*⁴

عجب نورست در جان محمد
 عجب لعلی ست در کان محمد
*There is light miraculous in the soul of Muhammad^{sas},
 There is a ruby rare in the mine of Muhammad^{sas}.*

ز ظلمتہائے دل آنگہ شود صاف
 کہ گردد از بجان محمد
*The heart is cleared of all darkness,
 If it but becomes one of the lovers of Muhammad^{sas}.*

عجب دارم دل آں ناکساں را
 کہ زو تابند از خوان محمد
*I wonder at the wisdom of those fools
 Who turn away from the feast abundant of Muhammad^{sas}.*

ندانم هیچ نفسی در دو عالم
 کہ دارد شوکت و شان محمد
*No man in the two worlds do I know
 Who shares the greatness and glory of Muhammad^{sas}.*

خدا زان سینہ بزار است صد بار
 کہ هست از کینہ داران محمد
*A hundred times disgusted is God with him
 Who harbours hostility to Muhammad^{sas}.*

خدا خود سوزد آن کرم دنی را که باشد از عدوانِ محمدؐ
God Himself consumes in fire the contemptible worm
Who chooses to be one of the enemies of Muhammad^{sas}.

اگر خواهی نجات از مستیِ نفسِ بیا در ذیلِ مستانِ محمدؐ
If you want to shake off the intoxication of the baser self,
Then come and sit among the devotees of Muhammad^{sas}.

اگر خواهی که حق گوید ثنایت بشو از دلِ ثناخوانِ محمدؐ
If you wish that God Himself should sing your praises,
Then sing sincerely the praises of Muhammad^{sas}.

اگر خواهی دلیله عاشقش باش محمدؐ هست بُرهانِ محمدؐ
Lookest thou for proof for his truth? Then his lover be,
For Muhammad himself is the proof of Muhammad^{sas}.

سرے دارم فدائے خاکِ احمدؑ دلم هر وقت قربانِ محمدؐ
A head have I to offer at the altar of Ahmad^{as},
And a heart ready to be sacrificed for Muhammad^{sas}.

بگیسویں رسولِ اللہ کہ ہستم نثارِ زوئے تابانِ محمدؐ
By the tresses of the Messenger of God^{sa},
It is true, I am infatuated by the resplendent face of
Muhammad^{sas}.

دریں ره گر کشدم در بسو زند نتایم زو ز ایوانِ محمدؐ
Whether I am killed or burnt in this path,
Never will I turn away from the court of Muhammad^{sas}.

بکارِ دینِ مترِ سم از جهانے کہ دارم رنگِ ایمانِ محمدؐ
In matters of faith, I fear not even the whole world,
For I am dyed in the faith of Muhammad^{sas}.

بے سہل است از دنیا بُردین بیادِ حسن و احسانِ محمدؐ
Easy it is to be carried away from the world,
In memory of the charms and graces of Muhammad^{sas}.

فدا شد در رهش هر ذرہٴ من کہ دیدم حسنِ پنهانِ محمدؐ
Every atom of mine is sacrificed in his path,
For I have peeped into the hidden beauty of Muhammad^{sas}.

وگر اُستاد را نامے ندانم کہ خواندم در دبستانِ محمدؐ
I know not the name of another teacher,
For I have been taught in the school of Muhammad^{sas}.

بدیگر دلبرے کارے ندارم کہ ہستم کشتہٴ آنِ محمدؐ
I am not interested in another beloved,
For I have been captivated by the comeliness of Muhammad^{sas}.

مرا آں گوشہٴ چشمے بایدِ نخواہم جز گلستانِ محمدؐ
Only a favour need I from the eye of Muhammad^{sas},
All I seek is access to the garden of Muhammad^{sas}.

دلِ زارم بہ پہلویم جوئید کہ بستیمش بدانانِ محمدؐ
Do not look for my stricken heart in my side,
For I have tied it to the robe of Muhammad^{sas}.

من آں خوش مرغ از مرغانِ قدسم که دارد جا به بُستانِ محمدؐ
I am a sweet bird out of the sacred flock
Which has its nest in the grove of Muhammad^{sas}.

تو جانِ ما منور کردی از عشقِ فدایت جانمِ اے جانِ محمدؐ
Thou hast illumined my soul with thy love,
May I be a sacrifice to thee, soul of Muhammad^{sas}.

دریغا گردهم صد جاں دریں راهِ نباشد نیز شایانِ محمدؐ
Even were I to offer a hundred lives in this path,
It would still fail to match the worth of Muhammad^{sas}.

چه یسیتِ با بداند این جواں را که ناید کسِ بیدانِ محمدؐ
What terror does this champion [Muhammad^{sas}] strike
That no one can meet him in his arena!

الا اے دشمنِ نادان و بے راهِ بترس از تیغِ بُرانِ محمدؐ
Beware, O foolish and misguided enemy,
Fear the sharp sword of Muhammad^{sas}.

رهِ مولیٰ که گم کردند مردمِ بجز در آل و اعوانِ محمدؐ
The path of God from which men have strayed far,
You can still find with the followers and friends of
Muhammad^{sas}.

الا اے منکر از شانِ محمدؐ ہم از نورِ نمایانِ محمدؐ
Listen, O, you who deny the greatness of Muhammad^{sas},
And the luminous light of Muhammad^{sas}!

کرامت گرچہ بے نام و نشان است یا بنگر ز غلمان محمدؐ
*Though miracles seem a thing of the past,
 Come thou yet and see them with the servants of
 Muhammad^{sas}.*

Just think, this was a man who spent literally every moment of his life in devotion to God, expounding the message of His Prophet, and nurturing his love for him and his teaching. This man suffered at the hands of his own people and others because of his devotion to God and his regard for the name and honour of His Prophet. Every particle of his being was devoted to the service of Islam. If such actions are mischievous, and if such love is heresy, and if such devotion to the Holy Prophet^{sas} is misguided, then:

یہ گمراہی خدا مجھے ساری کرے نصیب یہ کفر مجھ کو بخش دے سارے جہان کا
*Such misguidance may God grant me in full!
 May He bestow upon me this unmitigated kufr!*

God, His Word, His Prophet^{sas}, and human reason are all witnesses that such a man could not be a pretender. He could not be misguided. If a man could love and obey God and His Prophet^{sas} to this degree, and devote himself so completely to the duty of propagating the truths and verities taught by them, and if he could show more regard for them than any other man living or dead, and yet be branded an impostor and *Dajjāl*, then we must say that there has never lived, nor shall ever live, a man who is deserving of Divine guidance!

References

- ¹ *Sūrah al-Ankabūt*, 29:70
- ² *Sūrah Āl-e-Imrān*, 3:32
- ³ *Sūrah at-Taubah*, 9:24
- ⁴ *Ā'ina-e-Kamālāt-e-Islam*, Rūḥāni Khazā'in, vol. 5, p. 658
- ⁵ *Ā'ina-e-Kamālāt-e-Islam*, Rūḥāni Khazā'in, vol. 5, p. 649

Argument 12—Life-Giving Powers

As the twelfth argument for the truth of the Promised Messiah^{as}, I wish to cite his powers of resurrection. This argument, like the previous ones, is made up of thousands of sub-arguments. Today, Muslims, like Christians, believe that Jesus possessed the power to restore the dead to life. This belief, as I have shown already, is contrary to the teachings of the Holy Quran. It amounts to *Shirk*, or setting up equals with God. It is subversive of faith in the One and Only God. Jesus did, in a sense, restore the dead to life, and this is a miracle that all Prophets perform. The word of God testifies to this and to deny it is to deny the Divine Word. It is the spiritual and not the physical dead who are restored to life by Prophets. In fact, to replace spiritual death (and disease) with spiritual life (and health) is the *raison d'être* of the coming of Prophets. No Prophet has ever appeared in the world who did not restore the dead to life in this sense. From Adam to the Holy Prophet of Islam^{as}, all Prophets have been raised for this purpose. One criterion by which the claims of great Prophets may be judged is whether or not they bring life to the spiritually dead. If a claimant to a spiritual office is unable to show this miracle, his claim must be held in great doubt. On the other hand, if he can demonstrate his life-giving powers, he must be a man of God. No mortal can have life-giving powers except with the sanction and support of God, and one who earns Divine sanction and support must be true in his claim.

In the case of the Promised Messiah^{as}, this sign was demonstrated so extensively that no parallel is to be found in the history of any other Prophet, except the Holy Prophet^{sas} of Islam (God

knows best). The Promised Messiah^{as} appeared at a time when spiritual death stalked the world. People had been dead so long that decomposition had set in. It was such a terrible death that all Prophets had warned about it. The Holy Prophet^{sas} had said:

إِنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ نَبِيٌّ بَعْدَ نُوحٍ إِلَّا قَدْ أَنْذَرَ قَوْمَهُ الدَّجَالَ وَإِنِّي أَنْذِرُكُمْ

Every prophet after Noah has warned his people of the menace of the *Dajjāl*. I also warn you against him.¹

There could be no dead worse than those ‘killed’ by the *Dajjāl*, and to revive such dead as had been despaired of was a formidable task indeed. And yet this is what the Promised Messiah^{as} accomplished. He restored to life hundreds of thousands of the spiritually dead and created a following that has no parallel other than the Companions of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Moses was a political as well as a spiritual leader, therefore, many of his followers felt obliged to follow him for political expedience. Of those who truly believed in him, the Holy Quran says:

فَمَا آمَنَ لِمُوسَى إِلَّا ذُرِّيَّةٌ مِّنْ قَوْمِهِ²

And none obeyed Moses save some youths from among his people.

This was the situation in Egypt. But even after Moses left Egypt, most of his followers did not at heart believe in him and only accompanied him for political considerations. The Holy Quran says that after the exodus, some of Moses’ followers said to him:

يَسْمَعُونَ لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّى نَرَى اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ³

‘O Moses, we will by no means believe you until we see Allah face to face;’ then the thunderbolt overtook you, while you gazed.

It is likewise evident from the Holy Quran, the New Testament, and historical records that very few people believed in Jesus. Those who followed him sincerely and received true life through him were fewer still. The Promised Messiah^{as}, being a disciple of the Holy Prophet^{sas} of Islam, came to the world to demonstrate the spiritual graces of his master and to spread his blessings. Since he was the Messiah of Muhammad’s^{sas} dispensation, God caused many of the spiritually dead to be revived through him. The dead were such as could not have been revived other than through the life-giving fountain of the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

It is a wonder that in this age—which is marked by false innovations in religion, greed for material things, rampant sin and debauchery, hatred of religion, heedlessness towards the Word of God, callousness towards morality, unconcern for good deeds and prayer, and indifference to the plight of faith—the Promised Messiah^{as} created a Community of followers who, despite being as educated as any, believe in God and His Prophet^{sas}, in angels, in prayer, miracles, revelation, the Hereafter, the Day of Judgment, Heaven and Hell, and observe all the religious obligations prescribed by Islam. Few among his followers can be found who are lacking in the observance of daily prayers and other obligations of the faith. Any lack in this regard is because they are in a nascent state, but the weakness is slowly being overcome.

It is amazing that at a time when college-educated people and those who have acquired any degree of modern education have become averse to religion and see it as no more than a means of political cohesion, the Promised Messiah^{as} has created a following that has acquired modern education and yet their prayer mats become wet with their tears when they pray, their hearts are filled with tender fervour when they supplicate before God, and they hold the interests of Islam and their duty to propagate it above any desire for political gain or fame or wealth. Many among them would do well in the world, but because they see the dire state of Islam and realize the need for intellectual Jihad, they have given up all their worldly aspirations and busied themselves in the service of Islam. They prefer scarcity to plenty, starvation to satiety. Ever on their lips is the name of God and the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Their hearts are filled with love for God and the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Their actions demonstrate the glory of God and the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Their countenances shine with the love of God and the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

They live in this world and are aware of the concepts of freedom of thought and action, but they realize that Islam today does not require freedom but obedience. The harm done to Islam by the mischief of the *Dajjāl* has been through vast and organized propaganda designed to destroy Islam. They realize that the progress of Islam today requires only one thing: that all Muslims submit to God and come together under one banner. It requires the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlettered, to focus their efforts and organize themselves under one leader so that they can together counter the forces of infidelity and chaos. Realizing all this, they chose God's commandments

and the interests of Islam over their own beliefs and opinions. They refused to be influenced by the seductions of the world and willingly accepted the yoke of obedience. They were ready to follow whatever directions their leader gave them in the interests of Islam and to obey him without hesitation, without demur. No sacrifice was too heavy, no difficulty too great. They did not merely make these claims but practically demonstrated them. Today, many such young men are living far from their homes and families, undergoing physical hardships and financial constraints; they are not doing this to earn money but to spread Islam at the behest of their leader, the Khalifah of the Promised Messiah^{as}. There are many who eagerly wait for their own turn to leave their homes and set out to proclaim the glory of God.

فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَنْتَظِرُ⁴

There are some of them who have fulfilled their vow, and some who still wait.

May Allah reward them with the best of rewards. They are persecuted for the sake of God and are driven out of their homes and abused and ridiculed, but they accept it all because they have been enlightened, their inner eye has been opened, and they see what others do not see. They are beaten and treated with contempt but only desire the well-being of others.

Who is the solitary individual fighting for the protection and expansion of Islam in America? He is like a drop in an ocean but does not despair. He single-handedly strives to bring America to the fold of Islam, for he knows that one living person is more powerful than millions of the dead.

Who are the people working to spread Islam in Britain? They are, again, the dead who have been quickened to life by the Messiah of the Holy Prophet's dispensation. Even though England was able to subjugate India on the physical level, followers of the Messiah know that England is spiritually dead and has strayed far from God. They have carried to England the water of life which the Messiah gave them and it will now give life to others. The power and wealth of England do not frighten them, for they know that they are alive and England is dead. Why would the living be afraid of the dead?

Who are the people upholding the Oneness of God and fighting idolatry in the West Coast of Africa where Christian missionaries had converted hundreds of thousands to Christianity and taught them to worship a mortal? They are the ones who were revived to life by the Promised Messiah^{as} and have stood up to defend Islam at a time when others have despaired of it.

Who was it that thought of Mauritius and took upon himself to revive the forgotten inhabitants of that island? Who went to Sri Lanka, the land of ancient traditions, and woke up its people? Who went to Russia and Afghanistan to give them the gift of life? It was none other than men who had been brought back to life by the Promised Messiah^{as}.

Who can mistake these signs of life? Of four or five hundred million Muslims, not one has left his home to preach Islam to the world, and yet hundreds out of the small community of Ahmadis are engaged in this task. They are taking the message of Islam to countries where it was not even thought possible.

If the members of this Community were not imbued with

new life, how did they manage to change the map of the world? Where did they find the courage to fight for Islam all alone in other countries? What was it that forced them to leave their hearth and home and bear hardship in strange lands? Do they not have parents and wives and children and siblings and friends? Do they have nothing else to do? What was it that led them away from the world and towards the service of their faith? It was the fact that they received the spirit of life and gave up all dead things for the sake of God Who is the Source of all life.

قُبِّرَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَلْقِينَ ۝

So blessed be Allah, the Best of creators.

The true import of the Promised Messiah's^{as} life-giving power cannot be fathomed without mentioning the true touchstone of life: that life begets life. The Promised Messiah^{as} breathed such life into the hearts of his followers that it not only revived them but gave them the power to revive others. If this power had not been imparted to them by the Promised Messiah^{as}, then his own power to raise the dead through the Grace of God would have remained in doubt. One might have been led to believe that his powers, his special knowledge, his warnings, his prayers, were all due to some peculiarity of his own mind rather than a gift of God. This is not so, because the Promised Messiah's^{as} spiritual powers did not disappear with him. Instead, they were inherited by his true followers in various degrees according to their capacity. As a result of their love and devotion to him, God reveals knowledge to them. Many among his followers can hold discourses with such clarity

and eloquence that it at once removes all doubts and ambiguities. The Holy Quran, which had hitherto been like a sealed letter, is for us like an open book. Its difficulties and subtleties have made manifest for us. There is no religion or idea in the world contrary to Islam that we cannot, by the grace of God, demolish with the help of the Holy Quran alone. There is no seemingly objectionable verse of the Holy Quran of whose solution God has not apprised us through His subtle revelations.

Nor did the experience of Divine revelations and visions remain limited to the person of the Promised Messiah^{as}, for there are many among those he revived to whom God speaks through revelation and shows them dreams and visions that come true in their time and continue to bring conviction to them and to their friends. God speaks to them and discloses to them His will, which helps them walk the path of righteousness and strengthens their faith.

The acceptance of prayers and the gift of special Divine help also continue, thanks to the beneficent influence of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Those who have found life through him have experienced this life-giving power in their own lives. They have first-hand knowledge of the acceptance of prayers and receive God's special help more often than others. Their enemies suffer disgrace and defeat, while their own efforts and sacrifices are rewarded manifold. They are never left alone. God is with them and is ever vigilant for them.

In short, not only did the Promised Messiah^{as} himself raise the dead to life, he also left behind followers who could do the same. This can be accomplished by none other than God's

special Messengers whom He favours. We are convinced that the Promised Messiah^{as} owes all this to the Holy Prophet^{sas} and that his mission is the mission of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. The Promised Messiah^{as} says:

كُلُّ بَرَكَتٍ مِّنْ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَتَبَارَكَ مَنْ عَلَّمَ وَتَعَلَّمَ-⁶

Every grace comes from Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him. Blessed, therefore, is he who taught and he who learnt.’

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- ¹ *Kanzul-'Ummāl*, vol. 14, p. 611, Mu'assasat ar-Risālah, Beirut, 1985
- ² *Sūrah Yūnus*, 10:84
- ³ *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:56
- ⁴ *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb*, 33:24
- ⁵ *Sūrah al-Mu'minūn*, 23:15
- ⁶ *Tadhkirah*, p. 35–36, 4th edition, 2004; English rendering, 2018, London, p. 56

Part III—Invitation



I believe that the twelve arguments I have presented as proof of the truth of the claim of the Promised Messiah^{as} should suffice. Anybody prepared to deliberate upon them with the intention of finding out the truth will become convinced that Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} is the Messiah promised by God, that He has been appointed by God and sent as a Messenger, and that it is now futile to wait for another Messiah. Whoever gains this conviction will hasten to accept him, just like the thirsty hasten to the fount of water, and will consider it his salvation to become part of the Community established by the Promised Messiah^{as}.

What can be more convincing for a Muslim than the testimony of God and His Prophet? In the case of the Promised Messiah^{as}, we have both these testimonies, as well as the testimonies of other Prophets. Every Prophet whose words have been persevered to this day testifies to the truth of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Our own reason and judgement also point to the need for a Reformer in the present age. The signs of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi^{as} described by the Holy Prophet^{sas} have all been fulfilled.

The purity of the Promised Messiah's life testifies to his truth. The enemies of Islam whom the Promised Messiah^{as} was destined to defeat are present in this age and he has defeated them in the manner that had been foretold. The inner conflict and corruption

of the Muslims has reached the highest point that could be possible in the presence of the Holy Quran, and the Promised Messiah^{as} has resolved these problems in the best way possible. Throughout his life, God treated him as He treats His Messengers and those He loves. He granted him victory in every field and saved him from harm. His enemies suffered the same fate as befits the enemies of Prophets and Messengers. God even caused the laws of nature and the heaven and the earth to work in his favour. Special knowledge of the Holy Quran was bestowed on him and he was provided with the means for spreading this knowledge. He invited all those who were considered most learned to compete with him but no one came forward. His works miraculously surpassed all others and the following Divine promise testified in his favour:

لَا يَمَسُّهَا إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ¹

[The Quran] which none shall touch except those who are purified.

The door to the knowledge of the unseen was opened for him and he was informed beforehand of thousands of events that came to be fulfilled in their time, thus demonstrating the Might and Power of God. God says that He does not reveal abundant knowledge of the unseen except to His Messengers. The Promised Messiah^{as} lived his whole life in devotion to God and to His Prophet^{sas}, and such lovers are never deprived of His grace. He left behind a holy and devoted following. Some of his followers enjoy such a relationship with God that they are able to quicken the spiritually dead and resolve spiritual problems. They are devoted to the faith

and indifferent to the allure of the world. They long for the glory and triumph of Islam and do not care for anything else.

To refuse to accept his claim in the presence of all this evidence cannot be pleasing to God. Anyone who loves Islam and the Holy Prophet^{sas} and is prepared to place the interests of Islam above all personal considerations will not hesitate to accept the truth after it has become so evident.

If the arguments which I have presented are insufficient to prove the truth of his claim, then, may I ask, what other arguments are there through which the truth of past Prophets was established and on whose basis they are accepted and revered? If there are not even as many arguments as I have presented above to prove the truth of any past Prophet, (excepting, of course, the Holy Prophet^{sas}), then why do we even believe in them? True faith is not inherited from parents or accepted as a tradition; it is acquired through thought and deliberation. If this is true, then we have to accept one of two things: either we deny all past Prophets, or we accept the claim of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

Any intelligent and insightful person would surely choose the second alternative and not hesitate to accept the Promised Messiah^{as} who has come to establish the truth of the Holy Prophet^{sas} of Islam, and to lead Islam to triumph, and to make Muslims true Muslims once more. To accept the Will of God and to subscribe to His will results in countless blessings. To resist His will or to go against it yields no blessings.

The condition of Islam today is pitiable indeed. Nobody who loves Islam can view its current state with equanimity; He will do all he can for its success and strive to secure it against all danger. The enemies of Islam have become so hardened that they can

see nothing in it but evil. The so-called friends of Islam are either inwardly averse to Islam or oblivious to its fate. They pay no more than lip service to Islam and are focused on political expedience. If a country loses its freedom, they raise such hue and cry, but if hundreds and thousands of Muslims give up Islam and turn Christians or Hindus, they are not moved in the least. They have no lack of volunteers when it comes to their political ambitions, but no one comes out of his home to propagate Islam. If someone refuses to accept the Turkish Sultan as Khalifah, this infuriates them, but denial of the Holy Prophet^{sas} does not perturb them in the least. This attitude is becoming more and more prevalent. The condition of the Indian Muslims is such that, far from preaching Islam to others, if someone even tries to respond to the attacks against Islam, they take such a person to task saying that this attitude is inexpedient in the current circumstances. In short, Islam has been cast aside like something frivolous, and its name is used only for political gain. There is one way to change this situation and to rescue Islam from this abject state, and it is by accepting the Promised Messiah^{as} and entering his fold. Otherwise, there is no way for Islam to progress. Jihad by the sword cannot help Islam. Unless people correct their faith and understand the true meaning of Islam and hold fast to the Rope of Allah, Islam cannot be expected to rise again.

The enemies of Islam allege that the Holy Prophet^{sas} used the sword to spread Islam and did not have any arguments to convince people of its truth—God forbid! Today the Muslims themselves seem to support this objection. However, God has now willed to counter this vile attack on His Beloved Prophet^{sas}. For this purpose, He has sent one of a follower of the Holy Prophet^{sas} to defeat

the enemies of Islam and to once again lead Islam to triumph with the sword of argument and persuasion. This is to show to the world that what has been achieved by the servant was achieved even more effectively by the Master^{sa}. Aside from this, there is no help for Islam today. God wishes to bring the enemies of Islam under the Holy Prophet's subservience. To make this possible, there is only one way, and it is to present to the world the true Islam taught by the Promised Messiah^{as}, in the manner that he taught, with the true sincerity that he instilled in people's hearts, and thus guide lost mankind back to the right path. Had God willed to bring about the triumph of Islam through some other means, He would not have closed all those avenues for us. To turn away from the Promised Messiah^{as} now is to hinder the progress of Islam and to embolden its enemies to continue their onslaught on our Holy Prophet^{sas} and to denigrate his status, something which no honourable Muslim can tolerate. The Holy Prophet^{sas} has said:

That *ummah* can never die which has me at one end, and the Messiah, son of Mary, at the other.²

This shows that only he who finds safety within these two walls will be able to preserve his faith. He who rejects the Promised Messiah^{as} after he has come will be devoid of God's protection. He who hinders the Promised Messiah^{as} is, in effect, the enemy of Islam and is averse to seeing Islam prosper. Otherwise, why would he oppose the raising of a wall that ensures safety for Islam? Such a person is the target of Divine wrath and it was better for him if he had not been born to witness this unhallowed day.

Great Divine promises are associated with the coming of the

Promised Messiah^{as}, for the revival of Islam is destined to take place through him. Islam is to have a new lease on life with his coming. Just as a dried-up tree becomes verdant if it receives abundant rain in time, so will Islam blossom with the coming of the Promised Messiah^{as}. A new power and a new spirit will be breathed into those who believe in him. God has waited long and remained silent, but no more. He will not tolerate that his own creature should be worshipped in His place, or be declared as His son who sits alongside him in Heaven, or is said to bring the dead to life, or has the power to create new life. God is Merciful, but He is also vigilant for His honour. He waited long for people to turn to His Holy Book but the Muslims only turned away from it and became engaged in frivolous things. They paid little regard to the Book of God and forgot the verse:

يَرْبِّ إِنَّ كَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا ۝٣

‘O my Lord, my people indeed treated this Qur’an as a discarded thing.’

God has turned away from them and will not look upon them until they take the hand of the Promised Messiah^{as} and make a pledge that they will never again be guilty of such negligence and that they will try to make amends for their past shortcomings. Muslims loved the world instead of God, therefore, God took the world away from them and brought ignominy upon them. They professed to be Muslims and yet they buried the Beloved of God (the Holy Prophet^{sas}) underground and raised the Messiah of Nazareth alive to Heaven; hence, God made them low on the earth and made the Christians rulers over them. This will not

change until they reform themselves. Worldly schemes and machinations will be of little avail to them because their abject state is the result of Divine displeasure. Until the Muslims make peace with God they will continue to suffer ignominy after ignominy. Blessed, therefore, is he who hastens to make his peace with God, for he will be saved from ignominy. The Help of God will be with him and the Hand of God will guide him at every step.

The coming of the Promised Messiah^{as} is a momentous event, not something ordinary, for he is the one to whom the Holy Prophet^{sas} has sent his greetings.⁴ The Holy Prophet^{sas} said that Muslims should reach him even if they have to bear great hardships in doing so.⁵ There are prophecies about him in all the religions of the world; there is no Prophet who did not foretell his coming. How great then is the man whose coming has been foretold by so many Prophets and who is awaited by their followers! How blessed are those who witness the time of the Promised Messiah^{as} and partake of these blessings!

The coming of a Messenger of God is a rare event, particularly one of such import as the Promised Messiah^{as}. The Holy Prophet^{sas} has given the glad-tiding of his coming more than of anything else, hence we cannot expect the arrival of anyone greater than him. He is the last Khalifah for the ummah of the Holy Prophet^{sas} and only the Day of Judgment is awaited after him. Every day of this time is precious, so precious that the world and all that it contains is nothing compared to it. Fortunate are those who know the value of the Promised Messiah^{as} and believe in him in order to earn the approval and pleasure of God. Such people will find the purpose of their birth and the secret of submission to God will be revealed to them.

When a messenger comes from God, his Community does not always remain in the same state. It starts with the poor and ends with monarchs. There comes a time when his Community dominates the land in which the Messenger was sent. Therefore, our Community will not always be the Community of the poor. It will grow day and night. All the governments of the world together cannot stop its progress. One day, it will eat away at all religions and sects, as was revealed to the Promised Messiah^{as}, ‘Those who believe in you will prevail over the disbelievers till the Day of Resurrection.’⁶ Also, God will cause the numbers of those who remain outside his fold to keep declining until Kings will join this Community.⁷ It will not remain subjugated but will prevail. It will not remain weak but will be victorious, as a revelation received by the Promised Messiah^{as} says:

بادشاہ تیرے کپڑوں سے برکت ڈھونڈیں گے⁸

Kings will seek blessings from your garments.

There is a time for everything. The same achievement can at one time bring a person great esteem, but at another time it might not even be noticed. Those who were the first to believe in the Holy Prophet^{sas} remain to this day the spiritual leaders of the world, whereas most of those who believed after Islam became victorious remain unknown. Therefore, those who join the Ahmadiyya Community now, when it is thought to be weak and insignificant, will attain the honour of early believers and will be worthy of special rewards and blessings. Even though a lot of time has elapsed, the door to honour is still open and the path to God’s nearness is

still easy. I invite you to value this time and to join those who are loved by God by responding to His call, saying:

رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا⁹

Our Lord, we have heard a Crier calling us unto faith, 'Believe ye in your Lord,' and we have believed.

I say truly that nobody can find God today outside Ahmadiyyat. Anyone who searches his heart will admit that he does not have such firm faith in God's words as one should have in indubitable realities. He will also fail to find in his heart the light by which he can behold the face of God. This certainty, this conviction and this light will not be found outside the Community of the Promised Messiah^{as}. God has willed to bring everyone together on one hand. He who knows that death is certain cannot accept a life remote from God and devoid of His Light. Hasten, therefore, to the Light and to the conviction that you will find today in Ahmadiyyat alone, without which life can have no charm. Lead others in your declaration of faith so that you are remembered with honour and respect and so that believers who come after you pray for you to the end of days.

True, those who join a Divine movement have to carry a heavy burden, but not every burden is burdensome. Does the peasant who carries on his back the produce of his labour see his load as a burden? Does the mother who carries her baby in her arms consider the baby to be a burden? Likewise, serving the faith of Allah and striving on its behalf is no burden for believers. Others may think it a burden, but for believers, it is a source of joy and peace. Do not be overawed by the responsibilities you will incur

by accepting the truth. Think, instead, of the favours of God and the Holy Prophet^{sas}, and do not hesitate to lend shoulder to the burden which it is the duty of every Muslim to carry. You are a Sovereign but, in the eyes of God, you are equal to every other human being. The service of Islam is as obligatory upon you as it is upon them. Just as it is incumbent upon them to believe in God's Messengers, so it is upon you. Submit, therefore, to God's teachings and commandments and enter this Divine Community in order to reap Allah's rewards, the smallest of which is more precious than your entire kingdom. The Holy Prophet^{sas} has said:

مَنْ فَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ شَيْئًا فَلَيْسَ مِنَّا

He who keeps away from a Divine Community by so much as a step is not one of us.¹⁰

To stay out of a Community raised by God, therefore, is a serious matter. It is especially serious for those whose responsibility is twofold: towards themselves and towards those who follow their lead. Men follow their leaders even in matters of religion. In the sight of God, the mistakes they make are the mistakes of their leaders. The Holy Prophet^{sas} said this when he wrote to the Roman Emperor:

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتَ فَعَلَيْكَ إِتْمُ الْأَرْبَسِينَ

If you deny, the sin of your subjects will also be upon you.¹¹

Therefore, Your Majesty, believe, so that your subjects may have no difficulty in believing as well, and so that you may not keep others from believing and become responsible for their sins.

Share, rather, the reward of their belief and of the good deeds that will result from believing.

Life here is transitory. Nobody knows how long each of us may last. Sooner or later all must prepare to depart and stand in the Presence of Almighty God. Nothing will then avail but true beliefs and good works. All of us, rich or poor, leave this world empty-handed. Neither rich, nor poor, nor kings, take anything to the Hereafter. We all carry only our faith and our good works with us. Believe, therefore, in the Messenger of God, so that God may grant you peace. Answer the call of Islam, so that you may become accepted by God. The duty that was mine has been discharged. I have delivered to you the message. It is for you to accept or not to accept. The least I hope and expect is that you will read this message with care, and if you find it right and true, you will not hesitate to believe. May God make it so! Our final words are:

وَأَخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All praise for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

References

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- ⁴ *Ad-Durr Al-Manthūr*, part. 2, p. 688, Dār al-Iḥya at-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, 2001
- ⁵ *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Kitābul-Fitan, Hadith no. 4084
- ⁶ *Tadhkirah*, p. 48, 4th edition, 2004; English rendering, 2018, London, p. 76
- ⁷ *Tadhkirah*, p. 232, 4th edition, 2004; English rendering, 2018, London, p. 363,370
- ⁸ *Tadhkirah*, p. 8, 4th edition, 2004; English rendering, 2018, London, p. 13
- ⁹ *Sūrah Āl-e-'Imrān*, 3:194
- ¹⁰ *Majma az-Zawā'id*, vol. 5, p. 290, Kitābul-Khilāfah, Hadith no. 9135
- ¹¹ *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, vol. 1, p. 688, Hadith no. 9137, Alamul Kutub, Beirut, 1998