AND FROM AMONG YOU THERE SHOULD BE A PARTY WHO INVITE TO GOOD AND ENJOIN THE RIGHT AND FORBID THE WRONG. AND THESE ARE THEY WHO ARE SUCCESSFUL.

The Holy Qur'an Ch. 3 verse 103

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OUR BELIEFS

As shadu-an ila ha ill-aahu wahdahu la sharika lahu wa ashshadu-anha Muhammadon abduhu wa rasuuluhi.

1. We believe Allah to be the Possessor of all the perfect attributes, free from all defects and imperfections, Unique in His Person, unrivalled in His Attributes and Works, and One without a partner.

2. We hold it essential to believe in angels, all of the Divine Books, and all the prophets and messengers of God.

3. We believe that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the Khatam al-Nabiyin. With his advent religion has been perfected, so he is the Last Prophet to whom no prophet shall come, neither a new one nor a former one.

4. We believe in the life after death, and in all matters relating to the grave, the day of judgement, and paradise and hell, that are proven from the Qur'an and Hadith.

5. From the depth of our hearts, we hold the Righteous Caliphs, the Holy Companions (aslih), the Purified Wives, and members of the Holy Household (ahl baith), as beloved, worthy of respect, and honourable in the sight of God.

6. We hold the Imams Abu Hanifah, Shiafi, Malik, and Ahmad Hanbal to be the leaders of jurisprudence (fiqih); and sants such as Shaikh 'Abdul Qadir Jilani, Khawaja Naqshbandi, and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi to be leaders of Tawwuf (the spiritual sciences). We believe all such elders of the religion to be worthy of esteem.

7. In accordance with the Holy Prophet's sayings about mujaddids and mullahs, we believe in the truth of the mujaddids of all the centuries, and in accordance with the same tradition, believe in Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian as the Mujaddid of the fourteenth century of Hijrah, not as a prophet.

8. We consider each such person to be a Muslim who professes to believe ila ha ill-aahu, Muhammadur rasul Allah (there is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) and calls himself a Muslim.

9. All the members of the Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore believe in acting according to God's Book the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and if no specific direction is found there, they give precedence to the Hanafi school of jurisprudence.

The Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore has not only been proclaiming these beliefs but, for over eighty years, it has been engaged in the propagation of Islam and service to its cause. The whole world and in particular the Muslim religious scholars of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent have borne witness to this fact.

SWORN DECLARATION OF HAZRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD OF QADIAN:

"I make it clear to the public that I swear by Almighty Allah that I am not a kafir. My belief is ila ha ill-aahu Muhammadur rasul Allah, and regarding the Holy Prophet I believe that he is the Messenger of Allah and Khatam al-Nabiyin" (the Qur'an, 33:40). I swear to this statement as many times as the Holy Qur'an, and as many times as there are excellency of the Holy Prophet in God's eyes. No belief of mine is opposed to the directions of God or of the Holy Prophet, and he who thinks otherwise is mistaken. Whoever still considers me a kafir, and does not refrain from declaring me as such, should remember with certainty that God will question him after his death."

"In all matters my beliefs are the same as those of the other ahl sunnah. In this house of God, I admit most clearly that I believe in the finality of prophethood of the Khatam al-anbiya, the Holy Prophet. Whoever denies the finality of prophethood, I consider him to be a disbeliever and outside the pale of Islam."

SWORN DECLARATION OF HAZRAT MAULANA MUHAMMAD ALI, FIRST HEAD OF THE LAHORE AHMADIYYA COMMUNITY:

"I, Muhammad Ali, head of the Lahore Ahmadiyyah Community, do swear by Almighty God that my belief is that Hazrat Mirza Sahib was a Mujaddid and the Messiah, but not a prophet, and that a person cannot become a kafir and excluded from the pale of Islam by denying him as such: this was also the belief of Hazrat Mirza Sahib himself. "O God, if I have lied in swearing by Thy name, send upon me such exemplary punishment as could not come from human means, and by which the world would see how terrible and frightening is God's punishment for those who deceive His creatures by swearing falsely in His name."
THE CHIEF ATTRIBUTES OF GOD
by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad
(The founder of the Ahmadiyya movement in Islam, the promised Messiah, the Mehti and the Mujaddid of the 14th century Hijri)

"He is Allah besides Whom there is no God: The Knower of the unseen and the seen; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful"

- 59:22

We shall now describe the chief attributes of God as mentioned in the opening chapter of the Quran which, by consensus of opinion, and according to a saying of Prophet Muhammad, is the quintessence of the Holy Book.

Attributive Names

Among the attributive names of the Almighty, four stand out prominently in the Fatihah: "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, the Beneficent, the Merciful, Master of the day of Requital. Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help. Guide us on the right path, the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor those who go astray."

Of these attributive names, priority has been given to "the Lord of the worlds" (Rabb al-'alam), next comes "the Beneficent" (al-Rahman), then "the Merciful" (al-Rahim) and, last of all, "Master of the day of Requital" (Malik yaum al-din). These attributes manifest themselves in this very order which is, therefore, the natural order of their display.

First Grace

The divine grace of Rabubiyyat, or bringing to perfection by fostering, which is absolute and all-encompassing, covers all things from heavens down to this earth without any discrimination of the animate or the inanimate. It is on account of this attribute that a thing which existed not comes into being and, passing through a process of evolution, attains to its highest point of perfection. The Quran says: "Indeed He (Allah) has created you by various stages." And again: "You shall certainly ascend to one state after another."

It is by means of this great attribute that all the souls and all the bodies have come into existence, and each and every thing is fostered and fed. It is, as it were, the life-breath, the animating spirit of the whole universe. Should it cease to function ever for a moment, the whole world would disappear, and if it had not been, there would not have been any creation. Hence of all His gracious attributes, God has made first the mention of Rabb al-'alam (the Lord of the worlds), the reason being that the attribute of Rabubiyyat has precedence and priority over all the other attributive names. Their relative importance is further shown by the fact that while the name Allah is found in the Quran some 2,800 times, the name Rabb occurs about 960 times, no other name being so frequently mentioned.

Second Grace

The second kind of grace, standing next in importance, is the general grace. The difference between the two kinds is that whereas the former is Rabubiyyat on an unconditional and universal scale, the existence and exhibition of the whole universe having been on account of it, the latter special divine favour having its relation exclusively with the living creatures. The purpose of this divine favour is to bestow upon all living creatures, according to their needs, without any one's having any right, title or privilege thereto. It is neither a recompense nor a reward for any one's actions or deeds. On the other hand, it is on account of the blessings of this divine grace that every living creature lives, eats and drinks, and has its needs satisfied and fulfilled; and that all the requirements of life, necessary for the subsistence of each and every living being and its species, seem to have been provided for and supplied.

All these are signs of the same divine grace that, whatever was needed for the physical development of living beings, has all been given unto them, in the same way, for the good of such creatures which, along with their physical upbringing, also stand in need.
of spiritual nourishment - they have in them the power to make spiritual advancement. Divine Word, just in times of urgent need, has ever since been revealed for their guidance. In short, it is by means of this second kind of God's grace that man has been successful in getting over his various needs and requirements. For his residence he has the vast surface of this earth, the sun and the moon for light, air for breathing, water for drinking, different kinds of food for eating, many medicinal herbs for the treatment of his illness, clothes and garments of so many kinds for wearing, and heavenly Books to give him guidance. And none there is who can put forth the claim that all these things have been created in consequence of his actions, and that he had done some noble deed as a reward whereof the Lord of the world has conferred all these innumerable blessings upon him.

It is thus clear that this divine grace, which is in operation in many different ways for the good of living beings, is a gift without any right or title. It is not a reward nor a return to compensate some deed or action, but it is purely a fine fervour, an admirable ardour of divine love and kindness, so that every living soul may get to its destined goal, and the needs which have been infused into his nature may be accordingly provided for. Therefore, the purpose of God's eternal favour in this grace is to provide for the requirements of man and all other animals so that they may perpetuate and the powers and faculties created in them may not remain in a state of inaction. The existence of this bountiful attribute in the person of the Almighty stands manifestly proved by an observation of the law of nature, for, no sensible person can have any objection to the fact that all the indispensable necessities of this world - the sun, the moon, the earth, the elements of nature, etc., whereon depended the life of all living creatures - have come into existence on account of this divine grace, and each and every living being, without any discrimination of man or beast, believer or heretic, good or bad, is deriving benefit from these great gifts according to his needs, and not a soul there is that has been deprived of this great good, which has been called Rahmaniyyat. With reference to this attribute, God says: "My mercy encompasses all things."

Since, after Ruhubiyyat, this divine grace stands second in dignity and rank, the Almighty has made a mention of it after the attributive name of Rabb al-alamin, keeping in view their natural order and sequence.

**Third Grace**

The third kind of divine grace known as Rahimiyyat is of a special nature. The difference between Rahimiyyat and Rahmaniyyat is that, whereas it is not essential for the recipient of benefit under Rahmaniyyat to make himself noble and good as a prerequisite for the attainment of that favour nor to pull himself out of darkness, nor to perform some kind of strenuous spiritual struggle but, under that attribute, the Supreme Being confers on himself on every living creature all the requirements of life which a living being naturally stands in need of, and provides for all the requirements without any request or attempt for their achievement. In the second kind of grace, effort and struggle, purification of the heart, prayer and supplication, humility and humbleness, turning towards the Lord, and any other sort of spiritual struggle that suits the occasion, is an essential condition. This favour is achieved only by he who seeks after it and it is granted unto him who works hard for it. Its existence, too, is proved by an observation of the law of nature. For, it is clear that the unconcerned cannot stand on the same level with those who work hard and strive in the way of God. There is no doubt that people who struggle on the right path, abstaining from every kind of evil and darkness, are made the recipients of a special kind of favour. And it is on account of this special grace that Rahim is the name of the Almighty in the Quran. This attribute, for the reason of its being a special kind of favour, bound up with certain conditions, stands next to Rahmaniyyat, because the latter came into play first, after which the attribute of Rahimiyyat began to function. We are told in the Holy Quran that "those who believed and those who fled (their homes) and strove hard in Allah's way - these surely hope for the mercy of Allah. And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

In short, God's grace of Rahimiyyat surely comes upon those who deserve it, and none there is who sought after it and got it not.

**Fourth Grace**

The divine grace of the fourth kind, called Malikiiyyat, is of a greater nature. It is such that it cannot be displayed merely on account of one's hard work and labour. The first and foremost condition for its coming into play is that this world of cause and effect should completely cease to exist and the perfect power should display its splendour without God's stirring up the usual causes. For, in this last grace, the
finis of all the favours, whatever more can be imagined intelectually with regard to the previous favours, is that this grace should be crystal-clear, and not a shade of doubt or deficiency should be left in it. In other words, there should not remain the slightest suspicion regarding the fact of the Merciful's having bestowed it with a will, and that it is the real and true favour and the perfect special blessing; rather the bountifulness and benefaction of the Great Giver of this grace should shine forth like the sun, so that the recipient thereof may be able to cherish the firm belief that, in reality, it is the Divine Sovereign Who, with His will, mercy and power, is bestowing this great blessing upon him, and that he is, as a matter of fact, getting on a perfect and perpetual basis in return for his good deeds, the reward which is excellent, pure, delightful, and that it is neither a trial nor a tribulation of any kind.

To be blessed with such a perfect, perpetual, and excellent grace depends upon the fact that man should depart from this world, which is imperfect and gloomy, fleeting and doubtful, and go to the next world, for this divine grace is a manifestation of great splendour and glories, with the condition that the excellences of the Benefactor may be seen to the highest degree of firm belief and conviction. And there should be left no stage unachieved in this matter of manifestation, observation and full belief, nor any screen of common causes standing in between, and every subtlety and acuteness, connected with the perfect divine knowledge, may get out of the place of concealment into the open field of action. Moreover, the grace itself should be so distinct, so well-defined, that the Lord Himself may say in respect of it that it is pure and clean of the scum of every kind of trial and tribulation. Besides, it should have in itself delights of such a high order that the perfect nature of which should exercise such a complete influence over the mind, body and soul, and every spiritual and physical faculty of man, that it will be impossible to imagine anything over and above it intellectually, speculatively, and even capriciously. And this world, which is imperfect and impermanent, obscure and inadequate, cannot stand to bear those great glories, brilliant lights and everlasting favours, nor can it contain the radiant rays which are perfect and ever-abiding; but quite another world is required for its display which is wholly pure and clean of the common causes and is the manifestation of the perfect power and majesty of the Creator of the world.

It is also true that some sort of felicium foretaste of this super-special grace is enjoyed even in this world by those pure and virtuous men who trudge upon the path of Truth and turn towards God, having torn themselves off from the will and desire of their bodies; for, they die before dying, and although to all seeming they are in this world, in reality they reside and live in the next world, and since they separate their minds from the means and resources of this world, breaking away from the tendencies of human nature, and adopt a way which is extraordiary, therefore, the Almighty, too, treats them in the same singular manner, and confers upon them His special lights, which cannot be given unto others without death.

It may also be recalled that the divine purpose in making a display of this fourth truth is to disclose the following facts upon every soul to the point of firm belief: Firstly, that reward is a positive fact which comes upon the people from their Lord in accordance with His Will; but such a display is not possible in this world for the reason that the why and wherefore of the pleasure and pain that befall the human race, and the power under whose authority it works, is not disclosed upon the people in general in this world, and none of them feels or perceives, nor hears a voice saying that he is reaping the fruit of his deeds. Secondly, this great truth brings to light the fact that common causes of daily occurrence go for nothing, and the real power is God, Who is the Supreme Source of all good and grace and the Master of every kind of reward and requital. Thirdly, the exalted blessedness is that state of splendid bliss and glory when heavenly light and ecstasy, benign pleasure and comfort, penetrate into and pervade over the entire human body, externally as well as internally, and not a limb nor any human faculty remains without the line of its effect; and the bitterest misery constitutes that excruciating pain which, in consequence of man's disobedience and defilement, going astray and in remoteness, takes fire in the heart, blazes and spreads over to plunge the whole body into the horrid fire of hell. And these great manifestations cannot be disclosed in this world, for, being turbid, tainted and shrunk, so far as causes are concerned, it is in an imperfect state, and is, therefore, incapable of standing these displays. On the other hand, trials and tribulations predominate over this world and both its pleasure and pain are impermanent. Moreover, whatever befalls a man in this world is under the cover of causes, on which account the face of the Master of Requital remains concealed.
It is for this reason that this world cannot be the day of Requital in a perfect and manifest way, but the real day of Requital, on the other hand, will be the next world, the place for the perfect display of great manifestations, majesty and grace. And since the present world is the place of trial and affliction, hence whatever pleasure or pain, adversity or affluence, sorrow or delight befalls human beings, is not an indication nor evidence of the Supreme Being’s favour or frown. For example, a person’s becoming wealthy is no argument to prove that the Creator of the world is pleased with him, nor his falling into poverty implies that He is annoyed with him. But both these conditions are two kinds of trial, that the wealthy one may be tested in his riches, and the poor in his penury.

All these truths, it may be pointed out here, had disappeared from the world before the advent of Prophet Muhammad, and not a people there was that conformed to these truths without any admixture of exaggeration or decrease. When the Quran was revealed it pulled out these lost truths from the limbs of oblivion, brought them anew to the ears of the erring, and enlightened the world with their celestial light.

From the explanations thus given of the four names - Rabh, Rahman, Rahim and Malik - from the frequency of their mention in the opening chapter, it is clear that the Quran looks upon these four names as the chief attributive names of the Divine Being, and all His other attributes are but the offshoots of these four essential attributes.

**Worship**

"Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help" - continues the opening chapter. This means that we worship God alone, and we believe not in the intermediation of anything else to reach Him, nor do we rely on our own intellect and knowledge, but in every affair seek His help alone. This truth is concealed from the eye of the unbeliever. Turning away from the heavenly light of revelation, the faithless seeks salvation in the imperfect intellect and believes himself to be safe.

Such a view is faulty and fallacious. It has been explained that mere intellect cannot be the means for the attainment of those high aims of perfect faith and true knowledge whereon depends salvation. Intellect, it may however be conceded, can appreciate these sublime truths only after these have been acquired; but then the perfect manifestation comes exclusively from that pure light which exists only in the Divine Being, and the imperfect light of human reason and intellect becomes simply useless and unavailing in this case.

**Right Path**

"Guide us on the right path" - we implore. This constitutes, in fact, the true and real prayer of man that he should search the right way, which may lead him to God, for such is the natural law ordained by the Lord that measures by means of which the desired object may be achieved and fulfilled should, as a matter of principle, be adopted. When man treads on the right path, and adopts the necessary measures and means, the desired object is achieved automatically. It has always been the law of nature that, for the acquirement of every object, there be a fixed way, and that, unless man follows that way, no one be able to achieve that object. Hence the goal to be acquired with all the toil and trouble, prayer and supplication, is the Right Path.

It is thus clear that the unfaithful are bereft of this truth as well. Some ask for food and comfort in their prayers; others believe that a sinner is not permitted to seek after guidance; yet others argue that a set form of prayer need not be specified.

Such views are baseless. Having emerged from all kinds of darkness, man should reach the highest stage of divine knowledge and no trace of any infidelity should be left behind in him. Recognizing God in the most perfect way, and having been saturated with His pure love, he should attain communion with Him, which is the highest state of blessedness. It is, therefore, the true prayer which man stands in urgent need of, and whereon depends his whole beatitude. The simple and straight way for its achievement is that we should beseech the Merciful to guide us on the right path.

**Favour**

The opening chapter of the Quran (al-Latika) ends in saying, "The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor those who go astray."

It may be recalled that the children of Adam, according to their words and deeds, intentions and
actions, are of three kinds: Some are sincere seekers-after God and tend towards Him with a true and humble heart. The Almighty, too, becomes a Seeker-after them, and bestows His blessings upon them. This is called "Divine Favour" (In am-i-Ilahi). The second kind consists of those people who adopt intentionally the course of conflict and reject God, and He, too, turns away from them in disgust so that the animosity and aversion, the resentment and repugnance that lay hidden in their hearts assume the form of a separating wall between Him and them. The name of this condition is the "Divine Wrath" (Jdla-i Ilahi). The third kind of people are those who remain unconcerned towards God, and make no effort to search Him, and so He, too, becomes indifferent towards them, and guides them not unto His path for the obvious reason that they have themselves become sluggish and slothful in searching for His way. The name of this state is the "Divine Indignation" (Ghaazar-i Ilahi).

In short, the quintessence of the above three verities is that just as man stands in three different relations to God, in the same way He, too, deals with them accordingly. With them who resign themselves contentedly to His will, and yearn after Him with true love, He showers upon them the blessings of His pleasure. With regard to those who turn away from Him, He assumes the same role, paying them back in the same coin; and with them who become careless as to institute a quest for Him, He deals accordingly, leaving them to wallow in the mire of error.

These three examples illustrate the three states, which emerge from man's own action. However, some people argue as to why God gives not guidance to mankind indiscriminately, others contend, how can the quality of "wrath" be possibly found in Him? The former oppositionists think not that divine guidance comes only to those persons who sincerely strive for its achievement, and who tread upon those ways which are necessary for this purpose. The latter reflect not that the Almighty deals with each man in conformity with His fixed and immutable Laws, of His help and guidance He deprives him who, out of carelessness and indifference, turns away from Him, but shows His ways to him who struggles for them with all his heart and all his might. For, how can it be that he who idles away his time in doing nothing, neither stirs nor moves his foot in quest for the Lord, should be treated on a par with him who seeks after Him with all his soul and sincerity? The Supreme Being has Himself said that "those who strive hard for Him, He shall certainly guide them in His ways."

In the Name of God

Mention may now be made of another truth contained in the opening chapter of the Quran. The first verse reads: "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful" (Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim). It may be remarked here that other chapters of the Quran are also headed by this verse. It occurs once in the middle of a chapter as well, and the recurrence with which it has been repeated in the Quran is not to be found in the case of any other verse. In Islam, it has been adopted as a practice that in the beginning of every affair, for which prosperity is desired, this verse is recited to invoke divine help and benefaction; it has acquired such a wide usage among young and old, that even though a Muslim may not understand all the Quranic teachings, yet he will not be ignorant of this verse.

The real aim underlying the revelation of this verse is to educate the humble and the uniformed in the subtle point of divine knowledge that, out of the many attributes of God, only two have been stated here: Beneficence and Mercy. It is of these two attributes that Divine Word, together with its blessings, descends from on High. It is on account of the manifestation of the quality of "Beneficence" that the Divine Word is revealed for the knowledge and guidance of mankind, for it is a specific character of this attribute that it comes into play merely through the munificence and generosity of God before man has done any deed to deserve it. For instance, He has created the sun, the moon, the rain, the air, etc., for the good and benefit of man. All this benevolence is in consequence of His attribute of Beneficence, and no human being can put forward the claim that all these things have been created as a reward for any of his deeds.

The revelation of the Quran, which took place in order to quicken life into the dead earth, has been caused into creation by this divine attribute. It is this attribute which, in the physical field, takes care of the famine-stricken and pours the heavenly rain on the dry soil. It is, again, this attribute which, in the spiritual sphere, takes pity on the hungry and thirsty, standing on the dead brim of agnosticism and unbelief, denuded of the truth which sustains spiritual life. The Beneficent, therefore, out of His mercy and grace, provides spiritual sustenance at the time of true need, just as He provides food at the time of hunger. It is
true that Divine Word is vouchsafed only to those chosen persons with whom He is pleased; but it is certainly not true that with whoever He be pleased, a heavenly Book should be sent even unnecessarily without any genuine need whatsoever. The Word of God descends from on High only when there exists a vital need and exigence for its revelation.

To invoke help in the name of Him Who is the Beneficent and the Merciful is indeed the way of profound humility and resignation unto divine will. The importance of this way lies in the fact that it forms the first rung of the ladder of unity in actions and deeds, by means of which man, adopting the humble submissiveness, is purified of all arrogance and conceit; then, having full belief in his own weakness and the divine help, he gets a share of the supreme knowledge which is given only to the chosen ones. There is no doubt that the extent to which man adheres to this way, and considers it his duty to act upon it, and sees death and damnation in renouncing it, to that extent he is purified in his belief in Divine Unity. It is, thus, the sublime truth which guides man gradually to the stage of annihilation in the Creator of the world and he sees that there is nothing his, but all things have been conferred upon him.

In pursuance of this truth, the sincere seeker has to acknowledge the fact of his own frivolity, and accept that God is the Possessor of all power and glory, and the source of all blessings. Both these things are such which constitute the ultimate goal of the seeker—after-truth, and the essential condition for ascending to the stage of annihilation. For instance, rain, although universal, drops only on him who stands in the shower; in the same way, he who seeks, gets, and he who searches, finds. People who, at the commencement of a work, repose their confidence in their own power, wisdom and skill, do not appreciate the greatness and worth of the All-Powerful.

It may also be pointed out here that there are philosophers who say that there is no need of invoking divine help in the commencement of a work, for God has already created powers and faculties in man, and it would be vain to ask for them again.

The Almighty, it is no gainsaying the fact, has bestowed upon us some powers for the performance of certain deeds, yet His dominion has not passed away from over our heads; from Himself He has not separated us, and from His support, He has not detached us, nor deprived us from His blessings that know no end. Whatever He has conferred upon us is limited and small, and what is begged of Him is limitless and unbounded; and for the accomplishment of those matters which are above and beyond our bend, no power has been vested in us. These truths are so manifest and clear that any one can test and appreciate their truthfulness by making his own experiments. No man can exist from whom these transcendent truths can remain hidden. However, these are not disclosed upon such people who, on account of their hard-heartedness and indifference, have their eye only on the few limited means, and possess no knowledge of the Divine Process; nor is their wisdom and understanding sufficient to think that it is not within the power of mortal man to prepare and provide for the innumerable things, celestial as well as terrestrial, which are required for each and every comfort and adornment of the human body, and that it is only the Possessor of all the attributes Who brings into existence all those requirements from above the heavens and from beneath the earth, and has a strong dominion over them.

An objection is sometimes adduced as to why this seeking of divine help does not bear fruit invariably, and why does not God's mercy manifest itself every time when His help is solicited? It is only the misconception of a truth that has given rise to this doubt. For, every prayer offered with a true and sincere heart is surely heard by the Lord, Who sends His help in the way He thinks best, but sometimes it also happens that a man's prayer and supplication are devoid of sincerity and humility, and his spiritual condition, too, is unsound and impure, and with his lips he utters the words of prayer, whereas in his heart there is indifference and even hypocrisy, and it may also sometimes happen that God is pleased to hear his prayer, and bestows upon him what He deems profitable, but the unwise man cannot comprehend this subtle favour, and begins to complain, failing to appreciate the sublime teaching that "it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you; and Allah knows while you know not."

Divine Power

It should, therefore, be understood that what is illimitable and infinite, cannot be brought under the operation of any law for the simple reason that a thing which is, from beginning to end, within the ambit of a known and accepted law, and no portion thereof falls without its field, nor is unknown and incomprehensible,
is undoubtedly limited and confined within bounds. If the perfect divine power should, likewise, be understood to lie within the limits of a definite law, then a thing which has been accepted and acknowledged as imitable and infinite shall have to be regarded as confined within limits. Those who want to squeeze into the narrow hole of their knowledge and experience the imitable power of God, understand not that such matters which fall within the operation of a definite law must be limited and narrow, whereas the wisdom and power found in the Infinite Being must necessarily be boundless and unconfined. Can any sensible man say that the Supreme Being knows only to create in this way, and nothing beyond this? Can His infinite and ininterminable power be measured by the imperfect human imagination. Can His inexhaustible and eternal power be ever inoperative and helpless in its dominion over this universe? His powerful hand, beyond the least shadow of doubt, is holding its sway over each and every particle; and not a single creature there is that depends not on Him, and owes its existence to the greatness of its own creation. Countless fields, which neither internally nor externally have any end or extremity, lie open before His limitless power. Just as it is possible that He can create external causes to extinguish the heat of a blazing fire, in the same way it is also possible that, in order to destroy the burning quality of that fire, He can create causes to that effect within its very body.

Moreover, when we have accepted God's power and wisdom to be limitless and external, it becomes equally incumbent upon us to believe that it is merely impossible for us to know of all His power and wisdom. We cannot, therefore, frame any rule for His boundless strength; and we certainly cannot measure a thing the limits whereof we do not know. This world is indeed very small, and yet we do not possess full knowledge of this tiny sphere. It will, therefore, be unwise on our part if we should try to measure the infinitely immense power and wisdom of the Creator with our imperfect and inadequate scale.

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TASAWWUF AND TARIQAT - TERMINOLOGY
(The Spiritual ('Sufi') Side of Islam)
By Maulana Hafiz Sher Muhammad

Just as Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, in his capacity as the Reformer (mujaddid) of the formal side of Islam (the Shariat), has explained the terminology of the Holy Quran and Hadith, similarly, being also the Reformer of the spiritual and mystic side of Islam, he has disussed at length the nomenclature of this field as well. He did this so that no one may stumble into error, because unless the terminology of *Tariqat* is understood along with the terms of the *Shariat*, it is not possible to understand his books properly, or the works of the great Sufi saints, or even the prophecies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad about the coming Messiah and Mahdi. This is what Hazrat Mirza wrote:

"Unless one understands the question of *burooz* (a person in the complete image of a prophet), one cannot understand the meaning of this prophecy, and eventually has to reject it." (Malfoozat, Vol. 1, p. 454).

It is thus necessary to understand the terms of the field of *Tasawwuf* (Sufi-ism), i.e.,

Fana fir Rasul - a person 'effaced' in the Holy Prophet.
Zill - 'image' or 'shadow',
Burooz - 'manifestation'.

i) "Muhaddas ... due to his complete following of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and on account of his being *fana fir-Rasul*, is included in the being of the Last of the Prophets (i.e., Holy Prophet Muhammad), as the fraction is included in the whole." (Izalah Auham, p.575).

Ummati wa Nabi - a follower as well as a prophet.
Masil Anbiya - the 'like' of prophets.

Fana Fir-Rasul

When we read books written by the classical religious scholars of yore, we discover that according to the saints and holy men of Islam there are three ranks of spiritual nearness to God: *fana fish-Shaikh* (effacing oneself in a spiritual master or saint), *fana fir-Rasul*, and *fana fi-Allah*. Those persons who attain the rank of *fana fir-Rasul* become imbued with the colour of prophets of the past due to perfect following and in this state call themselves by the names of various prophets such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, (the Holy Prophet) Muhammad and Ahmad. They also utter expressions such as "I am the prophet" and "I am the Messenger". These persons are not prophets in point of fact, but belong to the category of saints. This is exactly what Hazrat Mirza wrote:
ii) "God gives the honour of His word to a person who is fana fin-nabi (effaced in the Holy Prophet), just as He does with His prophets, and in these communications the servant to whom He speaks is spoken to by Him face-to-face, as it were. The servant asks a question and God replies to it, even though this question-answer may go on for fifty times or more." (Zameema Anjam Atham, p. 19).

iii) "At the head of every century, especially a century in which people have departed from faith and honesty and which is full of darkness, God raises someone who is a substitute for a prophet and whose nature reflects the image of the prophet. That substitute-prophet shows people, through his own being, the qualities of the Prophet whom he obeys." (Ainah Kamalat Islam, p. 247).

iv) "Do not turn your attention to anything else, and like the true lover become fana fir-Rasul (effaced in the Holy Prophet Muhammad) with your word, deed, praise, and obedience, for therein lie all the blessings."

Those persons whose nature is a mirror reflecting the image of the Holy Prophet, and who are fana fir-Rasul or fana fin-Nabi, who in other words are known as saints (muqaddid), these persons are the ones amongst whom it included Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

The books of Muslim saints inform us that there are three stations of nearness to God:
(1) Fana fish-Shaikh
(2) Fana fir-Rasul
(3) Fana fi-Ilah.

Those who reach the status of fana fir-rasul (being self-annihilated in the prophet) are tainted with the colour of the prophets. due to their perfect following, and they call themselves by names such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and Ahmad. and also raise cries of "I am the Apostle", "I am the Prophet".

Such persons are not prophets in point of fact, but remain in the category of saints (Wali). There have been numerous such persons among the Holy Prophet Muhammad’s followers, in every single age.

1. Professor Yusuf Saleem Chishti, an interpreter of the works of Iqbal, writes: "The first stage is fana fish-shaikh, producing the qualities of the spiritual leader in oneself; the second stage is fana fir-rasul, producing the qualities of the Holy Prophet within oneself; the third stage is fana fi-ilah, producing the taint of the attributes of God in oneself." (Sharh Baljibriel, p. 267)

2. Shah Wali-ullah (d. 1763), recognized as Muqaddid of the 12th Century Hijra, wrote: "Piety (taqwa) means to stay within the limits of the religious law. The 'love of rites of God' is applied to loving the Holy Quran, the Holy Prophet, and the Holy Shrine (Kaaba), and in fact to love everything that is associated with God, including even love for the saints. Some people call it fana fir-rasul or fana fish-shaikh" (Altafal Qudus, p. 93, Gujranwala, Pakistan, 1964).

3. Khwaja Shams-ud-din Siyalwi: "After this I asked, What is fana fish-shaikh? The Khwaja said: The disciple should be so engrossed in the form of his master that he should not be conscious of his own movements, and, in fact, the very form and figure of the master and disciple become one." (Mirat al-Ashiqeen, p. 229, Islamic Book Foundation, Lahore, 1981).

4. Khwaja Zia-ullah Naqshbandi wrote: "The rank of fana fir-rasul is attained when all the characteristics and qualities of the Holy Prophet are to be found in one, and all one’s deeds, movements, habits, devotions and meditations are exactly according to the manner of the Holy Prophet... Perfect good fortune is that God should paint His servant with the colour and qualities of His friend, the Holy Prophet." (Masqasid as-Salikeen, p. 46, Lahore).

5. Maulana Rasheed Ahmad of Gangoh, prominent Deoband scholar of the last century, answers a question as follows: "Question: What are fana fish-shaikh and fana fir-rasul, from where are these concepts established, and what have Sufis said about it?"

   Answer: Both these words are from the terminology of spiritual leaders (Shaikhs). The meaning is to obey God and have overwhelming love for Him. Its basis is in the Quranic words: "Follow me (i.e. Muhammad), and God will love you." (Fatwa Rashidiyya, p. 48, Islamic Kutub, Karachi).

Zil Nubwwat (Reflection, image, or shadow of Prophethood).

The term zill nubuwat was also coined by the saints, scholars and elders of the classical ages as being synonymous with sainthood (wilayat), (imamat), and successorship to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Khilafat). The person to whom this term is applied does not become a prophet, but belongs to the category of saints (wali). This is just what Hazrat Mirza wrote: i) "When some persons of the Muslim nation turn to the obedience of the Holy Prophet Muhammad with perfect humility, and totally lose themselves in their humbleness, God, finding them like a clear mirror, manifests the blessings of the Holy Prophet through
their being. And whatever praise they receive from God, or whatever blessings and signs are displayed by them, all these praises are for the Holy Prophet and he is the source of all these blessings. But because the perfect follower of the Holy Prophet is a zill (spiritual image), the Divine light of that Holy Person can be seen in his zill as well. It is not a hidden matter that the shadow has the form of its original. However, the shadow has no existence of its own, and no real attribute, but all that it has is an image of its original." (Barahin Ahmadiyya, Part III, Section 1, footnote of footnote 1, p.24).

ii) "No status of honour or perfection, and no position of dignity and Divine nearness, can be achieved by us except by true and perfect following of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Whatever (spiritual achievement) we get is obtained through the medium of the Holy Prophet by way of reflection (zill)" (Izalah Auham, p.138).

iii) "There have been hundreds of persons in whom the reality of Muhammad was established, and with God they had the names Muhammad and Ahmad by way of reflection (zill)." (Aina-E-Kamalat-E-Islam p.346).

iv) "Sainthood (wilayat) is the perfect zill (image of reflection) of prophethood." (Hujjat-Ullah, p.14).

v) "The prophet is the real thing, and a saint is the zill (his image or shadow)." (Karamat as-Sadiqeen, p.85).

vi) "Thus the person who, totally effacing himself in the one he serves (i.e. Holy Prophet), receives the title of prophet (nabi) from God does not contravene the finality of prophethood. Just as when you look at yourself in the mirror you do not become two, but remain one, even though it appears as if there are two of you. The only difference is that between the real and its image (zill)." (Kishit Nuh, p.15).

vii) "But muhaddaseen will come who will be spoken to by God - and possess some of the attributes of prophethood by way of zill (image or reflection), and in some ways be coloured with the colour of prophethood. I am one of them." (Nishan Asmani, p.31).

In short, zilli nabi (a prophet by way of reflection) means the image (zill) of a prophet, i.e. such a person who mirrors the prophethood of a prophet, or the image of prophethood is manifested through him. If this was real prophethood, it would be absurd to speak of the image of prophethood. What the Holy Quran calls wilayat (sainthood), the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad call muhaddasayyat and exactly the same thing is called zillinubuhwat (reflected prophethood) by the Sufis. So being a 'prophet by way of reflection' is precisely the same as being a saint (wali or muhaddas). It is not prophethood.

The following extracts from works of recognized scholars and saints in Muslim history support the views of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as given above.

1. Shaikh Abdul Haq, the famous Muhaddith of Dehli wrote:
   i) "Wilaya (sainthood, or being a wali) is the zill of prophethood." (Sarh Futuhul-Ghaib, p.23, Lucknow, India, 1918).
   ii) "As wilayat is, in point of fact, the zill of prophethood, whatever that man has will also appear in the shadow, especially the greater wilayat." (Ibid)

2. Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind, known as the Mujaddid Alf Sani (d.1624) wrote:
   i) "In short, the status of wilayat is the zill of the status of prophethood, and the attainments of prophethood." (Maktubat, Daftar II, letter no. 71 p.236, published in Lahore).
   ii) "As the zill has no intrinsic value of its own, but the intrinsic value of the original which has manifested itself in the zill, hence the original is closer to the zill than the zill's ownself because the zill is the reflection of the original, not of its own self." (Ibid, Daftar III, Letter no. 1, p.6)

3. Shah Ismael Shaheed, famous Indian Muslim leader of the early nineteenth century: "It should be known that the Imam is the deputy of the Messenger, and Imamat is the zill of messengership." (Mansab-i Imamat, p.125, Aeenah Adab, Lahore, 1969).

4. Qari Muhammad Tayyib, the well-known Deoband scholar, writes: "Prophethood is the original, and reformership (Tajdid or being a mujaddid) is its zill because reformership is the actual zill of prophethood" (Ulema Hind ka Shandor Mazid Jadid, i.e. "Bright recent past of the Indian Ulema, p.308, Dehli, 2nd edition).

5. Professor Yusuf Saleem Chishti, an interpreter of Iqbal, writes: "The third question is, What is the meaning of zill? The answer is that the zill, for its existence, is the follower of the original, i.e., it stands in need of real existence. For example, if a man stands in the sun, although his zill i.e. the shadow, exists, but it does not have a real or independent existence of its own. If the man moves into the shade, the zill ceases to
exist. In other words, the essence of the zill has no existence.” (Sharh Bal Jibreel, P. 162, Dehli, 1970)

6. Qazi Sana-Ullah of panipat commentates as follows on the Quran verse, "O Mary, God has chosen thee" :- "That is, He has chosen thee for Himself, for His Brilience which the Sufis term as attainments of prophethood. These attainments, in the real sense, are for the prophets; and the truthful ones (sadiq) gain them by way of obedience and inheritance. Mary was a truthful one, as God said: His mother was a truthful woman." (Tafsir Mazhari, vol. 11, under verse mentioned).

BUROOZI NUBUWWAT ('Manifestation' of prophethood)

The word burooz means 'to be a manifestation'. Since the light of the Holy Prophet Muhammad is manifested in the person of the saints, they are called the burooz of the Holy Prophet. Hence burooz nabi (a prophet by way of manifestation) is also a term coined by the Sufi saints, about which Hazrat Mirza has written much:

i) "Sometimes the coming of a soul into this world, which resembles the soul of some righteous person of the past, and not only has a connection with that soul but derives benefit from it as well, is considered as the coming of the original soul itself. In the terminology of the Sufis this is known as burooz." (Sut Bachan, p.49).

ii) "The Sufi believe that the nature, disposition and qualities of a person from the past come again in another. In their terminology they say that so-and-so is in the footsteps of Adam, or the footsteps of Noah. Some call this burooz." (Mafazoat, Vol I, P. 444)

iii) "God always employs metaphors and gives one person's name to another on account of nature, qualities, and abilities. He whose heart is like that of Abraham is Abraham in the sight of God, and he who has the heart of Umar is Umar in His sight." (Fathi-I-Islam, P. 16).

iv) "All the Sufis and the elders of the Muslim nation hold this belief. In fact, they even say that no one can be a perfect follower until he acquires the accomplishments of the Holy Prophet Muhammad in the sense of burooz...... When a person shows such perfect obedience of the Holy Prophet that he, as it were, is absorbed and effaced to the extent of being lost in that obedience, his condition at that time is like a mirror showing the image fully and perfectly." (Tafsir Sura Fathia, p 26).

v) "The heart of the devotee is a mirror which is so polished by trials and tribulations that the qualities of the Prophet are reflected in it." (Mafazoat Vol. I p.28)

vi) "As one's face is seen in the mirror, though the face has a separate existence, this is termed burooz." (Tafsir Sura Fathia, p.330).

vii) "The Muslim nation is agreed that a non-prophet takes the place of a prophet as a burooz. This is the meaning of the saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, 'The Learned ones of my community are like the prophets of Israel.' (Ayyam as Sulh, p.164).

i) "Burooz - The turning of a perfect knower or accomplished spiritual leader towards a deficient person, giving him spiritual benefit, and making him into his manifestation by making him like him. In this sense it is said, so and so saint has appeared in the form of such and such a saint. The meaning is that the image of the perfect saint was cast perfectly upon the second one, and the essential form of the two of them became the same." (Siri-e Dilbaran, Dictionary of Sufi terms, Karachi, 1400 A.H., p. 90).

ii) "Burooz is that a soul gains benefit from another one which is perfect. When it receives the benefit of Divine illumination, it becomes its manifestation, and says that 'I am that one' " (Isharat Faridi, Collection of Sayings of the famous Punjabi saint, Khowaja Ghulam Farid, Islamic Book Foundation, Lahore. P.418).

iii) Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind, the Muhaddid Alf Sani, wrote: "The burooz spoken of by some spiritual Shaikhs has nothing to do with re-incarnation. In re-incarnation, a soul forms a connection with another body as the means of its life, and to give it sensation and movement. In Burooz, a soul forms a connection with another body, not for this purpose, but to make that body acquire attainments and reach high grades." (Maktubat, Daftar II, Letter no. 58, p 191).

In an Urdu translation of Fusoos al-Hukam, the famous Sufi work written by the world-renowned Muslim philosopher Muhiy-ud-Din Ibn Arabi, the translator Maulana Muhammad Abdul Qadeer writes in an introductory note:

"Burooz means that the nature of some of the saints (wali) resembles the nature of a particular prophet. Many saints are made to journey through the attainments of the great prophets, and the saints become dvyed with the colour of the prophets. To put it another way, the image of the attainments of the prophets is cast upon them. Or one could say that the special
characteristics of the prophets are manifested and projected (burooz) through them. But after the completion of the journey, each of them remains at his original position of natural affinity. For instance, the saint who aids the cause of the faith is known as: having the nature of Noah, or being in the footsteps of Noah, or one who manifests Noah, or the burooz of Noah. The saint who accepts the will of God is known as one having the nature of Abraham, he who has love is known as one having the nature of Moses, he who annihilates himself is known as one having the nature of Jesus, and he who is a perfect servant, combining all these, is known as one having the Muhammadi nature. Sometimes it is said that such and such a saint (wali) is the burooz of such and such a prophet, just as the moon is the burooz of the sun. In short, the prophet is the original, and the saint is his copy." (Urdu translation of Fusooas at Hukam, published by Nazir Sons, Lahore, 1979, page 24).

MASIL ANBIYA (The 'like' of prophets)
Hazrat Mirza wrote:

i) "Of all the leaders of the Sufis up to the present day, not one has disagreed with the view that in this religion (Islam) the way is open for becoming the like of prophets, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad has given the glad tidings that 'the Learned ones of my community will be like the prophets of Israel'. The words of Ba Yazid Bustami (famous saint, d 877 C.E.) to be found in the book Tazkira-tul-Auliya by Faiord-ud-Din Attar, and in other reliable books, are on the same basis, as he says: 'I am Adam, I am Seth, I am Noah, I am Abraham, I am Moses, I am Jesus, I am Muhammad, peace be upon him... Similarly, Sayyid Abdul Qadir Jilani refers to this in his book Futuh al-Ghaba, that by leaving his own self and becoming absorbed in God, man can become the like of prophets, even their form." (Izalah Auham, p. 258-59).

ii) "The Holy Quran clearly gives this instruction, and in the opening chapter gives us the hope of becoming the likes of prophets. God exhorts us to pray to Him five times a day and beseech Him to give us guidance so that we may become like the Adam, the like of Seth, the prophet of God, the like of Noah, the second Adam, the like of Abraham, the friend of God, the like of Moses, the recipient of God's word, the like of Jesus, and the like of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and Ahmad, and the like of every truthful and faithful one." (Ibid., p. 257).

iii) "Ponder over this, that all the eternal fountains of spiritual life have come into the world through the Holy Prophet Muhammad. This is the nation (i.e. Muslim Nation, which, though not having prophets in it, has those who receive the word of God like prophets, and though not having messengers in it, has those who show God's clear signs like messengers. It has rivers of spiritual life flowing in it, and none can compete with it." (Ainah Kamalat Islam, p. 224).

iv) "God's ancient way cannot be denied, by which He gives the name of one to another on account of spiritual similarity. A person having the disposition of Abraham is Abraham in His sight, of Moses is Moses, of Jesus is Jesus in His sight, and he who has something of the disposition of all of these deserves all these names." (Izalah Auham, p. 412).

The belief expressed repeatedly by Hazrat Mirza is that, after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, no prophet can come, but there can be Muslims who become the likes of prophets.

TERMS OF TASAWWUF

Hazrat Mirza said that he was "the Reformer for both the Sharat (formal side of Islam) and the Tariqat (spiritual side of Islam)" (Al-Hakm, 24 June 1900).

So, just as he used the terminology of the Sharat in his books, so also did he discuss at length the issues of the Tariqat. For example:

i) "The heart of the devotee is like a mirror which is so polished by going through trials and tribulations that the qualities of the Prophet are reflected in it. And this happens when, after much striving hard for purity, there remains no dirt in it. Every believer needs such cleaning to a certain extent. No believer will receive salvation till he becomes like a polished mirror." (Ruwan Khaza'in, No. 2, Malfourat, Vol. I, 28).

ii) "As a person's face is seen in the mirror, though the face has a separate existence' this is called burooz." (Tafsir Sura Fatiha, P. 330).

iii) "When you see yourself in the mirror, you do not become two, but remain one, though there appear to be two. The difference is that of the real and its image(zil)." (Kishti Nuh, p. 15).

iv) "Just as a person's image is seen in a mirror or in water, that image can metaphorically be called that person." (Zameema Jihad, p 3).

v) "I am the mirror in which the 'Muhammadan' form and prophethood is perfectly reflected." (Nuzul Masih, pp. 2, 3).

vi) "My example is as if someone looks in a mirror. Will not the image show the characteristics of the original? Similarly, this is the image of the Holy Prophet Muhammad." (Al-Hakm, 24 October 1902).
vii) "All prophets have believed that the burooz ('manifestation') is a complete picture of its original; so much so that even the name becomes one." (Aik Ghalti Ka Izala, p. 13).

viii) "God gave the honour of His perfect and pure communication to some such persons who had reached the stage of fana fir-Rasul (effaced in the Holy Prophet) to completion and perfection so that their existence was not of their own persons, but the Holy Prophet Muhammad's person was reflected in them." (Al-Wasiyyat).

ix) "Due to ignorance, our opponents await the descent of Jesus in a real sense, but we accept it in the sense of burooz as held by all the Sufis." (Kitab al-Bariyya, Footnote, p. 182).

x) "This section of the Sunni Muslims is right in believing in the descent of Jesus, because it was necessary that the Messiah descend in the sense of burooz. But they make a mistake in explaining the mode of this descent. The descent was to be in the sense of burooz, not in the real sense. (Zaroorat al-Imam, p. 25). Fruits of perfect obedience (of the Holy Prophet) are never wasted. This is a point of (Tasahwufl). If the rank of zill (become an image) had not existed, the saints of this religion would have died. It was this perfect obedience and the rank of zill and burooz which made Ba Yazid call himself 'Muhammad' ... In brief, the people who oppose us do not know of this fact." (Al-Badr, 27 October 1905).

These quotations show that zill nabi, buroozi nabi (prophet by way of image or manifestation etc.) is not a prophet, just as a picture is not the real thing itself.

Hazrat Mirza's heart was like a well-polished mirror in which the image of the Holy Prophet Muhammad could be seen, or in other words, the Holy Prophet is the original and Hazrat Mirza the zill or picture. According to the Sufis the Prophet is the original and the saint (wali) is the zill.

**FINALITY OF PROPHETHOOD AND THE USE OF ABOVE TERMS FOR SAINT**

The belief held by Hazrat Mirza was that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the Last of the Prophets, and after him no prophet is to arise, whether new or old. Before the Holy Prophet Muhammad, prophets used to arise to put man in touch with God and to deliver the commands of God to man. With the finality of prophethood religion and religious laws reached perfection, and therefore the chain of prophets was cut off after the Holy Prophet. No prophet will now come.

However, whenever people stray far from God and lose faith in Him, in order to revive faith afresh and to re-establish man's relation with God, according to the teachings of the Quran and Hadith there arise saints and reformers. These are known by various titles such as Khalifa (deputy to the Holy Prophet), wali (saint), Imam, mujaddid (reformer) and mubaddas (recipient of revelation, though not prophet), in the Quran and Hadith. The same persons are referred to in Sufi terminology as fana fir-Rasul (effaced in the Holy Prophet), masil anbiya (the like of prophets), zill nabi, buroozi nabi, ummati nabi (prophet by way of reflection, or manifestation, follower-prophet), etc. These terms of the Sufis do not describe prophets, but are synonymous for saints. For further clarification, some writings of Hazrat Mirza are given below:

i) "I have seen a great power in the Holy Quran and a wonderful characteristic in following the Holy Prophet Muhammad, which power and characteristic are not to be found in any other religion. That is that the true follower reaches the stage of sainthood (wilayat)... Hence I have personal experience of this." (Chasuma Ma'rifat, part II, p. 60).

ii) "This is the sainthood (wilayat) beyond which there is no higher stage." (Haqiqat al-Wahy, p. 52).

iii) "Remember that by learned one is not meant a person whose knowledge of language, grammar, or logic is unmatched, but a person who is always fearing God and does not use his tongue frivolously. And in the Holy Quran the quality of the learned ones is that they fear God... In fact ulama (learned ones) is the plural of Alim, and Ilm (knowledge) is that thing which is certain and definite. True knowledge can only be had from the Holy Quran, not from ancient Greek or modern Western philosophy. The true philosophy of faith is obtained through the Holy Quran. The perfection and highest achievement of the believer is to reach the stage of the ulama and to acquire that degree of conviction which is the ultimate extent of knowledge." (Mafazo Zat, Part I, p. 348).

iv) "But in the end the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the one to receive the crown of honour. I am one of his slaves and servants, to whom God speaks." (Haqiqat al-Wahy, p. 274).

v) "Similarly, whatever God has mentioned in the Holy Quran of His virtues, it is by way of beauty and love. By reading it, it becomes quite clear that He wants to turn the reader into a lover of God. So, He made thousands of lovers in this way, and I too am one such humble servant." (Chashma Ma'rifat, Part II, p. 64).
vi) "Remember that in the Holy Quran God has described this characteristic of Holy life that such a person shows miracles. God listens to the prayers of such people and speaks to them and gives them news of matters unseen beforehand and aids them. So we see that there have been thousands of such persons in Islam and in this age I am here to show this example." (The Four Questions Answered, p. 150).

vii) "Muhaddas are the people who have the privilege of Divine communication, and their souls bear the utmost resemblance to the souls of the prophets. They are the reminders of the wonders of prophethood, so that in some age the subtle issue of Divine revelation may not become devoid of Proof and a mere tale. It is not a correct idea that the Prophets (peace be upon them) left the world with no heirs... rather, in every century their heirs arise according to need, and in this century there is my humble self." (Barkaat-ud-Dua).

viii) "In this age too, whatever spiritual blessings of God are being sent is a result of following and obeying the Holy Prophet. I say truly, and from my experience, that no person can be called truly holy and attaining the pleasure of God, nor can he receive those blessings deep truths and visions which are obtained by a high degree of spiritual purity, till he becomes totally absorbed in following the Holy Prophet Muhammad. This is proved by the word of God (the Quran) itself which says: 'If you love God, follow me (i.e. Holy Prophet). God will love you.' I am the practical and living proof of this claim of God. Recognize me by the signs of the lovers of God and the saints as given in the Holy Quran." (Tafsir Sura Fatiha, p. 1210).

ix) "Though in Islam there have been thousands of saints and godly men, none of them had been prophesied about specifically. But the one who was to come bearing the name of Messiah, he had been prophesied about. Similarly, no prophet before Jesus was a promised prophet. Only the Messiah was a promised one." (Tazkira Shahadatain, p. 29).

x) "This teaching (i.e. Islam) can make thousands into Messiahs, and has done it for hundreds of thousands." (The Four Questions Answered, p. 22).

xi) "All the Khalifas (successors to the Holy Prophet) of this religion are to be from amongst the Muslim nation, and they are the likes of the successors to Moses. Only one of them, to appear at the end of the chain, will be the Promised one who shall resemble Jesus. The rest would not be promised ones, i.e., they have not been prophesied by name." (Tazkira Shahadatain, p. 37).

xii) "Yes, muhaddases will come who will be spoken to by God, and possess some attributes of prophethood by way of reflection (zill), and for some reasons be coloured with the colour of prophethood. I am one form amongst them." (Nishan Asmani, p. 28).

xiii) "We believe and accept that, in the real sense, there can come no prophet after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, neither new nor old. The Quran denies the appearance of such prophets. But God can, in the metaphorical sense, use the word nabi (prophet) or mursal (messenger) for any recipient of His revelation... The Arabs to this day call a messenger of some human being as rasul. So why is it forbidden for God to use the word mursal (or rasul) even by way of metaphor? Do you not remember from the Quran the words, 'So they (some non-prophets) said, We are mursals'..." (Siraj Munir, p. 3).

BUDDHA'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

(Delivered in San Francisco, California on March 18, 1990 by Swami Vivekanand)

"... And then comes Mohammed, the Messenger of Equality. You ask, what good can there be in his religion? If there were no good, how could it live? The good alone lives, that alone survives. Because the good alone is strong, therefore it survives. How long does the influence of an impure man endure? Is it not a fact that the pure man's influence lasts much longer? Without doubt, for purity is strength. How could Islam have lived had there been nothing good in its teachings? There is much good. Mohammed was the Prophet of Equality, the brotherhood of all Mussalmans.

Now, ignorant fools start twenty thousand stories and put forward, according to their own mental development, explanations to suit their own ideas, and ascribe them to these great teachers. They take their teachings and put their misconstructions upon them.

Mohammed by his life showed that among Muslims there should be perfect equality and brotherhood. There was no question of race, caste, creed, color or sex. The Sultan of Turkey may buy a negro from the mart of Africa and bring him in chain to Turkey, but should become a Muslim and have sufficient merit and ability, he might marry the daughter of the Sultan.

Compare this with the way in which the Negroes and American Indians are treated in this country. And what do Hindus do? If one of your missionaries chanced to touch the food of an orthodox person, he would throw it away. Not withstanding our grand philosophy, you note our weaknesses in practice; but there you see the greatness of Islam beyond our faith, showing itself in equality, perfect equality, regardless of race or color." (An extract from the speech)
THE PROMISED MESSIAH SPEAKS
'Islam, the True and Living Faith'
By Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad
Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement in Islam

The true purpose of adopting a faith is that one should acquire such certainty concerning God, Who is the fountain-head of salvation, as if one can see Him with one’s eyes. The wicked spirit of sin seeks to destroy a man and a person cannot escape the fatal poison of sin till he believes with full certainty in the Perfect and Living God and till he knows for certain that God exists, Who punishes the offender and bestows upon a righteous one everlasting joy. It is a common experience that when one believes in the fatal effects of anything one does not have recourse to it. For instance, no one swallows poison consciously. No one deliberately stands in front of a wild tiger. No one deliberately thrusts his hand into the hole of a serpent. Then why does a person commit sin deliberately? The reason is that he has not that certainty in this matter as he has in other matters of the kind we have mentioned. The first duty of a person, therefore, is to acquire certainty with regard to the existence of God, and to adopt a religion through which this certainty can be acquired so that he should fear God and shun sin. How can such certainty be acquired? It cannot be acquired through mere stories. It cannot be acquired through mere arguments. The only way of acquiring certainty is to experience God repeatedly through converse with Him or through witnessing his extraordinary signs, or by keeping company with someone who has that experience (Naseem-e-Dawat, pp. 81, 82).

The purpose of religion is that man should obtain deliverance from his passions and should develop personal love for God Almighty through certain faith in His existence and His perfect attributes. Such love of God is the paradise which will appear in diverse shapes in the hereafter. To be unaware of the true God and to keep away from Him and not to have any love for Him is the hell which will appear in diverse shapes in the hereafter. Thus the true purpose is to have full faith in Him. Now the question is which religion and which book can fill this need. The Bible tells us that the door of converse with God is closed and that the ways of obtaining certainty are sealed. Whatever was to happen, happened in the past and there is nothing in the future ... of what use then is a religion which is dead? What benefit can we derive from a book that is dead? What grace can be bestowed by a god who is dead? (Chashma Masihi, pp. 20, 23).

The purpose of accepting a religion is that God, Who is Self-sufficient and is in no need of His creation or its worship, may be pleased with us, and that we should experience such grace and mercy as should wipe out our inner stains and rusts so that our breasts may be filled with certainty and understanding. This is not possible for a man to achieve through his own devices. Therefore, God the Glorious, keeping hidden mainly His own Being and the wonders of His creation, for instance, souls and bodies, angels, heaven, hell, resurrection and messengership, etc. and yet disclosing them partially through reason, appointed his servants to believe in all these mysteries (Surmah Chashm Arya, pp. 33).

Islam means losing oneself for the sake of God and surrendering one’s own pleasure for the pleasure of God.

I perceive that through believing in Islam fountains of light are coursing through me.