Speeches, Articles and Sermons

Volume II

by
Kalamazad Mohammed, Imam

Published by
The Muslim Literary Trust
of Trinidad and Tobago

www.aaivil.org
In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Speeches, Articles and Sermons

Volume II

by
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August, 2003

www.aaiil.org
Sincerest thanks to Imam Abdool Yarsien, Mr. Ashmeed Mohammed and his wife, Hamida and Mr. Hayyum Sulaiman for voluntarily and generously defraying the cost of this publication. May Allah bless them and their loved ones abundantly and may they continue to walk on the path of righteousness.
To the celebrated Founders of the original Fireburn Jama'at and all its members, past, present and future. They bring to mind the prayer of the prophets Abraham and Ishmael after they had raised the foundations of the Ka'bah:

And when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House: Our Lord, accept from us; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing.

Our Lord, and make us both submissive to Thee, and (raise) from our offspring, a nation submissive to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully); surely Thou art the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.

Our Lord, and raise up in them a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them Thy messages and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them. Surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise. (H.Q. 2:127-129)
The Muslim Literary Trust of Trinidad and Tobago is pleased to publish the second volume of *Speeches, Articles and Sermons* by our Brother, Kalamazad Mohammed. The first volume was published in 2001 and contained a variety of articles starting with *Allah is the Light* and ending with one on *Gratitude*. The second volume was eagerly expected and this, too, contains a wide-ranging group of subjects which, we are sure, will be of benefit to all readers especially Imams who will find abundant material for their own speeches and sermons.

The Muslim Literary Trust is also happy to produce yet another work in its endeavour to bring to the world the beauties of the religion of Islam mainly through books and through its quarterly magazine, The Message.

May Allah bless us all in this small but noble task of Islamic propagation.

ENAYAT MOHAMMED
Chairman
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Whilst it is true that as ordinary Muslims without any pretensions to sainthood we are unable to perform sublime miracles like the Prophets of God or like those of inspired mujadid and saints of Islam, yet Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Mujaddid of the 14th Century Hijrah has expounded to us an area in which we, too, can perform miracles in our own conduct that can perhaps be of more import collectively to mankind than the signs that were shown to the peoples of the past by their Messengers.

But, first of all, as the farmer clears his land of weeds and pebbles before ploughing and cultivating with healthy seeds that will bring forth beautiful fruits for all to relish, so, too, we must prepare our “soil”. And the first step given to us in the Holy Qur’an is:

'O you who believe, turn to Allah with taubatan nasuha (sincere repentance) (66:8).

Taba means he returned to a place to which he had come before or he returned from disobedience to obedience to God; he repented. Nasaha signifies to advise and counsel sincerely, honestly, sedulously or faithfully for the good of the person advised; and taubatan nasuha means true or sincere repentance; repentance that mends life; such repentance that one never returns to such sin after one repents of it (Lane).

So merciful and loving is our God to us that He has promised that if we effect this kind of repentance He will change our evil deeds into good deeds:

Except him who repents and believes and does good deeds; for such Allah changes their evil deeds to good ones. And Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful (25:70).
However, this repentance has to be sincere and it is also conditional, and in the following excerpt, Hazrat Mirza Sahib has given us three conditions that are to be fulfilled if this taubatan nasaha is to be a genuine, lasting and beneficial one.

Three conditions

"Indeed, in order to acquire fine morals, taubah (repentance) motivates and assists man and helps to make him perfect; that is, whoever wishes to change his evil behaviour, then it is an indispensable prerequisite for him to make taubah with a pure heart and with sincere intentions. One must also remember that there are three conditions to taubah without which perfect taubah or taubatan nasaha cannot be obtained.

The first of these three conditions is that which is called aqla in the Arabic language (from qala'a, verbal noun aqla'un—to root out, eradicate, pull out); that is, the banishing or eradication of all those evil thoughts which instigated those base habits. It is a fact that the influence of our imagination is very great, for, before any action comes into being, it must be preceded by thinking. So, as regards taubah, the first condition is to remove those evil thoughts or ideas. For example, if a man has contracted an unlawful relationship with a woman, then in making taubah it is incumbent upon him first to form an ugly picture of her in his mind and keep fresh in his heart the vile nature of this conduct, for, as I have just said, the influence of our imagination is indeed very powerful.

I have read in the memoirs of Sufis that so strong is their mental perception that they have seen people in the shape of monkeys and swine. In short, what happens is that a person tends to assume gradually the characteristics of whatever he meditates strongly on. Therefore, whatever ideas are understood to give rise to low pleasures should be rooted out. This is the first condition.
The second condition is to experience remorse and deep regret. Every man’s conscience within him has this power which warns him concerning every evil he commits, but unfortunate is the man who neglects this faculty and leaves it in abeyance. Therefore, we must feel sorrow and show penitence for having committed sins and should keep in mind that this low pleasure is temporary and only lasts for a few days and more so, the intensity of this false pleasure and joy is constantly decreasing to the extent that in old age, when one’s strength will have waned, all these worldly indulgences will have to be abandoned. So when all these pleasures have to be relinquished right here in this very life, what benefit is there in committing sins to taste them?

The third condition is that of iron determination; that is, to make a firm resolution never to return to those evils in the future. When this resolution is adhered to, then Allah will confer His Divine assistance for achieving true taubah so much so that when vile habits are completely extirpated, they will be replaced by beautiful morals and praiseworthy actions. It is the work of Allah to bestow on a person the power and strength to achieve this for He is indeed the Master of all power and might, as is mentioned – all power belongs to Allah alone; and man’s existence is built on a shaky foundation, as the Holy Qur’an testifies: *Man is created weak* (4:28).

So, in order to obtain strength from Allah, one should fulfil the above three conditions to perfection and must abandon sloth and laziness and make constant *du‘ā* (supplication) to Him. Then Allah will surely effect a transformation in one’s morals” (*Malfūzat*, vol. 1, pp. 138-140).

Of course, before the above conditions can be fulfilled or even undertaken, they demand of us that we search for and recognise our shortcomings and entertain a genuine desire to mend our ways as we aim
for moral and spiritual advancement. This calls for honesty and sincerity in self-examination and excludes all varieties of anxiety-evading techniques like denial, projection, rationalisation, etc.

*Moral miracles*

Hazrat Mirza Sahib then puts forth three types of miracles and explains, with examples taken from the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas), why the third kind is so much more efficacious in making a deep impression on the hearts of people and in bringing about a change in their lives. He says:

"I affirm that miracles like the splitting of the moon, etc. belong to the category that requires deep knowledge for them to be understood, whilst other miracles hinge upon profound spiritual knowledge and insight, but in the third category fall moral miracles which cast a very deep and pervasive influence. Philosophers cannot find comfort in profound spiritual truths and insights. However, outstanding and meritorious virtues exert a deep and penetrating effect on them.

From among the many moral miracles of His Excellency, the Chief of the Prophets (sas), is this one: Once he had fallen asleep under a tree when he was unexpectedly aroused by a loud shout. And what did he see? Standing right over him with a drawn sword was a wild, fierce-looking desert Arab who addressed him thus: ‘O Muhammad! Who can save you from me now?’ With perfect calmness and full composure, the Holy Prophet replied: ‘Allah.’

This declaration was not like that of ordinary men. *Allah*, which is the personal name of God and which is a compendium of all perfect attributes, was uttered by the lips of the Holy Prophet in such a way that it really came from deep within his heart and struck the heart of the desert Arab also."
It is said that this is the mighty name of God and there are great and innumerable blessings in it. But what benefit can a person obtain if he does not remember Allah? In short, with such majesty did the word Allah come forth from the lips of the Holy Prophet that this wild Arab was struck with fear and his hand even began to tremble so that the sword fell out of his hand. The Holy Prophet (sas) took up the sword and spoke to him thus: ‘Now, tell me, who can save you from me now?’ And that by-now-weak-hearted barbarian could find not a single name to mention. Then, the Holy Prophet (sas), displaying that superb example of virtuous conduct, said to him: ‘Well, you are free! But learn kindness and bravery from me.’ This moral miracle had such an effect on the desert Arab that he became a Muslim.

It is written that a person came to Abul Hasan Khuraqani and related this story: ‘During his journey he met a lion and he said to it: “For the sake of God, leave me alone!”’ The lion still attacked him, but when he exclaimed: “For the sake of Abul Hasan, desist!” the lion moved away. This event created such a deep doubt in the faith of the traveller that he abandoned his journey. He returned and presented this enigma to Abul Hasan who told him that it was really a simple matter. He explained: “You were not truly conscious of the name of Allah, so, genuine fear of Him and knowledge of His power were absent from your heart. However, you know my name quite well and so you had a high estimation of it in your heart.”

Thus you can see that there are many great blessings and virtues in the word Allah but one must accord it the highest place in one’s heart and pay heed to His greatness.

Yet another of the Holy Prophet’s many moral miracles is the following: ‘Once he had a lot of goats and on seeing this a certain person remarked: “I have never seen this amount of
wealth in anybody’s possession before.” Whereupon our Master gave him all the goats. At this, the person immediately expostulated: “You are indeed a true Prophet! This type of generosity is difficult to be performed by any other than a Prophet.”

In short, such was the distinguished conduct of the Holy Prophet (sas) that the Holy Qur’an makes mention of it in the words: *And surely thou hast sublime morals (68:4)*” (*Malfūzāt*, vol. 1, pp. 101-102).

Hazrat Mirza Sahib also makes the point that people may make all kinds of excuses, learned or otherwise, to evade having to accept the first two kinds of miracles. For example, they may explain away the splitting of the moon or the eclipses of the sun and the moon in the month of *Ramadhan* (as signs of the appearance of the *Mahdi*) as acts of nature with no special spiritual significance. Likewise, miracles relating to deep spiritual knowledge and insight may be regarded as contrary to the demonstrable laws of physical science or may be considered as borrowed knowledge or even as the outpourings of a disturbed mind. However, moral miracles that bring about a distinct and astounding change in behaviour cannot be gainsaid and, in fact, their influence is not limited to time and space nor to race and social class. He then gives a few specific examples of the kind of change he invites us to institute in our lives.

“Every person who gives up evil morals and blameworthy habits and replaces them with beautiful and virtuous habits is a miracle-worker. For example, if he possesses a very harsh disposition and his temper is easily aroused and he forsakes them for forbearance and forgiveness or he exchanges miserliness for generosity or adopts compassion in place of envy,
then, indeed he has wrought a miracle. And so, too, if he relinquishes egoism and self-conceit for humility and meekness, then, that, too, is a miraculous act. So, who is there among you who does not cherish the ambition to become a miracle-worker? I am sure that everybody will like to do this in his life. So, without doubt, it will go down as a perpetual and ever-living miracle if a man should change his moral condition, for this is such a miracle that is never destroyed but instead its influence is spread far and wide.

A believer should become a miracle worker in the eyes of God and of people, too. There have been many drunkards and rakes who were unimpressed by any extraordinary sign but who were forced to bow their heads in acquiescence before a change in the moral conduct of another person (who was like them). If you examine the lives of many people, you will find that they accepted the religion of truth only after having witnessed a miraculous transformation in the moral conduct of someone else" (*Malfuzat*, vol. 1, pp. 141-142).

**Advice to his *Jama‘at***

Mirza Sahib then directly addresses his *Jama‘at*, which has been specially chosen to initiate the final triumph of truth over irreligion, on how to respond to the rabid attacks from even Muslim objectors who reject his explanations of the Holy Qur’an and are hostile to him and to his followers. He writes:

"It is absolutely necessary, therefore, for my *Jama‘at* members to make progress in their moral conduct for the maxim ‘steadfastness is greater than a miracle’ is a well-known one. So, they should always remember that if someone should treat them harshly, they should, as far as possible, respond gently and kindly. They should not allow themselves to fall into the trap of meeting violence and harshness with the same.
Man possesses a soul, too, and it has three different stages – the *nafs-ul ammarah* (soul that commands evil), the *nafs-ul-lawwarah* (self-accusing soul) and the *nafs-ul-mutma’innah* (soul at rest).

In the *ammarah* stage, man finds himself unable to control his passions and unlawful emotions and loses his sense of equilibrium and falls from a high standard of morality.

But in the *lawwarah* stage, he has control over his passions. An interesting anecdote comes to mind here. Sheikh Sa‘adi wrote in his *Bustan* that a venerable old gentleman was bitten by a dog. When he came home his family observed that a dog had bitten him. Among them was a pretty little girl who asked him: ‘Why didn’t you bite back the dog?’ He replied: ‘Daughter, it is not mete for a human to behave like a dog.’

Similarly, if an evil person should abuse a believer, the latter should turn away, otherwise the example of the dog will be fulfilled in him. Those closest to Allah were severely cursed, abused and persecuted but they observed the command of the Holy Qur’an: *Turn away from the ignorant* (7:199).

Many evil kinds of punishment were perpetrated against the very person of the perfect man, the Holy Prophet (sas), not to mention curses, rudeness and impertinence. But what did this most virtuous of all personalities do in return? He made *du’a* (supplication) for them. And as Allah had given him a promise that if he withdrew from the ignorant, He would preserve his life and honour and uncouth people would not be able to attack him, so it came to pass – that the Prophet’s opponents could not besmirch his honour in the least. On the contrary, they themselves suffered disgrace and humiliation and either fell at his feet in submission or were destroyed before his very eyes. In short, in this *lawwarah* stage, man struggles to re-
form himself and this is not a one-shot affair but a daily task. If an ignorant person or a vagabond should revile or do evil to you, then your honour will be preserved in the measure you turn away from him. On the other hand, if you clash with him in an angry confrontation, then you will be destroyed for you will have bought dishonour for yourself.

In the *mutma'inah* stage, man becomes the embodiment of beauty and goodness. He severs all connection with the world and from whatever is not of Allah. He goes about his business in this world and even cordially treats with worldly-minded people. But, in reality, he is not of this world. Wherever he is, the world is transformed – there, the heaven and the earth become something else” (*Malfūzāt*, vol. 1, pp. 102-103).

**Allah's promise to true Ahmadis**

“Allah, the Most High, says in the Holy Qur’an: *And We shall make those who follow thee above those who disbelieve, to the Day of Resurrection* (3:55). This heart-consoling promise was given as assistance to the son of Mary, the past Messiah. But I give you the good news that Allah has also used the name of the Christian Messiah in speaking to the present Messiah, son of Mary, and has given him the same good news in the same words, too.

Now, let those ponder, those who are associated with me and wish to be included in this mighty promise and good news, and let them ask themselves this question – Can they be like those who are still stuck in the *ammarah* stage and are still bound to the path of vice and immorality? Certainly and decidedly not! Those who truly value this promise of Allah and do not treat my words like a fairy-tale should remember and listen to me with sincerity of heart. Again, I say to those who are joined to me, that this is not an ordinary relationship. In
fact, it is a most powerful one, the influence of which extends not only to me personally, but reaches that Being Who also joined me to that chosen and perfect man who came to the world with truth and purity of soul.

I affirm that if the effect of these words had concerned only me, then I would not have had any fear or anxiety nor would I have paid any concern to them. But that is not the case. In fact, this impression extends to our Holy Prophet (sas) and even to the Supreme Being, Allah, Most High.

So reflect deeply and listen in the proper state of mind to this – if you wish to be part of the good news and you desire to prove its truthfulness and there is indeed a great thirst in you for that promised success (that you will triumph over the disbelievers until the Day of Judgement), then I say again to you that that success will never come unless you transcend the lawwamah stage and arrive at the minaret of the mutma’innah stage.

I say nothing more than this – that you people have grafted yourselves onto a person who is commissioned by Allah, Most High. Therefore, listen to his words with the ears of your heart and be totally prepared to act upon his words, and do not be like those who first accepted the truth then fell into the dirty pit of rejection and have thus bought for themselves eternal punishment” (Malfūzāt, vol. 1, pp. 103-105).

Finally, we put forward from the Holy Qur’an another reference to the Messiah of the 14th Century Hijrah and his disciples:

_O you who believe, be helpers (in the cause) of Allah, as Jesus, son of Mary, said to the disciples: Who are my helpers (in the cause) of Allah. So a party of the Children of Israel_
believed and another party disbelieved; then We aided those who believed against their enemy, and they became predominant (61:14).
The Meaning of *Istighfar*

*Istighfar* is derived from *ghafara* he covered, veiled, concealed or hid; and *ghafara Lahu dhanbahu* means: He (God) covered his sin, crime or offence or forgave it, pardoned it. *Istighfaral-Lahu* signifies he begged of God forgiveness or pardon, he sought of God the covering or forgiveness or pardon of his sin, crime, offence, by word and by deed (Lane).

The Holy Qur’an has numbered as one of the qualities of the *muttaqin* (pious ones) the following:

> And those who, when they commit an indecency or wrong their souls, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins (3:134).

And we are taught to pray thus:

> And pardon us! And grant us protection! And have mercy on us! (2:286)

Maulana Muhammad in his footnote to the above verse explains:

"Some of the words in which these prayers are addressed require to be explained. *Iṣr* means *a burden which restrains one from motion*, and, therefore, *the burden of sin*, as sin hampers the spiritual progress of man and restrains him from advancing spiritually. *Ufū* is from *afw*, which means *effacing or obliteration*, and generally indicates the effacing or pardoning of sins. *Ighfar* is from *ghafir*, which means *covering with that which protects a thing from dirt*. In religious terminology, the word *ghafir* is used, as Barmawi explains in *Qastalani* (commentary of Bukhari), as meaning *protection which*, he says, is of two kinds, *protecting man from the commission of sin* or *protecting him from the punishment of a sin that he has committed*. This is in accordance with what is said in the *Nihayah* where the Divine attributes *Ghafir* and *Ghafur*
are explained as meaning *One Who protects men from the commission of sins and faults and One Who passes over their sins and faults.*

The Imam of the Age, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, has identified at least eleven separate but related entreaties, contained in the prayer for *istighfar*:

- To cover or suppress evil tendencies
- To protect from committing sins because of human weakness
- To ask for forgiveness for past sins
- To protect from future sins and calamities or misfortunes; that is, for sinlessness
- To seek help and guidance to do good deeds; that is, for perfection
- To implant oneself deeply into the soil of God’s love
- Through penitence in word and deed, to drink in the celestial water through the ducts of humility and meekness
- To keep one’s heart steadfast in the love of God and never be severed from Him just as a child who is ill cannot bear separation from his mother even for a moment, and to pray that He never stops loving us
- To make this prayer with total sincerity of heart
- To be saved from the repercussions of past sins
- To be given strength to continue to advance in good deeds.

The following excerpts from the writings of the Imam shed further light on the matter. Before tackling the definition of *istighfar*, he encourages us, in this extract, to protect ourselves from the punishment of Allah through *taubah* (repentance) and *istighfar*.

"You ought to engage in *taubah* and *istighfar*. Without constant recourse to *taubah* and *istighfar*, what can man do? All the Prophets preached that God will forgive you if you make *taubah* and *istighfar*. So read *salah* and ask help of Allah to protect you from committing future sins and ask pardon for
past sins and make *istighfar* repeatedly so that the innate inclination of man towards evil may not surface. Two propensities are found in the nature of man – one is the power to earn goodness and to perform acts of righteousness, and the other is the attraction to evil works. The power to impede this attraction is the responsibility of Allah, Most High, and this tendency to evil lies hidden in man as fire is latent in stone” (*Malfuzat*, vol. 9, p. 372).

He then gives the meaning of *istighfar*.

“The meaning of *istighfar* is that no sin may be committed openly and the propensity towards evil may be suppressed. It is true that in spite of being sinless the Prophets of God also engaged in *istighfar* but their *istighfar* was for the purpose of preventing future lapses. But, for the common people, another dimension of *istighfar* is that Allah may save them from the repercussions of past crimes or sins and forgive them their sins and protect them from future ones.

In any case, it is imperative for man to be constantly engaged in *istighfar*. The purpose of famines and other kinds of calamities that descend on the earth is to remind people that they should constantly make *istighfar*. But the meaning of the word is not that one should repeat superficially *astaghfirullah*, *astaghfirullah*. In fact, because it is an expression in a foreign language, Arabic, the deeper meaning is hidden from people. Of course, the Arabs are very cognisant of the various meanings of this expression, but in our country, because Arabic is a foreign tongue, many of the intricate realities of this language are unknown to us.

There are many people who claim to have made *istighfar* abundantly – that they have read a hundred *tasbihs* (prayer of glorification), or a thousand, but if you ask them the purpose and
meaning of *istighfar*, they may well become dumbfounded. Man ought, with full sincerity and in the depth of his heart, to ask forgiveness for the sins and transgressions he committed in the past, that he may not suffer punishment for them, and as regards the future, he should, with genuine sincerity of heart, continuously beseech Allah for His help in guiding him to do good deeds and to save him from future transgression.

Remember well that nothing is achieved by mere words. *Istighfar* can be made in your own language by asking Allah to efface your past sins and protect you from future ones and to guide you to do righteous deeds, for this is the essence of *istighfar*. There is no need to repeat constantly, like a parrot, *astaghfirul-Laha, astaghfirul-Lah*, while your heart is untouched. Bear in mind that it is only that prayer which is uttered with sincerity of heart that reaches Allah, Most High. Therefore, you should make abundant *du‘a* (supplication) to Allah in your own tongue, for this makes an impression on the heart. If there is enthusiasm in the heart and if this is shared by the tongue, then that is a commendable thing. Without participation of the heart, it is futile to make *du‘a* with the tongue alone. Verily, *du‘as* that issue from the heart are indeed genuine.

If, before a calamity strikes, man constantly makes sincere supplications to Allah, Most High, and also engages in *istighfar*, then, through the mercy and beneficence of Allah, that disaster is averted. But when the disaster actually descends, it is too late to be warded off. One should therefore always make *du‘a* before the misfortune falls and one should also immerse oneself in *istighfar* beforehand. In this way, Allah protects a person in the time of affliction.

My Jama‘at members should display a distinctive feature in their lives. If someone takes *bai‘at* (oath of fealty) and goes
away and yet shows no difference in his behaviour, for example, he treats his wife in the same way as before and so, too, his family and relations, then that cannot be regarded as exemplary conduct. If, after having taken the bai’at, he still maintains the same bad morals and behaviour, then what is the use of the bai’at? After having taken the bai’at he ought to present such an example of probity that, not only his relatives, but strangers and his neighbours, too, will proclaim for themselves that he is not the same person he was in the past.

Remember well, too, that if you purify your heart and do good deeds, you will certainly cast fear in the hearts of others. Look at the awe-inspiring personality of the Holy Prophet (sas). Once, the unbelievers were terribly afraid that he would hurl imprecations on them, so they came together to him and requested him not to curse them. A truthful person certainly possesses a commanding personality. So, you must purify yourselves thoroughly and do good deeds only for the sake of Allah and you will be sure to exert a powerful influence on others and put fear in their hearts” (Malfūzāt, vol. 9, pp. 372-374).

In one of his writings Hazrat Mirza Sahib makes the point that the istighfar of the prophets of God was not only for sinlessness and perfection, but also for another noble and subtle purpose. He explains that when the prophets contemplated the favours of God and tried to count them, they realised they could not. So to express their human inability to thank their Creator adequately for His innumerable gifts they made istighfar in the hope that this prayer for forgiveness would make up for their inability to thank God fully. Or, in other words, their istighfar was for the purpose of making up for the shortfall in their thanksgiving.

Hazrat Mirza Sahib goes deeper into the subject of istighfar as he explains:
"The laws of nature also testify that rules similar to those laid down by the Qur’an for the attainment of spiritual purification and real salvation obtain in the organic world also. We daily observe that diseases attack all fauna and flora fed on unwholesome diet for want of nutrition. For combating these diseases, nature has laid down that wholesome nutrition should be provided, and what is unhealthy should be stopped. Look at the trees, for instance. To keep themselves healthy they are provided with two faculties; one, that they continue burying their roots deep into the earth, lest being unattached they should dry up (this is to ward off unhealthy atmosphere and unhealthy food for the root), and second, that they draw in moisture from the earth through the tiny tubes of their roots (capillary attraction). (This is to feed on healthy sustenance.) By this combined process, trees grow. For man, too, the Divine Dispensation has ordained a similar principle. That is, he succeeds in living a spiritually holy life only when, first, he truly and firmly holds himself fast to God and through istighfar he implants his self deep into the soil of God’s love; and secondly, with penitence expressed in word and deed and complete turning towards God he drinks in the celestial water through the ducts of humility and meekness, and in this way he so draws this water into himself that he washes away the barrenness of sin, and purges himself of spiritual weakness.

Istighfar with which the elements of faith are strengthened has been mentioned in the Holy Qur’an in two senses. The first is that keeping the heart steadfast in one’s love for God, one should, by means of this attachment, stop the manifestation of sins, which surge up in a state of severance from Him; and further, one should seek God’s help through complete union with Him. This istighfar is peculiar to those near to God, who consider even a momentary separation from Him disastrous to themselves, and who offer istighfar that God may always hold them in His love.
The second sense of *istighfar* is that one should depart from sin, and fly towards God, and should try that one’s heart be seized with the love of God, just as a tree implants its roots into the earth, and thus being blessed with a holy development for the soul one may escape the aridity of sin and spiritual decay. Both these connotations have been included in the word *istighfar*, for *ghafara*, from which this word is derived, means *to conceal, to cover up*. In other words, by *istighfar* we mean the prayer that God may cover up the sins of one who keeps himself steadfast in His love, and may prevent the elements of his human frailties from uncovering themselves. Nay, He may draw him into the mantle of His Divinity, and bestow on him a portion from His Holiness, so that, if perchance human weakness should manifest itself through sin, God may again cover it up, and save him from the evil consequences of such an exposure” (*The Four Questions Answered*, pp. 32-34).

As a matter of fact, the concept of *istighfar* is not limited to this earthly existence but extends into the life after death and is really “the pride of man” which leads to unimaginable progress and excellence as Hazrat Mirza Sahib explains in his commentary of *And those who believe with (the Prophet) their light will gleam before them and on their right hands – they will say: Our Lord, make perfect for us our light, and grant us protection! Lo! Thou art able to do all thing* (66:8).

He explains:

“This unceasing desire for perfection shows clearly that progress in paradise will be endless. For, when they will have attained one state of excellence they will not stop there but, seeing a higher stage of excellence, will consider that to which they will have attained as imperfect and will, therefore, desire the attainment of the higher excellence. When they will have attained this, they will yet see another higher excellence and
thus they will continue to pray for the attainment of higher and higher excellence. This ceaseless desire for perfection shows that they will be endlessly attaining to excellence: the righteous will go on making progress and will never recede a step nor shall they ever be deprived of those blessings” (Teachings of Islam, p. 145).

He further amplifies the point in his footnote:

“The question may arise here as to the seeking of maghfirat after entry into paradise and obtaining God’s pardon. Such a question is, however, based upon ignorance of the actual meaning of maghfirat and istighfar. Maghfirat really means suppression of a defective state. The righteous will be continually praying to the Lord for the attainment of perfection and complete immersion in light. They will be ever ascending upwards and will regard every state as defective in comparison with a higher one to which they will aspire and will, therefore, pray to God to suppress the defective state that they may be able to get to the higher one. Their desire for maghfirat will, therefore, be endless because the progress which they will have to make will also be endless. We can clearly see from this that the true significance of the word istighfar and also that the desire of it is really the pride of man, because it is the only thing which leads him on to the highest excellence which a man can possess” (p. 145).

To further underline the importance of istighfar, the following are some selections from the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas):

➢ I swear by God that I ask God’s pardon and turn to Him in repentance more than seventy times a day.
➢ My heart is invaded by unmindfulness, and I ask God’s pardon a hundred times in a day.
By Him in Whose hand my soul is, if you had not sinned God would have removed you and brought a people who sin, then ask God’s pardon and are forgiven.

God’s Messenger stated that God has said: *If anyone knows that I have power to forgive sins I will pardon him and not care, so long as he associates nothing with me.*

If anyone continually asks pardon, God will appoint for him a way out of every distress and a relief from every anxiety, and will provide for him from where he did not reckon.

All the sons of Adam are sinners, but the best of sinners are those who are given to repentance.

God loves the believing servant who is severely tried and is penitent.

Finally, the Holy Prophet (sas) gives us the best prayer of *istighfar*:

“O God, Thou art my Lord. There is no god but Thee. Thou hast created me, and I am Thy servant and hold to Thy covenant and promise as much as I can. I seek refuge from Thee from the evil of what I have done. I acknowledge Thy favour to me, and I acknowledge my sin. Pardon me, for none but Thee pardons sins.”
The Meaning of Rabitu

Ya ayyahal-ladhina amanus-biru wa sabiru wa rabitu wattaqul-Laha la ‘allakum tuflihan (O you who believe, be steadfast and try to excel in steadfastness and guard (the frontiers). And keep your duty to Allah that you may be successful (3:199).

Wa a’iddu lahum mastata’tum min quwwatinw-wa mir ribatil khaili turhibuna bihi ‘aduwwal-Lahi wa ‘aduwvakum (And make ready for them whatever force you can and horses tied at the frontier, to frighten thereby the enemy of Allah and your enemy (8:60).

According to Lane’s Lexicon, rabata, from which ribat is derived, means: he tied or bound a beast with a rope that he might not run away; his heart became strong and firm and resolute so that he did not flee on account of fear; he strengthened or fortified his heart; he stuck patiently to a particular affair; and the imperative rabitu carries the meanings: tie horses at the frontier and remain at one’s post; be patient in endurance of what one’s religion requires; vie in patience with one’s enemy; be mindful of the times of prayers; or apply self constantly, perseveringly or assiduously to prayer; wait (expectantly) for prayer, for it ties one from acts of disobedience and restrains from forbidden deeds; and rabitul khaili signifies two (hostile) parties each tying their horses at their frontier, and each in preparation for the other.

Imam Raghib, in his Mufradat, explains the various meanings of the word rabata as: to keep watch in order to guard the frontiers of Islam; to protect the inner self from unworthy desires and not to fall short, for the reward for striving to protect one’s soul from evil desires is the same as jihad for the sake of Allah; and he quotes 8:11 and 28:10 of the Holy Qur’an to show that it also means strengthening and fortifying the heart.
In the following hadith, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) gives an insight into the identity of the “frontier” and furnishes us with guidance on how to protect it from satanic assaults:

“God’s Messenger said: ‘Shall I not guide you to something for which God blots out sins and raises men’s ranks?’ When his hearers expressed their desire that he should tell them, he said: ‘Performing complete ablution although circumstances make it difficult, travelling far to mosques, and looking expectantly to the next time of prayer after prayers have been said. That is the defence of the frontier’” (Mishkat al-Masabih, vol. 1, p. 64). Robson.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Mujaddid of the 14th Century Hijrah, has also given his explanation of the word ribat. He says:

“Look at the noble companions (ra) of the Holy Prophet (sas) and ask yourself whether it was their love of the luxurious life that gave them victory over their enemies. No, certainly not so. Even in the former scriptures it was prophesied that these people would worship their Lord during the night and fast during the day. They spent their nights remembering their God and reflecting deeply on Him. And if we inquire as to how they spent their lives, then the following verses of the Holy Qur’an provide full details of their existence:

Wa min ribatil khaili turhibyana bihi ‘aduwwal-Lahi wa ‘aduwwakum’ (And keep your horses tied at the frontier to frighten thereby the enemy of Allah and your enemy (8:60).

Ya ayyahal-Ladhina amanusbiru wa sabiru wa rabilu (O you who believe, be steadfast and try to excel in steadfastness, and guard (the frontiers) (3:199).
The word *ribat* is used for those horses which are stationed on the frontiers in order to repel an assault from the enemy. Allah, Most High, commands the believers to keep themselves in readiness in order to defend themselves from the attack of the enemy and this word *ribat* is used by Him to warn them they have to be perfectly alert.

There were two duties that had been assigned to them – to confront the visible enemy and to fight for spiritual advancement. The lexicons tell us that *ribat* means one’s self as well as the human heart. There is a subtle point here in that the horses can only perform that task if they are well-trained and well-taught. Nowadays, these horses are trained in the same way as children are nurtured, that is, with great care and attention. If they are not properly trained, not only will they prove to be completely useless, but more than that, they will become harmful and dangerous.

It also points to the fact that the *ribat* (inner selves) of human beings should be so educated and that their powers and capacities should be such as would be totally subservient to the laws of Allah, Most High. For, if they are not like this, they would not prove useful on the battlefield – that battlefield where man has to come up against Satan, his mortal foe, and this is an ever continuous battle.

Just as in a fight or on the battlefield, besides bodily strength, bodily training is also a necessary prerequisite, in the same way, for the sake of this internal war and *jihad*, training for man’s inner self and pertinent knowledge are indispensable requirements, and if these are lacking, then Satan will gain the ascendancy over man and his will be an evil end of ignominy and abasement.

For example, if a person possesses guns, muskets, rifles and
other weapons of war, etc., but he is unskilled in the use of them, then he can never gain victory in a battle against his enemies. Another person may also possess arrows and muskets and other provisions of war and he may know how to use them efficiently, but his arm may be weak. He, too, will suffer defeat. It is evident from this that mere knowledge of the manner and method of using weapons cannot bring victory and success unless the arm is strengthened by rigorous practice and exercise. For, if a person knows how to use a sword but is deficient in the matter of exercise and practice, then he will enter the battlefield, wield his sword a few times and cut off a head or two but then his weak arm will become worthless for it will tire quickly and become totally useless, and he himself will end up as the prey of the enemy” (Malfūzat, vol. 1, pp. 54-56).

He continues:

“If you desire to be of service to Islam, then you must first choose the path of self-purification and taqwa (righteousness). I shall now revert to my original topic, that is, sabiru wa rabitu (have patience and guard the borders).

Just as in opposing the enemy it is important to station horses at the frontier so that the enemy may not be allowed to cross the border, so, too, should you always be in a state of preparedness. You should not allow the enemy to cross the frontier and launch an attack on Islam.

I have already mentioned above that if you wish to serve and support Islam, you should first adopt the path of self-purification and righteousness through which you yourself may enter the sanctuary of Allah’s impregnable fortress, and that you may acquire dignity and merit for such a service. You can see for yourself that because of the external weakness of Mus-
lums, other nations look upon them with scorn and contempt. Now, if your inner spiritual power should also become weak and abject, then you can consider yourself as good as dead. You should cleanse your heart so that the holy power of Allah may penetrate it and that it may become strong and powerful. Allah’s grace has always attended the pious and righteous ones. Do not assume such morals and conduct as would put a blot on the escutcheon of Islam. Those Muslims who commit evil deeds and do not act upon the teachings of the religion bring disgrace to Islam. A person who consumes alcoholic beverages becomes intoxicated and vomits all over the place. His turban hangs inelegantly on his neck, he falls into drains and dirty canals, and he even suffers the kicks of the police. Hindus and Christians laugh at him. Such a flagrant violation of Islamic law not only makes him a laughing-stock but its influence insidiously penetrates the heart of Islam itself. When I hear these things or I read the Prison Reports, it makes me very dejected. When I see how Muslims are being punished for evil deeds, my heart becomes perturbed that these people who are blessed with the straight path, because of their lack of discipline, not only cause harm to themselves but bring ridicule to Islam, itself.

My point is this – that Muslim people call themselves Muslims and yet indulge in those things that are prohibited in Islam thereby bringing into doubt not only themselves but the religion of Islam, also. Therefore, shape your conduct and manners in such a fashion that the unbelievers will be left with no opportunity to find fault with you, for this, in reality, applies to Islam” (Malfuzat, vol. 1, pp. 77-78).

Finally, he advises us:

“True insight and profound knowledge cannot be attained without turning to Allah, Most High, in deep humility and
submission. For this reason, people have been advised to fear the insight of a believer because he sees through the light of Allah. As I have just said, genuine perspicacity and insight and true knowledge cannot be obtained unless a person possesses *taqwa* (righteousness).

If you wish to be successful, then use your intellect, meditate, ponder. The Holy Qur’an repeatedly laid emphasis on the practice of deliberation and reflection in our affairs. Meditate on the precious Book and let your nature become pure. When your heart is purified and your intellect is sound and you tread the path of *taqwa*, then the marriage of these two (intellect and piety) produces the condition where the following words are uttered from the depths of your heart:

*Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! Glory be to Thee! Save us from the chastisement of the fire!* (3:190)

Then in your intellect will be born the realisation that this creation is not in vain but rather it provides proof and evidence and signs of the truth of the real Creator, so that all kinds of knowledge and science that support the truth of religion will become manifest*”* (*Malfuzat*, vol. 1, p. 66).

Dear brothers and sisters, may Allah help us to purify and fortify ourselves and imbue ourselves with the divine colours. May He also assist us in following the example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*) and his companions (*ra*) so that we, too, shall become veritable soldiers of Islam and so fulfil the mission for which He has created us – a mission that He, Himself, has vouchsafed to us in the 22:78 of the Holy Qur’an:

*And strive hard for Allah with due striving. He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion – the
faith of your father Abraham. He named you Muslims before and in this, that the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you, and you may be bearers of witness to the people; so keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and hold fast to Allah. He is your Protector; excellent the Protector and excellent the Helper!

Ameen.
The Holy Qur’an informs us that in the alternation of the day and the night there are signs for men of understanding, and Science has opened to us the door of understanding of the physical blessings that accrue to all of God’s creation from this alternation. Naseer Ahmad Faruqui, in his commentary of 2: 164 of the Holy Qur’an refers specifically to the phrase: *Wakhtilafil-laili wan-nahari* and makes the observations that one major benefit, (discernible by even the most ignorant of men), that we obtain from this arrangement is that we can work at leisure and with ease during the day and rest peacefully during the night and despite all the differences and contrasts in this alternation, one thing is sure – it is all in the service of, and to the benefit of man.

However, this alternation is not limited to physical phenomena but has its counterpart in the spiritual world: for example, the vicissitudes of moods, circumstances and specifically here, the expansion and contraction of the heart which are referred to as *bast* (expansion) and *qabz* (contraction).

The Holy Qur’an tells us in 2:245: *Wal-Lahu yaqbidu wa yabsutu.* According to Lane, *qabadahu* means: he took with the hand, he grasped it, clutched it, seized it; or, he contracted it, or drew it together; and according to Penrice, it means: to contract, take, seize, draw in (its wings in flying), as a bird.

*Basatahu*, according to Lane, means: he spread it out or forth, expanded it, extended it; that is, *Basatal-Lahur-rizqa*: God multiplied, enlarged or made ample or plentiful, the means of subsistence; and so he explains the above verse (2:245) as “And God straitens or scants, or makes scanty the means of subsistence to some or withholds the means of subsistence from whom He wills and amplifies, enlarges, or makes ample or plentiful, the same” (p. 2482). We may note in pass-
ing that two of the attributes of Allah, Most High, are Al Qabid (He Who contracts things) and Al Basit (He Who opens or expands things).

Lane also records the following explanation of qabz and bast: (There are two) “terms applied by the investigators of truth among the Sufis to two contrary states of heart, from both of which it is seldom or never free: the former (qabz) being an affection of the heart withholding it from dilation and joy; whether the cause thereof be known, as the remembrance of a sin or an offence or of an omission, or be not known; and some of them make other divisions thereof” (p. 2482).

Two sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) come to mind here, both of which seem to be alluding to the two states whilst offering means of profiting from them. Firstly, Abu Huraira reported the Prophet as saying: “For everything there is eagerness, but every eagerness has a slack period; so if one who experiences it does what is right and pursues a middle course, place hopes in him, but if fingers are pointed at him (that is, he did it for name and reputation), do not consider him of any account” (Tirmidhi).

Secondly, Abu Umama reported God’s messenger as saying that his Lord suggested turning the valley of Makkah into gold for him, but he replied: “No, my Lord, but let me have enough to eat and be hungry on alternate days; then when I am hungry I shall make supplication to Thee and make mention of Thee, and when I have enough I shall praise and thank Thee” (Ahmad).

In the following two extracts, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Mujaddid of the 14th Century Hijrah, has described the two states of qabz and bast and has given us suggestions on how to recognise and expel the former from our hearts.

“Man experiences alternate periods of qabz (contraction) and bast (expansion). In times of expansion, enthusiasm increases
and the heart begins to open out. More attention is paid to Allah, Most High, at this time, and one begins to derive more pleasure and delight from prayer. But on many occasions there comes upon man that condition in which joy and happiness gradually recede and a straitened condition overspreads the heart. Whenever this event occurs, then its remedy is to engage in *istighfar* abundantly and to read *darud sharif* repeatedly. In addition, one should perform *salah* over and over – that is the prescription for freeing the heart of this constriction” *Malfuzat*, vol. 5, p. 10).

Later on, in answer to a companion who was experiencing the above states without understanding their origins and causes etc. Hazrat Mirza Sahib gave the following explanation:

“This is called *qabz* and *bast* (that is, contraction and expansion). *Qabz* is the name of that condition when a veil of heedlessness covers the heart and there is little love for God and all kinds of anxiety, fear and grief and worldly apprehensions engulf the mind. And *bast* is that state when the heart is removed far from the world and is turned towards Allah and the thought of death is ever fresh in the mind, for unless a person consciously and deliberately thinks of his own death, he cannot attain to that state of *bast*. Death is a regular visitor. There is no man who has not already lost a close relative and nowadays, as the plague is attacking every home, the minds of people are so occupied with the thought of death, that there is no wish to think of anything else at all.

These states of *qabz* and *bast* arise in the heart of a person who does not remember death because experience has shown us that on many occasions a person might be in the grips of *qabz* (contraction) and then an unexpected event occurs and that state of *qabz* instantaneously disappears. For example, an earthquake may strike without warning, or a sudden death
may befall and side by side with these, his heart still opens out (in joy). From this, it is also known that qabz is a temporary state, which can be banished by constant remembrance of death and intimate attachment to Allah, Most High, and that bast (expansion) is a permanent condition.

The mystics hardly ever experience the state of qabz. Ignorant people, however, believe that this world is a place of lengthy residence and so there is much time for doing acts of righteousness in the future, and they thus fall into error. Only Allah knows whether one will be alive tomorrow or not” (Malfuzat, vol. 5, pp. 260-261).

In conclusion, the Holy Qur’an relates that when Korah was destroyed with all his much flaunted wealth, those who had yearned to be in his place and had said: O would that we had the like of what Korah is given (28:79), had the scales removed from their eyes and now said: Ah! (know) that Allah amplifies and straitens the means of subsistence (material and spiritual) for whom He pleases of His servants; had Allah not been gracious to us, He would have abased us. Ah! (know) that the ungrateful are never successful (28:82).
Two Parallel Systems

(This is Our) way with Our messengers whom We sent before thee, and thou wilt not find a change in Our course (17:77).

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Mujaddid of the 14th Century Hijrah, has identified a general law operating in the whole universe when he explains that there are two systems operating side by side in Allah's creation - a physical system and a closely related spiritual system; the former, in fact, being a manifestation of the latter which is hidden, except to discerning spiritual eyes.

In Taudhil-i Maram, he has given a somewhat detailed example of this in his tafsir (commentary) of chapter 91 of the Holy Qur'an. An explanation of the first seven verses is given below.

By the sun and his brightness! And the moon when she borrows light from him! And the day when it exposes it to view! And the night when it draws a veil over it! And the heaven and its make! And the earth and its extension! And the soul and its perfection!

Mirza Sahib explains:

"...all the splendours that have been listed with the various oaths have all been assembled in man. Thus the soul of a 'perfect man' contains within it the brilliance of the sun and its rays, the characteristics of the moon in being able to acquire benefit from others, and for his own good, acquire light (wisdom) from another source of light (wisdom). Man also has the characteristics of daylight. Just as in daylight labourers and workers are able to carry out their duties properly, in the same way the seekers of truth and those who tread the path of peace, by following the example of the 'perfect man', are able
to carry out their religious functions with ease and comfort. Such a man, like daylight, can reveal himself with clarity and holds within himself all the characteristics of daylight. The ‘perfect man’ also bears resemblance to the pitch darkness of night. This is explained by the fact that despite the aloofness and separation from desires of the self that he acquires through the Grace of God, he sometimes reverts to those things that constitute human rights under Divine Wisdom and Guidance. Such desires are apparently opposed to and are a hindrance to the spiritual light, such as the functions of eating, drinking and resting, duties towards wives, love and care of children. The ‘perfect man’ carries out these duties and for a little while accepts this darkness for himself, not because he is inclined towards such darkness, but because Almighty God directs him towards these things, so that he may gain a little rest from the exertions and endeavours in the path of the spirit and, having rested, be prepared to carry on with the burden of his efforts. A Persian poet expresses this in a single verse:

Trainers sew the eyelids of a falcon
Only to unstitch them again.

So, if such people, indulge in bodily comforts and needs after undergoing anxiety and mental fatigue, it helps their feeble bodies to be refreshed and become fit and gain enough strength and energy to accompany the spirit on its course once again. After this somewhat baser indulgence, man is able to cover many stages of spiritual progress. Besides this, the human soul has many other finer qualities resembling the night which have been discovered through the researches carried out in the fields of astronomy and astrology. Similarly, the soul of the ‘perfect man’ bears resemblance to outer space. Just as the boundaries of space are so extensive and limitless that nothing can fill it, in the same way the reasoning powers of these noble souls have extensive capacities within them, and, despite the fact
that they acquire a vast amount of knowledge and truths, they still cry out *ma‘arafinaka* (I do not know Thee).

Just as the canopy of space is dotted with bright stars, so the soul of the ‘perfect man’ also bears a strong resemblance to the earth. The best kind of soil has the characteristic that, when it is ploughed, sown and irrigated and all the care and attention that it needs has been given to it, then it yields far more than any other plot of land, and the fruit produced from such a land is finer and sweeter and more delicious than other crop of fruit; in its quantity and quality it cannot be excelled. A similar thing happens to the soul of the ‘perfect man’. When Divine commandments are sown into the heart of such a person, he prospers wonderfully, and good deeds, like plants, emerge from those seeds. The fruit of these ‘plants’ is so wonderful and delicious that anyone who looks at it is reminded of the Divine power of God and has to say:

All praise is due to God!  
All praise is due to God!

The verse in the Holy Qur’an, *And the soul and its perfection* (91:7) clearly indicates that ‘perfect man’ in his inner self and nature is a universe, and all the manifestations, characteristics, and qualities of the great universe are found in him on a smaller scale. In the verses mentioned earlier, Almighty God started with the characteristics of the sun and ended with a reference to the earth which is our place of abode and briefly referred to the characteristics of everything that falls within these two regions; these were referred to by way of oaths. After that, the verses mentioned the soul of the ‘perfect man’ so that it should be understood that the soul of the ‘perfect man’ combined in itself all the various splendours which are present individually in all the things that have been mentioned by way of oath" (pp. 40-43, Iqbal Ahmad’s translation).
Also, in explaining the following sentence from 2:25 of the Holy Qur'an, *And give good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that for them are Gardens in which rivers flow...*, he says that the Holy Qur'an has likened faith to gardens, and good deeds to water. That is, just as gardens need water not only to exist but also to flower and bear fruit, so, too, man's faith (garden) needs to be sustained by good deeds (water) in order for man to achieve *falah* (success), or perfect self-actualisation or a complete flowering of all the hidden talents that Allah has reposed in him.

In the following extracts, in a *tafsir* (commentary) of 86:11-12, Mirza Sahib amplifies the theme of two co-existing and mutually related systems operating in the universe and draws many profound, enlightening and pertinent conclusions from this divine arrangement.

He says:

"In short, in the laws of nature, you can observe that Allah has made two parallel systems – one physical and the other spiritual. Whatever arrangements are provided for the physical are also furnished for the spiritual.

Thus, whoever holds these two systems as his guide and strives and struggles in his affairs will make rapid advance and his knowledge will become extensive. In every way, each physical task of his will become a manifestation of spiritual matters as our Holy Prophet (*sas*) said: 'This world is the field of the Hereafter.'

In the physical system we can see that physically, in spite of all kinds of proper exertion and endeavour, the farmer is still dependent upon water from the heavens, and if, in addition to his labours and efforts, heavenly water does not fall on his crops, then his harvest will be destroyed and his labour will
have been wasted.

Similarly, the same law operates in the spiritual world. Man can reap no benefit from dry, formal faith if heavenly rain does not descend and with powerful signs wash away the pollution from his heart and purify him. And this is what the Holy Qur'an alludes to when it says: *By the cloud giving rain, and the earth opening with herbage* (86:11-12).

Many people in their ignorance question the necessity for oaths by Allah, Most High, and end up having to repent for their own hasty judgement. To take an oath really means to establish evidence on a solid foundation. In the affairs of worldly governments, too, we can see that on many occasions, the determination of a court matter hinges on oaths. Likewise, Allah, Most High, swears by heavenly water in pointing out the similarity between the physical and spiritual systems and He presents this fact as testimony that just as the verdure of the earth and the luxuriance of the fields depend upon water from above and unless there is heavenly rain there can be no greenery on earth and the earth will become dead – in fact, wells will become dry, too – and the earth will be convulsed and will head for destruction and people will die of hunger and thirst, and men and animals and even birds and beast, etc. will feel the effects of the resulting drought, so, too a self-evident system obtains in the spiritual world.

Remember that faith without heavenly rain, which descends in the nature of converse with Allah, can never form the basis for salvation or for genuine peace. Those people (who claim) that they can achieve salvation without heavenly rain or without the assistance of one sent by Allah and therefore have no need for any purifier or commissioned one from Allah, should create water in their own homes. What need do they have of heavenly water?" *Mafuzat*, vol. 10, pp. 397-399.
In *Malfuzat*, vol. 8, pp. 304-305, he explains that the counterpart of physical rain in the spiritual realm is really divine revelation which is the source of all worldly knowledge, philosophical, scientific, spiritual; and just as wells become dry physically, so, too, the wells of worldly knowledge dry up or become stagnant, polluted and filthy if the purifying and vivifying rain of divine revelation does not descend from above. In short, everything on earth depends for its existence upon divine sustenance from above, as the Holy Qur'an tells us: *And in the heavens is your sustenance, and that which you are promised* (21:22); and, *Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its death...* (57:17) by sending rain, physically and spiritually, as he explains in this excerpt from his book, *A'ina-e Kamalat-e Islami*:

In this age such a poisonous air has spread both externally and internally that its removal is not within the power of man, but in the hands of the Ever-living, Self-subsisting God Who changes the seasons, and times, Who brings down the merciful rain after the season of drought. As you observe that the intensity of heat ultimately attracts rainfall, so when the heat reaches close to the degree where it would prove fatal to mankind, then the Supreme Wisdom of the Creator causes that heat to cast its effect on the oceans. Due to the intensity of the heat arise vapours from these oceans. The air above these water masses which is cold and heavy absorbs these vapours and becomes laden with them like a pregnant woman. The neighbouring wind currents naturally propel this vapour-ridden mass in the form of clouds towards areas where the air mass is comparatively warmer and offers less resistance. It thus rains according to the degree of heat.

Similar is the example of spiritual rain which, like the physical rain, has been coming down according to its seasons from very ancient times. Thus in times of drought, when lack of moisture reaches extreme limits, all at once the heat generated by vigilant souls, and the heat of their supplication and
desire reaches its intensity and it conveys its restlessness and anguish to the limitless Sea of Divine Mercy which then diverts its attention towards the removal of this condition. The luminescent vapours of Pure Grace then start rising. The angels who are close to the Divine Spirit and are inherently cool and benevolent by nature, absorb this Divine Grace. The spirits of those human beings that are in contact with these angels, i.e., the prophets, the messengers and the muhaddathin (or inspired ones), mobilize these angels with their intense craving for Truth. They themselves become the agents that cause this rain to be brought down in places which possess the capability and warmth of desire. This condition has always occurred in this world in times of need. However, since the heavy rainfall that occurred during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, large quantities of rain are no longer needed. That pure water has not been wasted yet; however, smaller quantities of rainfall are needed so that the greenery of the earth is maintained. Whenever the Wise and All-Knowing God sees that drought has taken over the earth and the plants of His garden are withering away, then He certainly causes the rain to fall. This has always been His law and you will not find any change in it. In accordance with this it was necessary that God would display His mercy in these times on His humble servants. Observe the condition of this age and witness with your faith. Is this not the age when the religion of Islam needs the help of Allah?

In *Chashma-e-Ma‘rifat*, p. 102, Mirza Sahib points out that revelation will never be contrary to the laws of nature for there is a perfect consonance between the words of God and His works. This is why in the Holy Qur’an Allah, Most High, first swears by physical things and then presents spiritual matters, the clear inference being that the physical things are a verification of deep spiritual truths. This, he goes on to say, is a criterion for judging the veracity of a holy book, for if any scripture is contrary to the laws of nature, then it cannot have come
from God.

Everything that Allah has created works according to a divinely appointed system and what deeper purpose, one may well ask, do these parallel systems serve? It is that the fear of God and the appreciation of His majesty should be generated in our minds through our knowledge of the sciences and through this we may delve deeper into the hidden spiritual truths to which these sciences point, as he says:

"Just as Allah, Most High, wants people to fear Him, so, too, He wishes that the light of scientific knowledge be born in them and through this they may transcend the boundaries of spiritual insight, because deep knowledge of the external world creates true fear in the heart on one hand, and on the other, worship of God is also born because of this knowledge. There are many unfortunate people who are so engrossed in worldly sciences that they are far removed from the appreciation of divine decrees and thus fall into doubt concerning the very existence of Allah, Most High.

There are some, too, who believe in divine decrees but relinquish the search for scientific knowledge. The Holy Qur’an has taught us both kinds of knowledge and in a perfect manner, too, for it wants man to be steeped in true scientific knowledge and inclines him to it because through this the fear of God is born within him. And in the measure knowledge of God grows in us, so, too, in the same way, the majesty of God and love for Him will be generated in our hearts. Man is taught to live according to the laws of divine decrees so that thereby the attributes of reliance and dependence on Allah may be born and through complete resignation to His will he will become the beloved of God and will obtain true peace and tranquillity which are the aim and object of salvation" (Malfuzat, vol. 1, pp. 223-224).
Finally, in his *tafsir* (commentary) of *Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and (lying) on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord, Thou has not created this in vain! Glory be to Thee! Save us from the chastisement of the fire* (3:190), Mirza Sahib reveals in its clarity the true purpose of these two systems:

“If you wish to be successful, use your intellect in all your affairs, ponder and meditate. The Holy Qur’an has repeatedly emphasized the importance of deliberation and planning in our lives.

Ponder deeply on the hidden book and on the Holy Qur’an and cultivate a pious disposition. When your heart is purified and you make use of sound thinking in your work and you also walk along the paths of righteousness, then from a union of these two attributes is born such a condition that the following words spring with conscious realization from the heart: *Our Lord, Thou hast not created this* (that is, the world) *in vain! Save us from the chastisement of the fire* (3:190).

At this time the realization comes to mind that this creation is not in vain but really serves as a testimony of the truth and the verification of the real Creator so that all kinds of arts and sciences which serve religion may become manifest” (*Malfuzat*, vol. 1, p. 66).

May we therefore, not fall into the trap of rigidly compartmentalizing life’s experiences into secular and religious, or scientific and spiritual, and thus find ourselves unwillingly subscribing to the erroneous dictum: “Render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and unto God what is God’s.”
Attacks on Islam by Latter-day “Companions of the Elephant”

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the possessors of the elephant? Did He not cause their war to end in confusion? And send against them birds in flocks? Casting at them decreed stones – so He rendered them like straw eaten up? (105: 1-5)

For those who may feel a bit discouraged at times at the present depressing state of affairs in the Muslim world and the persistent rejection of Ahmadiyyat on all sides, the following commentary by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib, Mujaddid of the 14th Century Hijrah, on chapter 105 of the Holy Qur’an comes as a refreshing tonic – a tonic to reinvigorate us, and to cement our oath to put religion above the world and to spread Islam to all corners of the globe. For Allah, Most High, promised the Founder that this Movement would never come to an end, but instead would triumph over all adversaries, within and without the fold of Islam.

Before the commentary itself, we present a little background information relating to the event of the “Companions of the Elephant”, a well-documented episode in Arab history.

Abrahah’s attack on Makkah

“This is hardly the place for dwelling at length on the extraordinary events that are related to have attended the Holy Prophet’s birth. We content ourselves with referring to just one, by itself a mighty sign. The very year that the Holy Prophet was born, the Christian chief of Yaman erected a magnificent church in his capital, San‘a, with a view to make it a general centre for people, both commercial and religious, in place of the Ka‘bah which he resolved to demolish. This was, in fact, a life
and death struggle between Trinity and Unity. Abrahah, the chief, marched at the head of a large army against the Ka‘bah to pull it down. He encamped at a distance of three stages from Makkah, and sent word to the Makkans, intimating his mission to them. The Quraish, finding themselves too weak to offer any resistance to Abrahah, evacuated Makkah, taking shelter in the neighbouring hills. While leaving the city, ‘Abd al-Muttalib took hold of a curtain of the Ka‘bah and prayed: ‘O Allah! This is Thy Own House. We feel too feeble to defend it. Be pleased to take care of it Thyself.’ Historians say that a most virulent form of smallpox broke out in the camp of Abrahah, and wrought a terrible havoc, destroying the major part of his forces. The rest took to flight in utter confusion. This miraculous event came to pass simultaneously with the Holy Prophet’s birth. According to some reports, the day of Abrahah’s discomfiture was the very day of the Holy Prophet’s birth. According to others, he was born forty days after this event.” Maulana Muhammad Ali, *Muhammad, the Prophet*, pp. 29-30.

**Commentary of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib**

“Allah, Most High, has revealed in the Holy Qur’an a chapter which makes manifest the lofty eminence and status of the Holy Prophet (sas) and this chapter is: *Alam tara kaifā fa‘ala Rabbuka bi ashabil fil* (Hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the possessors of the elephant?) – 105:1.

This chapter was revealed at a time when the Chief of Creation (sas) was undergoing extreme difficulties. Allah, Most High, is consoling him here during this trying period and is assuring him of His friendship and help. In this incident, there is a great prophecy. Allah is saying: *Do you not see how your Lord dealt with the owners of the elephant?* That is, He ruined their plot and turned it against them, and He sent some small birds to destroy them. There were no guns in the pos-
session of those birds but rather sij'il (damp pieces of clay).

In this famous chapter, Allah, Most High, bequeathed the Ka’bah to the Holy Prophet (sas) and in presenting the story of the companions of the elephant, He prophesied his success, help and victory. That is, whatever plans and preparations the enemies made and whatever practical stratagems they brought in order to demolish the Holy Prophet’s entire mission, Allah, Most High, in order to annihilate them, made their very plans and efforts work against them. As such, as the birds destroyed the owners of the elephant, so too, this prophecy will endure till the Day of Resurrection. Whenever any owners of the elephant arise, in order to destroy them, Allah, Most High, always makes the necessary arrangements to demolish their efforts.

This is the doctrine of the Christian Fathers - that Islam is a rock on their chest – all the other religions, in their opinion, are powerless. Hindu converts to Christianity are writing books to refute Islam. Ram Chandar and Thakur Dass have exerted all their energies in writing books in order to discredit Islam. The plain fact is that their conscience is telling them that their destruction will come from Islam. In a natural way, they are overcome by a fear that is the source of their downfall. On merely seeing a cat, a chicken begins to make fearful sounds. In this way, the followers of different religions, generally, and particularly the Christian Fathers, who are opposing Islam tooth and nail, are doing so not only because they are intellectually certain, but more so, deep within them, their heart also tells them that Islam is the religion which will smash all false creeds into smithereens.

At present, the likes of the owners of the elephant are launching an assault against Islam, and Muslims are riddled with weaknesses. Islam is in a wretched condition and the posses-
sors of the elephant are in a strong position of ascendancy. But Allah wants to show the same example again and He will use birds to do the same job once more. What comparison can our Jama‘at bear with them? Compared to them we are insignificant. When we consider their allied strength, their power and their wealth, our Jama‘at does not even exist. Nevertheless, we see right before our eyes, in the events of the companions of the elephant, what verses of comfort were sent down."

He goes on to explain the essence of sincere faith and true Islam and then gives the following words of advice:

"I received this revelation from Allah in which it is made very clear that having done my work, Allah’s help and victory will surely continue.

Indeed, that kind of certainty is entertained only by those who love the Holy Qur’an. How can those who do not have love for the Holy Qur’an and for the religion of Islam appreciate this matter? The meaning of Islam and faith is this – that one’s will should merge with that of Allah. He who has no regard for the honour and glory of Islam, whoever he may be, has no honour or esteem in the eyes of Allah and is not a conscientious Muslim.

Do not treat Allah’s words with contempt. And consider as deserving of compassion those who, on account of prejudice, have denied the truth and have advanced the argument that in the time of peace, what need is there for anyone to come (from Allah). How pitiable are they that they do not perceive how Islam is tightly besieged by enemies, and attack after attack is being made on our religion from all sides – such scorn and contempt are being heaped on the fair name of our Holy Prophet (sas) – and yet they say that there is no necessity for
anyone to come (as a reformer)” (*Malfuzat*, Bk. 1, pp. 172-174).

In conclusion, let us remember that the same promise that was given to the first Messiah, *And We shall make those who follow thee above those who disbelieve to the Day of Resurrection* (3:54), was also given to the second Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib. However, he warns us that we cannot become part of that extraordinary promise and glad-tidings until we have conquered our *nafs-ul-ammarah* (spirit that commands evil) and have advanced to the stage of *nafs-ul-mutma’innah* (the soul at rest). He also advises us not to become like those who accepted him initially, but then reneged and so have bought for themselves the punishment of everlasting fire.

*Rabbana la tuzigh qulubana ba’ada idh-hadaitana wa hablana milladunika rahmah. Inna Antal-Wah-hab* (Our Lord, make not our hearts to deviate after Thou hast guided us and grant us mercy from Thee; surely Thou art the most Liberal Giver) – (3:7).
Tabattul and Tawakkul
(Total devotion to Allah and complete reliance on Him)

Today we live in a world in which scant regard is paid to serious devotion to the Almighty. In the West, belief in God is openly ridiculed and in some social, political or intellectual circles, to invoke the name of God in an argument or discussion is to run the risk of immediate ostracism as a "nut" or "softhead" or even "traitor". In Muslim countries, the intelligentsia, including the political elite, have been educated in the West or are Western influenced, and while they may retain some of the "colouring" or visible formal practices of Islam, most of them in their hearts are nothing more than pawns of Gog and Magog and consequently they view this life as vastly superior to the Hereafter. As people assume the characteristics of their leaders, the Muslim masses, bereft of spiritual guidance for centuries, are in the main mere formal practitioners of the religion and are attached to it emotionally rather than intellectually and spiritually.

Sadly, wherever in these countries there is an attempt to return to Islamic roots, to the Holy Qur’an and the Hadith, this effort is attended by violence – violence against them from the authorities who, being servants of the West, are not allowed to have a ruling Islamic government – or violence from these resurgent groups against foreigners or against those who oppose their concept of a bloody jihad, that is, of seizing power through the gun. So their good works are stifled under the derogatory epithet of "fundamentalism", a Western-coined term that connotes intolerance, fanaticism, hatred and violence against non-Muslims. So, while there may a little of tabattul (devotion to Allah), tawakkul (complete reliance) on Allah is missing.

The following is a very brief introduction to these important subjects which, one hopes and prays, will awaken us to the reality of living
under the eyes of Allah. Firstly, the dictionary meanings of *tabattul* and *tawakkul* are given from the Holy Qur’an and the *Hadith* and these are followed by excerpts from the writings of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Imam Ghazali and Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, *Mujaddids* (Reformers) of the fourteenth, the fifth and the sixth centuries *Hijrah*, respectively. And finally, four episodes from *Tadhkiratul Auliya* are presented.

*Batala* – he cut off or severed or separated something.

*Inbatala* – it was or became cut off or severed.

*Inbatala fi sairihi* – he strove, laboured or exerted himself and made much progress in his journeying or in his pace.

*Tabattala* – he was, or became alone.

*Tabattala ilal-Lahi* (inf. noun *tabtilun*) – he detached himself from worldly things, and devoted himself to God; or he devoted himself to God exclusively, and was sincere or without hypocrisy towards Him; he forsook every other thing and applied himself to the service of God; he devoted himself exclusively to the service of God; or he separated himself from women and abstained from sexual intercourse; (and hence metaphorically employed himself to exclusive devotion to God).

*Wakala* – to entrust (something to someone); to assign (something to someone); to put someone in charge.

*Wakil* – an authorised representative, attorney, manager, agent, trustee, guardian of one’s interest, witness to a bargain, patron.

*Tawakkala* – to rely on, confide in, trust in, depend on, to become a *wakil* in an affair, to entrust every affair into the hands of God.

*Tawakkul* – trust, confidence; trust in God and complete reliance on
Him.

*Mutawakkil* – one who puts trust in another, especially God.

Some Qur’anic verses on *tabattul*

*O thou covering thyself up!* Rise to pray by night except a little, half of it, or lessen it a little, or add to it, and recite the Qur’an in a leisurely manner. Surely We shall charge thee with a weighty word. The rising by night is surely the firmest way to tread and most effective in speech. Truly thou hast by day prolonged occupation. And remember the name of thy Lord and devote thyself to Him with (complete) devotion (73:1-8).

*Say: My prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are surely for Allah, the Lord of the worlds* (6:163)

*Is it not to God that sincere devotion is due?* But those who take for protectors others than God (say): We only serve them in order that they may bring us nearer to God. Truly God will judge between them in that wherein they differ. But God guides not such as are false and ungrateful (39:3)

*Say: Verily, I am commanded to serve God with sincere devotion* (39:11).

*Say: It is God I serve, with my sincere (and exclusive) devotion* (39:14).

*Call ye, then, upon God with sincere devotion to Him, even though the unbelievers may detest it* (40:14).

*And away from it (the hell-fire) shall be kept the most faithful to duty, who gives his wealth, purifying himself, and none has with him any boon for a reward, except the seeking of the pleasure of his Lord, the Most High. And he will soon be well-pleased* (92:17-21).
So when thou art free (from anxiety), work hard, and make thy Lord thy exclusive object (94: 7-8).

And they are enjoined naught but to serve Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience, upright, and to keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and that is the right religion (98:5).

Some Qur’anic verses on tawakkul
Behold! You are they who disputed about that of which you had knowledge; why then do you dispute about that of which you have no knowledge? And Allah knows while you know not (3:65).

If Allah helps you, there is none that can overcome you; and if He forsakes you, who is there that can help you after Him? And in Allah should the believers put their trust (3:159).

Two men of those who feared, on whom Allah had bestowed a favour, said: Enter upon them by the gate, for when you enter it you will surely be victorious; and put your trust in Allah, if you are believers (5:23).

And obey not the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and disregard their annoying talk, and rely on Allah. And Allah is enough as having charge (of affairs) (33:48).

Allah, there is no God but He. And on Allah let the believers rely (64:13).

Say: He is the Beneficent – we believe in Him and on Him do we rely. So you will come to know who it is that is in clear error (67:29).

Our Lord, on Thee do we rely, and to Thee do we turn, and to Thee is the eventual coming. Our Lord, make us not a trial for those who disbelieve, and forgive us, our Lord. Surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise (60:4-5).
Some *Hadith* quotations
Abu Huraira reported God's Messenger as stating that God has said: I am present when my servant thinks of Me, and I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me inwardly, I shall remember him inwardly, and if he remembers Me among people, I shall remem-ber him among people who are better than they. (Bukhari and Mus-lim. Robson, Mishkat al Masabih, vol. 1, p. 475.)

Abu Dharr reported God's Messenger as stating that God has said: He who does a good deed will have ten times that amount of blessing, and I shall give more; but he who does an evil deed will have an equivalent reward of evil, or I shall grant forgiveness. If anyone draws the length of a span near Me I shall draw the length of a cubit near him, and if anyone meets Me with sins tantamount to the size of the earth, but has not associated anything with Me, I shall meet him with a similar amount of forgiveness. (Muslim. Ibid. p. 476.)

Abu Huraira reported God's Messenger as stating that God has said: If anyone is hostile to a friend of Mine, I have declared war against him. No one draws near to Me with anything dearer to Me than what I have made obligatory for him. If My servant keeps drawing nearer to Me with supererogatory acts I shall love him, and when I love him I shall be his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he grasps and his foot with which he walks. If he asks from me I shall certainly give him and if he seeks refuge in Me I shall certainly give him refuge. I have not hesitated about any-thing I do as I hesitate about taking the soul of a believer who dislikes death, for I dislike grieving him, but he cannot escape it. (Bukhari. Ibid. p. 477.)

Ibn ‘Abbas reported God's Messenger as saying: “Seventy thousand of my people will enter paradise without being taken to account. They are those who do not use spells or take omens, but put their trust in their Lord.” (Bukhari and Muslim. Ibid. vol. 11, p. 1098.)
Suhaib reported God’s Messenger as saying: “It is remarkable that everything turns out well for a believer while that applies only to a believer. If happiness befalls him he gives thanks and it turns out well for him, and if misfortune befalls him he shows endurance and it turns out well for him.” (Muslim. Ibid. p. 1098.)

Abu Huraira reported God’s Messenger as saying: “The strong believer is better and dearer to God than the weak believer. In all that is good, be eager for what benefits you, seek help in God, and do not be too weak to do so. If any affliction comes to you do not say, ‘If I had done such and such, such and such would have happened,’ but say, ‘God decrees, and what He wishes He does,’ for ‘if I had’ provides an opening for the deeds of the devil.” (Muslim. Ibid. p. 1099.)

Umar bin al-Khattab reported that he heard God’s Messenger say: “If you were to trust in God genuinely He would give you provision as He does for the birds which go out hungry in the morning and come back full in the evening.” (Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah. Ibid. p. 1099.)

Sa’d reported God’s Messenger as saying: “Part of the happiness of a son of Adam consists in his pleasure with what God has decreed for him, part of the misery of a son of Adam consists in his abandonment of asking God’s blessing, and part of the misery of a son of Adam consists in his displeasure with what God has decreed for him.” (Ahmad and Tirmidhi, with Tirmidhi saying this is a gharib tradition. Ibid. p. 1100.)

Abu Dharr reported God’s Messenger as saying he knew a verse which would suffice men if they would but apply it: *For him who fears God He will appoint a way out and He will give him provision from an unimagined source* (65:2-3). (Ibn Majah. Ibid. p. 1101.)

Amr b. al-As reported God’s messenger as saying, “This heart of the son of Adam has a piece in every wadi (valley) and if anyone lets his heart follow all the pieces God will not care in which wadi (valley) He
destroys him; but to anyone who trusts in God, He will supply enough for all the pieces.” (Ibn Majah. Ibid. p. 1101.)

From the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement
What is tabattul?
A companion had been commanded in a dream to seek information from Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, on the question of tabattul (complete devotion to Allah). The following is the Founder’s reply.

“In my opinion, the significance of your being told in a vision to inquire of me the meaning of tabattul is that my view in this matter should be followed. To give the logical or syntactical meanings is not of benefit here. What is needed is a clear description of the condition that prevails in tabattul. In my view, a person can be called a mutabattil (one completed devoted to Allah) only when he places Allah, Most High, His laws and His pleasure above worldly attractions and shun all acts which are detestable to Him. No custom or practice or national law should be a hindrance nor should his base passions or his blood relations such as his brother, wife, son and father be an impediment or an obstacle in his way to attaining tabattul. In short, nothing, whether animate or inanimate, should be able to influence him to disobey the laws of Allah and prompt him to act against His pleasure. In order to win Allah’s pleasure he should annihilate his entire self to such an extent that he totally submits to the will of Allah. On many occasions worldly relations can dissuade a person badly. So, in order to achieve perfect tabattul, it is necessary that a man should intoxicate his entire self to the point of extinction with the love of Allah but in a manner that he does not become oblivious of Allah but be lost in His love.

The reality of tabattul in a practical way becomes evident only when all obstacles have been banished forever and all kinds of
barriers are smashed and the bond of man with Allah reaches a stage of intrinsic love. This is how complete effacement (of one's ego) can be obtained. Everything can be lucidly said in verbal discussion and one's words and explanations can shed light on many matters. But the difficulty arises only when one tries to put into practice what one professes in words. There are many who profess to believe in God and even to love Him, and also strongly affirm that they wish to place Him above everything and may even claim to have done so already. But a difficulty arises when we try to search for those changes and signs which are the fruits and blessings of having given Allah priority over all things. At every step one is likely to stumble while discussing these transcendental subjects. That is why when the necessity to give their wealth and life in the way of Allah arises and He wishes the lip-professors to sacrifice their wealth and their lives and their most prized possessions which do not really belong to them but to Allah alone, they find it hard to do so.

In the early days of Islam, there were some companions who faced this kind of trial. The Holy Prophet (sas) wanted a piece of land on which to erect a mosque. A certain person was asked to give his land but he made all kinds of excuses and said that he could not give his land. Now, that person professed belief in the Holy Prophet (sas) and he had taken a covenant to put Allah and His Apostle above everything in the world. But when the time of trial came he threw this covenant behind his back although eventually he did offer the piece of land. So the truth of the matter is that nothing can be achieved by mere words unless the words are put into practice, and practice is not truly established if there is no test.

*Bai'at* (pledge of allegiance) is taken at my hands with the express undertaking that you will put religion above the world and that you will acknowledge as your *Imam* a person whom
Allah has commissioned and sent to this world as a representative of the Holy Prophet (sas), and who has been appointed as a judge and an arbiter. That is, that you will accept his decisions happily and will accept them with a calm mind and an open heart. If in spite of this covenant and acceptance a person does not cheerfully submit to the ruling of mine and instead there is a reluctance in his heart, then it will surely have to be said that he has not attained true tabattul and he has not ascended to that high station which is called the state of tabattul. Instead, the chains and shackles of low passions and earthly attachments are still blocking his way to spiritual progress and he has not yet emerged from behind those veils which man has to tear apart before he reaches the state of tabattul. If he is not cut off from the true love of this world and has not been grafted onto the branch of the divine tree, it is impossible for him to possess luxuriant verdue. Behold! If a branch is cut off from a tree, it cannot blossom and bear fruit. Even if you put it in water or provide all the ingredients that sustained its life before, it still can never become fruitful. In like manner, if man does not develop a powerful union with a sadiq (truthful person), that power to attract spiritually cannot be procured just as a severed and isolated branch cannot become green even if it is watered. Thus, severed and alone, it cannot bear fruit. So in order to become a mutabattul a person needs to have two prerequisites: cutting off all worldly connections followed by a sustained love for Allah.

A person who binds himself with Allah in a state of complete submission and reliance will have to sever all connections and enticements of this world. This does not mean that a man will achieve this union by totally abandoning the world and living a life of a recluse. Certainly not! But he has to live in this world and yet not be a part of it. That is true courage and bravery. And severing all worldly connections or being separate from the world means withstanding the power of its be-
guiling seductions and temptations and not giving them prece-
cedence over Allah, Most High, but putting Him first in all
matters. Further, no temptation of this world or hindrance
should stand in his way, nor should they inveigle him. I have
said before that in this world there are many obstacles in the
spiritual journey of a person. A wife, too, may become a great
stumbling block. Allah, Most High, has given us an example
of this. He has forbidden us specifically from one thing: And
We said: O Adam, dwell thou and thy wife in the garden, and
eat from it a plenteous food wherever you wish, and approach
not this tree, lest you be of the unjust (2:35). The conse-
quences of ignoring this prohibition affected first the wife and
then her husband, Adam (as).

The question arises as to what tabattul really means. It is sev-
ering oneself completely from everything and turning com-
pletely to Allah, and considering all other worldly interests
and desires as dead. There are many people who regard my
teachings as valid and even admit that they are sound and
correct. But if they are asked why they do not accept them
openly, they will reply that people will abuse them. This is the
main hurdle that prevents a person from earning Allah’s love
and proximity. For if the fear of Allah should exist in the heart
of man and he lives under the power and glory of His sover-
eignty, then what concern would he have with what others say
or do not say? Otherwise it would mean that their hearts are
still under the dominion of other people and not under Allah’s
command. When this polytheistic thought is expunged from
the heart of a man, then everything is seen to be less than
corpses and worms and weaker than them. If the whole world
should unite in opposition against such a person, even then it
will be impossible to prevent him from accepting the truth.

A manifest testimony of such a perfect tabattul should be
sought from the lives of the prophets of Allah and from His
commissioned ones - how, in spite of their utter helplessness and weakness, they showed not the least concern for the opposition of their worldly-minded antagonists. A lesson should be learnt from their conduct and the varied circumstances of their lives.

Some persons repeatedly ask whether it is permissible to perform salah behind such people who, although they do not revile me, yet do not openly accept me, because they fear the abuses of others. I say, Never, ever! Why? Because there is a big stumbling block on the path of their acceptance of truth and they are still a branch of that tree whose fruit is poisonous and destructive. If they had not considered the worldly-minded people as their gods or adopted them as their qiblah or as objects of veneration, they, having destroyed all those veils, would have freed themselves. They would also not have shown the least concern for anyone’s taunts or reproaches and they would not have lived under the fear of censure from anyone. Instead, they would have fled towards Allah. So, remember that in everything you do, you should reflect on whether it is for the pleasure of Allah or for that of people. Unless you achieve that state (of spirituality) where Allah’s pleasure is paramount in your heart, and no satan or evil suggestion can dissuade or infiltrate it, the fear of stumbling will always cast its shadow over your mind. But when neither the evils nor the benefits of the world exert any influence on you, but only the pleasure or displeasure of Allah prevails, it is then that you attain that blissful state in which man is released from the eventualities of all kinds of fear and grief. If there is someone who is within the fold of my Jama‘at and then withdraws from it, then the reason is that his satan still exists in his heart to dissuade him from following the righteous path. But if he should build a strong resolve that in future he will pay no heed to any evil whisperings then Allah will come to his rescue.
The Holy Prophet (sas) was a perfect example of *tabattul* - he disregarded both praise and blame from others. How many a difficulty befell him, yet he paid no attention to them. Neither greed nor covetousness could deflect him from his mission which he had brought from Allah. Unless man has impressed this condition within his self and has passed the test of trial, he can never be free from anxiety.

It is important to remember that whoever becomes a *mutabattil* will also become a *mutawakkil* (one who relies totally on God), for *tabattul* is an indispensable precondition for achieving the status of a *mutawakkil*, for, as long as a man considers his worldly relationships the means of his support and relies implicitly on them, how can he become totally dependent on Allah?

When a man turns to Allah after ridding himself of all crutches, he then makes a clean break with this world and he effects a union or bond with Allah, Most High, and that can happen only if there is total and unconditional reliance on Allah just as the Holy Prophet (sas) was the perfect *mutabattil* as well as the consummate *mutawakkil*. It was for this reason that he paid no regard to the advances of all the aristocrats and leaders of tribes and peoples, and neither did their opposition faze him in any way. Such was the extraordinary faith he possessed in the existence of Allah, Most High, that he was able to bear the stupendous burden (of his mission), and the desires of worldly opposition he considered as non-existent. The like of such a noble example of God-reliance is not met with in this world, so that having chosen Allah, he gradually converted the whole world into an enemy. But this condition cannot be attained until one has, as it were, seen Allah, and until an unshakeable trust exists that after doors of worldly support are closed there is Divine support which will definitely come to his rescue. When this trust and certainty are firmly estab-
lished, then in the path of Allah one makes enemies of those erstwhile beloved friends and that is because the true believer knows that Allah will create other friends. If his worldly estate is lost then he has the invincible faith that he will receive something better in return here or in the Hereafter.

In short, to put Allah’s pleasure first is tabattul and further, tabattul and tawakkul are twins. The secret of tabattul lies in tawakkul and the prerequisite of tawakkul is tabattul. And that is my teaching in this regard” (Malfuzat, vol. 11, new edition, pp. 357-363).

We shall now turn our attention to Imam Ghazali’s explanation of tawakkul.

“Meaning of God-reliance. The meaning of tawakkul or reliance is to entrust an affair to another and to believe him fully in that respect. He who is entrusted upon is called wakil or pleader and he who entrusts is called muwakkil or client. So sure faith in a wakil is called reliance.

I shall cite an example of a wakil in case of litigation. A wakil shall have four qualities:

1. Sufficient power to understand
2. Ability
3. Power of speech
4. Sympathy and kindness for client

With regard to the first quality, he must have power to understand the places of deception, false claim and even the minutest details. With regard to the second quality, nobody engages a wakil having no ability. He shall not flatter, shall not fear to disclose truth or feel shame or show cowardice. With regard to the third quality of power of speech, he must have it, otherwise many good reasons cannot be shown for
want of clear expression. With regard to the fourth quality, he must try to help an oppressed client.

Similar is God-reliance. When so much reliance is placed on a wakil with such characteristics, how much more reliance should be placed on God? When you believe that there is no master of an action besides God, that He is All-powerful and all-knowing, that He bestows His kindness, favour, help on all the people and some special people, that there is no power and might except through God, there is no knowledge but in Him, he must rely on Him and must not look to his own power and strength as there is no power except God. If you do not find in you this reliance, it is for two reasons – weakness in you in any one of the four qualities and weakness of faith in your mind. So without the united strength of mind and faith, God-reliance does not become perfect. With these two things peace can be attained. Peace of mind is one thing and certainty of faith is another thing. There are many men with certainty of faith who have no peace of mind, as Hazrat Ibrahim said: “O my Lord, show me how You give life to a dead thing.” God said: Have you no faith? He said: “Yes, I have, but in order to console my mind.” (H.Q. 2:260). Hazrat Ibrahim had full faith, but he was eager to see it to bring him peace of mind. There are many men having peace of mind but with no sure faith.

Three classes of God-reliant man. There are three classes of God-reliant men according to the measure of their reliance on God. The first class of God-reliant man is like one who entrusts all his affairs in a case to his wakil who is appointed by him from a consideration of his ability, eloquence and kindness. The second class of God-reliant man is more developed than the first. His condition is like that of an infant who knows nobody except his mother. When any danger comes, he takes refuge in his mother and believes nobody except his mother. In every condition, he catches hold of her clothes. When any danger comes to him in the absence of his mother, the first expression he utters is: “O mother.” Such a God-reliant man relies on God as a child relies on his mother. The difference between the first and the second
class is that in the latter, one annihilates himself in God-reliance, while it is not so in the first case.

The third class is the highest for a God-reliant man. Such a man lives before God in such a way as a dead man is kept before one who washes him. He thinks that he moves similarly at the hand of his original fate. He is firm and steady. He thinks that the flow of his movements, strength, will, knowledge and other attributes run through Him compulsorily. He is not like a child who takes refuge in his mother, cries to her and runs after her. He is like that child who knows that wherever he stays, his mother will find him out. If he does not like to suckle his mother’s breast, his mother will suckle him. Such a person gives up invocation as he trusts in God’s mercy and help and thinks that he will get more if he does not want than if he wants” (Imam Ghazali, *Ihya Ulum-ud-Din*, p. 253-255).

The following is a very short selection from the saint, Abdul Qadir Jilani, whose concise discourse here is most illuminating.

“An old man asked me in my dream: ‘What makes a servant of God near to God?’ I said: ‘This process has a beginning and an end, so the beginning of it is piety and Godliness and its end is to be pleased with God and to surrender oneself to His way and to rely on Him entirely” (Maulana Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad’s translation of *Futuh Al-Ghaib*, p. 139).

The following are a few excerpts from *Tadhkiratul-Auliya* that will serve as practical illustrations of *tabattul* and *tawakkul* given from the vantage point of some of the famous saints of Islam.

“Once Hasan, accompanied by several people, was on the way to the Ka’bah. On the way they came across a well. They were all thirsty but had no rope with them with which to draw water. Hasan said: ‘I am going to perform salah (prayer). As I pray, you will notice the water shall rise. You will then drink
it and quench your thirst.' And so it happened. But when a person, after drinking his full filled a tumbler to keep by his side for future use, the water sank to its original low level. When asked the reason for the strange occurrence, Hasan replied: 'It was due to your lack of faith to depend solely on God.'" (p. 12).

"Once a guest was partaking of the meagre meal that poor Ajmi had offered to him when a beggar knocked at the door. Ajmi took the food and handed it over to the beggar. Surprised at this unmannerly behaviour of Ajmi, the guest (who was no other than Hasan Basri) said: 'You must know little of manners.' Ajmi was silent for a moment, when, to the surprise of Hasan, there appeared a lady with a delicious dish. Both sat down and partook of it. Then Ajmi said: 'Hasan, you are a good man. You should develop a little more faith in God (that is, know that a thing given in God's name returns several-fold)."' (p. 17).

"For forty successive years Junaid kept awake the whole night in his devotional practices. Thereupon the pride was born in him that he had reached the spiritual pinnacle. The Divine Voice reprimanded Junaid saying: The time has arrived when you should be declared a heretic. He cried: 'Lord! What is my fault?' The reply came: Could there be a greater sin than that you in you still survives (that is, your ego is not yet dead)? He sighed and bowed his head in submission saying: 'He who attains not the union of the Lord, all his virtues are sins.'" (p. 107).

"Khaffif went out on a pilgrimage to the Ka'bah. He carried only a jug and a rope to draw water. As he passed through the wilderness he saw many deer standing on the top of the well and drinking water. As he approached, they ran away and the level of the water went down. In spite of his efforts, he could
not draw water from that low level. He prayed to the Lord to raise the level of the water as He had done for the deer. The Divine Voice was heard in reply: We cannot do so, as you depend upon the rope and the jug besides Us. Immediately he threw both of them away and lo! the water level rose and he quenched his thirst. When he related the incident Hazrat Junaid in Makkah, Junaid said: 'The Lord was testing your dependence on Him. Had you waited patiently for a longer time, it would have overflowed the top.'" (p. 138).

We pray that the living belief in a living God may return to or sink deeper into the hearts of all peoples, especially Muslims – to feel ourselves always in the presence of God and to be submissively obedient to Him, having annihilated our own will and ego to the point where we calmly and cheerfully accept the inevitable decrees of God, yet striving with self and property in His way without fear or grief despoiling our lives.

May Allah bless us all in our daily pilgrimage to His threshold.
Remembering our *fitrat* (nature)

Allah, Most High, created Prophet Adam (*as*) and took a covenant from his descendants as we are told in 7:172 of the Holy Qur’an: *And when thy Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants, and made them bear witness about themselves: Am I not your Lord? They said: Yes; we bear witness. Lest you should say on the day of Resurrection: We were unaware of this.*

However, as regards the fulfilment of this covenant, the descendants of Prophet Adam (*as*) have been split into groups. The Holy Qur’an has mentioned three groups with their characteristics together with the consequences of remembering or not remembering this *fitrat* (innate) agreement.

The first class are the deviators of whom the Holy Qur’an says: *Fa lamma zaghu azaghal-Lahu qutubahum* (So when they deviated, Allah made their hearts deviate (61:5). This came about because they refused to fight in Allah’s way in ranks. Instead they rejected the prophets of Allah and even maligned them.

The Arabic word *zagha* means to decline; that is, to slip from the truth and to doubt it and so fall into error. And when this happened, Allah dealt with them in the same manner as they dealt with His guidance – He turned their hearts away from the acceptance of truth. Hence we are taught to pray in the Holy Qur’an: *Rabbana la tuzigh qulubana ba‘da idh hadaitana* (Our Lord, do not let our hearts slip from the truth (or do not let us doubt it) after Thou hast given us guidance (3:7).

An example of how doubt is cast into the mind from an external source and the ravages it can wreak on our faith in Islam is given to us by Dr
Basharat Ahmad in his book, *Mujaddid-e ‘Azam* (The Great Reformer). He identifies four methods used by Christian missionaries in their crusade with the pen against the religion of Islam:

1. They exploited the overly-elevated position given to Prophet Jesus (as) by the ‘ulama of Islam. As a result of their wrong interpretation of the Holy Qur’an and the Hadith, they made the Prophet Jesus (as) look superior to the Prophet Muhammad (sas) and even unwittingly gave support to the Christian doctrine of the divinity of Prophet Jesus (as).

2. They fabricated sayings of the Holy Prophet and also capitalised on the ‘ulama’s faulty interpretations of the allegorical verses of the Holy Qur’an to make some of the teachings of Islam appear ridiculous or contrary to modern science.

3. They targeted the intelligentsia and the youths of Islam by providing them with all the objections of the atheists and materialists against religion in general. As a result of the intellectual sterility of the ‘ulama, they could not provide satisfying answers to refute these objections of the atheists and so doubt about the truth of Islam gradually insinuated itself into the minds of the youths and the educated classes.

4. They published millions of pamphlets, magazines and books in which they deliberately falsified and distorted the true nature of the religion of Islam, the character of the Holy Prophet and the true teachings of the Holy Qur’an. They even went so far as to slander the wives of the Holy Prophet. This false propaganda still continues today.

In addition to these we can add the inducements held out to Muslims, especially the impecunious, to ease their conversion into Christianity - money, education, position, jobs, status, favour with the Government, etc.
Another powerful tool of their propaganda was to direct attention to the decadent condition of Muslims world-wide and to attribute this decay to Islam. They asserted that Islam was a barbarous religion, a spent force, a backward religion, outdated and not suited to the contingencies of modern civilisation. As a result, they succeeded in causing hundreds of thousands to deviate from Islam, to forsake it and to enter the fold of Christianity thus proving the truth of the verse quoted above (61:5).

Most times though, the temptation to deviate comes from within – from the inviter to evil within us who whispers evil to us and excites our vanity and promises immortality and a kingdom that decays not (20:20) only to deceive (7:22). He is our open enemy (36:60) and his avowed aim is to lead us astray from the guidance of our conscience and that of the messengers of Allah and to make us take religion as a sport and a play as he himself says: Certainly I will take of Thy servants an appointed portion. And certainly I will lead them astray and excite in them vain desires and bid them so that they will slit the ears of the cattle and bid them so that they will alter Allah's creation (4:118-119).

Therefore, we are warned by Allah, Most High:

> O children of Adam, We have indeed sent down to you clothing to cover your shame, and (clothing) for beauty; and clothing that guards against evil – that is the best. This is of the messages of Allah that they may be mindful (7:26).

And we are ordered:

> And certainly We raised in every nation a messenger, saying: Serve Allah and shun the devil. Then of them was he whom Allah guided, and of them was he whose remaining in error was justly due. So travel in the land, then see what was the end of the rejecters (16:36).
To counteract the machinations of Satan, Allah, Most High, advises us to protect our fitrat.

_O you who believe, take care of your souls—_he who errs cannot harm you when you are on the right way. _To Allah you will all return, so He will inform you of what you did_ (5:105).

_And keep goodly company. And keep thyself with those who call on their Lord morning and evening desiring His goodwill, and let not thine eyes pass from them, desiring the beauties of this world's life. And follow not him whose heart We have made unmindful of Our remembrance, and he follows his low desires and his case exceeds due bounds_ (18:28).

In addition, constant remembrance of Allah keeps the devil at bay:

_And if a false imputation from the devil afflict thee, seek refuge in Allah. Surely He is Hearing, Knowing. Those who guard against evil, when a visitation from the devil afflicts them, they become mindful, then lo! they see_ (7:200-201).

To help us to do so easily, Allah, Most High, has given to us the last two chapters of the Holy Qur'an, _Al Muwaddithan_, which our Holy Prophet loved very much and which he recommended to us.

Those who comprise the second group are the ones who forget Allah. Believers are given a warning against them in the following words of the Holy Qur'an:

_Fa la takunu kal-ladhina nasul-Laha fa ansahum ansahum. Ula'ika humul fasiqun_ (And be not like those who forget Allah, so He makes them forget their own selves (souls). These are the transgressors — 59:19).
In his book, *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists*, Dr Malik Badri criticises Freud’s pessimistic and anti-religious theories of human nature and leans towards some of the principles of the humanistic and existentialist psychologists of today – in particular those principles which he considers in keeping with the teachings of the Holy Qur’an.

In contrasting the theme of “will to meaning” (taken from Nietzsche’s famous statement: “He who has a why to live can bear with almost any how”) of humanistic psychology, especially that of Dr Victor Frankl, with that of existential anxiety and the encounter with nothingness, Dr Badri touches upon the subject of the above verse (59:19), that is, the forgetting of Allah or the forgetting of our *fitrat* (nature). He writes:

“‘Will to meaning’ is then a basic human characteristic. Its frustration leads to existential vacuum, to an encounter with nothingness; with non-being. This manifests itself mainly in a state of boredom and ‘existential anxiety’ which may eventually lead to what Frankl calls a ‘noogenic neurosis’. This is a neurosis which emerges as a result of moral and spiritual conflict between various values, rather than a conflict between drives and instincts as psychoanalysts believe.

This concept of existential vacuum and non-being should remind Muslim psychologists of the Qur’anic verses which describe the dilemma of life without faith in Allah as a state of ‘spiritual non-being’ in which the atheist loses touch with his own self! God, in Islam, is the only True Reality of which man is only a reflection. Hence to forget God is to alienate one’s self from the very source of one’s being. The Qur’an says: *And be not like those who forget God and He caused them to forget their own selves or souls* (59:19).

Also, the Muslim psychologist should find himself on familiar ground when reading about the theory proposed by Frankl
and other existential analysts that modern life with its material wealth may actually increase the chances of agony and existential anxiety for the modern man. Islam considers the spiritual meaning derived from submission to God as the only true meaning for man in this life. Furthermore, the Qur’an speaks of material wealth as a form of punishment to those who live in a ‘spiritual vacuum’.

_Do not be dazzled by their wealth nor their (following in) sons. God’s plan is to punish them with these (material) things in this life before their souls perish in disbelief and denial of God (9:55)._ 

As is expected, religion is highly placed in Frankl’s logotherapy since, as he says, it is the greatest force which gives meaning to man’s continued sufferings. Listen to what he has to say about the role of religion in concentration camps:

‘The religious interest of prisoners, as far and as soon as it developed, was the most sincere imaginable. The depth and vigour of religious belief often surprised and moved a new arrival. Most impressive in this connection were improvised prayers and services in the corner of a hut, or in the darkness of the locked cattle truck in which we were brought back from a distant work site, tired, hungry and frozen in our ragged clothing.’” (Pp. 107-109.)

Still, when confronted with this verse of the Holy Qur’an, unbelievers seem nonplussed and in response they point to the detailed psychological, emotional, intellectual and physical profiles that are standard procedure in certain advanced countries of the West. These records indeed do exist but what they fail to realise is that what they have forgotten is really the essence of their humanity (or _fitrat_) as is stated in the following verse of the Holy Qur’an: _So set thy face for reli-_
gion, being upright, the nature (fitrat) made by Allah in which He has created man (30:30).

What is the meaning of fitrat? According to Lanes’ Lexicon, fitrat means among other things: the nature or original disposition of a person; (fitrat comes from fatara which means to originate or to create for the first time). It also carries the significance of possessing the natural faculty of knowing God (and worshipping Him) with which He has created mankind.

Man is by nature a worshipping animal and this is his essence, his outstanding characteristic just as it is the nature of a fish to swim, or fire to burn or a bird to fly. Hence, fitrat refers to our God-given instinct of worshipping Him, of loving Him to the point of colouring ourselves with His colours, thereby rising from the lowest stage to the highest point of perfection for this is one of the meanings of the Arabic word, Rabb. And so in our most abject position we pray: Subhana Rabbial ‘Ala(Glory be our Lord, Most High). That is, we are beseeching our Rabb for those attributes of His that will beautify us and make us rise to surprising eminence.

But where the problem arises is that when we forget Allah, this noble potential of ours is stifled and we become the lowest of the low although Allah has created us in the best make (94:4-5). It is true that we may possess great intellectual, scientific, technological and political power, but when we neglect our fitrat, our inner self is ruled by animal passions and we become like the one who clings to the earth and follows his low desires (hawa (desire) means what brings a person from a high position to a low position). His likeness, the Qur’an says, is like that of the dog – if thou drive him away, he lolls out his tongue, and if thou leave him alone, he lolls out his tongue (7:176); or we are reduced to the level of a creature of the earth who wounds people instead of helping them (27:82).

This point is elucidated in the following verse of the poet, Qasim
Rizvi:

Admi ko mil gae, lekin insan na mile
We found men but we did not find men.

Admi refers to any descendant of Adam without regard to rank, status or nobility, whereas insan carries connotations of nobility, generosity, sympathy and love for fellow human beings, godliness with or without intellectual excellence.

In Arabic there are two words, khalq and khulq, which Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad explains thus: Khalq refers to the features which God bestows on man whereby man is distinguishable from other animals. Khulq means the inner qualities by virtue of which the essence of humanness is distinguished from the reality of animals. Thus all inner qualities which distinguish man from animals are contained in khulq with the highest manifestation of this reality being the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) of whom the Holy Qur’an says: Wa innaka la ‘ala khulqin ‘azim (Certainly thou hast the most sublime inner qualities (or morals) – 68:4).

In another illustration of this point Hazrat Mirza Sahib refers to a story related by the poet Sa‘adi. He writes:

“Sa‘adi, may God have mercy on him, has told a story in verse wherein he says that a foolish person was teaching a donkey and was working assiduously at it. A wise person asked him what he was doing and chided him for wasting time and mental energy on a useless task for the donkey was not going to change into a man. The wise man also warned him that by doing so, he, the fool, might become a donkey himself.”

In other words, only man can advance morally and spiritually but this can only be done if he nurtures his fitrat. No other creature has that capacity for self-improvement.
This neglected truism has occupied the minds of philosophers, authors and poets throughout the centuries. Let us look at three examples in verse, one in Persian, two in Urdu.

Persian couplet

Admi ra admiyat lazim ast
Ud ra gar bu, na bashad hezam ast

Humanity is an indispensable quality for a human being
If aloes wood has no sweet scent it is not aloes wood but firewood.

Mankind loses this “sweet scent” when it subscribes to this view: There is naught but our life in this world; we die and we live and we shall not be raised again (23:37). All our potential for nobility and beauty of character become stillborn and instead our base emotions gain the ascendancy. The result is destruction individually and collectively.

Urdu couplets

Admiyat aur shai hai, ilm hai kuchh aur chiz
Kitna tuti ko parhaya, par woh haiwan hi raha

Humanity is one thing and learning is quite another matter
Teach a parrot as much as you can, he will still remain a parrot.

(Zauq)

Admi ko ‘ajab Khuda ne rutbah bakhsha
Adna ke lie maqam a ‘la bakhsha

What a wonderful status has God bestowed on man,
The loftiest eminence is given to those considered the lowest.

(Mir Anis)

However, when we forget Allah or we neglect our fitrat we fall from
that elevated God-given position and we witness the results in imperialism, fratricidal civil wars, and nearer home, rabid fanaticism and internal schisms, hatred and bloodshed because of differences in minor points of religion. This forgetting of our essential nature is a curse that has bedevilled mankind throughout history.

Nevertheless, and mercifully so, there is a third group and to this group belong those who remember their Creator and so are always in touch with their essential being. We must bear in mind that remembrance here is not merely a mental act but a complete dyeing of one’s fitrat in the colours of Allah. The Holy Qur’ an tells us of them:

Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and (lying) on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord, Thou has not created this in vain! Glory by to Thee! Save us from the chastisement of the Fire (3:190).

They love Allah and Allah loves them (5:54).

The believers are stronger in their love for Allah (2:165).

We are further given a promise:

If you remember Me, I shall remember you (2:152).

Not only that – we are also shown the way to remember our Creator:

Remember Allah as you remember your fathers, rather a greater remembering (2:200).

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has explained the secret of this analogy thus:

“Allah, Most High, has imposed on man two kinds of obligations – firstly, the duties we own to Allah and secondly, those
that are due to His servants, and these have been explained at great length in the Holy Qur'an. In a certain verse, Allah commands us: *Fadhkurul-Laha ka dhikrikum aba ‘akum au ashadda dhikra* (2:200). In this there are two secrets: Remembrance of Allah is compared with the remembrance of one’s father. For example, even when a mother beats her child he still continues crying out lovingly to her: ‘Ma! Ma!’ Thus Allah is teaching man in this verse to create in his heart a relationship with Allah based on natural love for Him. If we develop a love like that, then obedience to the commands of Allah becomes automatic. This is the true station of divine knowledge to which man ought to aspire. That is, to develop a personal and natural love for Allah” (*Malfuzat*, vol. VII, p. 248).

Further, we are apprised of one of the greatest benefits that come to us when we nurture our *fitrat* with the remembrance of Allah:

*Those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Now surely in Allah’s remembrance do hearts find rest* (13:28).

Again, Hazrat Mirza expounds to us the deeper meaning of this boon of Allah:

“The common meaning of this is that with the remembrance of Allah hearts find peace. But the true meaning and philosophy of this is that when man remembers Allah with complete sincerity and perfect faithfulness and every second he is sure that he is living in the Supreme Presence, then, as a result of this, an awe of the greatness and majesty of Allah is born in his heart and that fear saves him from abominable and forbidden things. He then advances in *taqwa* to such a degree that the angels of Allah descend upon him and give him good news and the door of *ilham* (inspiration) is opened to him: *Those*
who say, Our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them saying: Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the Garden which you were promised. We are your friends in this world’s life and in the Hereafter, and you have therein what your souls desire and you have therein what you ask for. A welcome gift from the Forgiving, the Merciful (41:30).

At this stage, he, as it were, begins to see Allah and he becomes a witness of Allah’s most hidden secrets. Also, neither fear nor grief can descend on his heart and his tabi’at (inner nature) is always suffused with pleasure and delight. In this way, he advances to a higher station. Nay, whoever submits himself entirely to Allah and he is the doer of good (to others), he has his reward from his Lord, and there is no fear for such nor shall they grieve (2:112).

If any tinge of fear remains then Allah, Most High, through His ilham (inspiration), either creates for his benefit external causes for the removal of this pain and anxiety or He bestows upon him extraordinary powers of endurance (to withstand the affliction)” (Malfuzat, vol. VIII, p. 1).

In conclusion, two lines from Mirza Ghalib’s poetry seem to echo the words of the Holy Qur’an given in 91:9-10: He indeed is successful who causes it (that is, his soul or his fitrat) to grow, and he indeed is disappointed who buries it.

Says Mirza Ghalib:

‘Ishrat-e qatrah hai darya men fana ho jana
The happiness of the drop (of water) is to join the river and be lost in it.
Khak ka rizq hai woh qatrah ke darya na huwa
That drop that fails to be come a river (or join the river) is food for the dust.

May we, therefore, strive to the utmost to make this drop of water (our soul or our fitrat) join the river of God's limitless love and may we never let it become sustenance for the worms of the earth.
Be a flowing stream

Sometimes in life we may find ourselves beset with an assortment of problems, inconveniences, frustrations and disappointments, which may originate from diverse sources. For example, the Holy Qur'an mentions three causes of trial in the following verse which encourages us to be patient: "ba'sa'i, that is, poverty, penury, straitened circumstances; "darra'i, that is, personal distresses like disappointments, fear, anxiety, grief, illness (especially a protracted disease) etc.; and "ba's, that is, conflicts, in war or with enemies or even with family, friends, neighbours, fellow-workers, etc.

Psychologists, sociologists and novelists have given us four kinds of conflicts:

1. Conflict with one’s inner self, e.g. cognitive dissonance, or a clash of values, or the fight between passion and virtue.
2. Conflict with nature, e.g. in times of natural disasters like droughts, famines, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, etc.
3. Conflicts with individuals as mentioned earlier on.
4. Conflict with society, the most famous for a Muslim being the battle between the Holy Prophet, the teacher of tauhid (unity of God) and his Arabian counterparts who were champions of idol-worship.

But regardless of the kind or the source of the difficulty, the Holy Qur'an, which is a guide for all mankind for every aspect of life, has provided guidance for us in this simple, terse but profound exhortation:

_Do not be of the qanitin (despairing ones) (15:55)_.

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In addition to this, there are many other verses that encourage us never to give up but to work steadfastly for Allah knows our condition (24:64) and His help is always near to His servants (2:186).

We must remember, though, according to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Mujaddid* of the fourteenth century, that help will come only after we have been tested, tried, and sometimes even persecuted, as the word *awa* connotes in the following verse addressed initially to the Holy Prophet:

\[
\text{Alam yajidka yatiman fa awa (Did He not find thee an orphan and give (thee) shelter? (93:6).)}
\]

Help did come to the Holy Prophet but only after he had to walk on burning coals and through blazing flames. This is the way of Allah as He Himself has said:

\[
\text{And certainly We shall try you till We mark out those among you who strive hard, and the steadfast, and (We shall) test your claims (47:31).}
\]

In the following pages we shall look at certain verses of encouragement in the Holy Qur’an and juxtapose a few poems in which the poet has tried to instil courage, resolve and determination in the hearts of his fellow human beings in words that have proven to be an inspiration to millions over the years. In addition to the poems we shall also focus on a couple pieces of advice in prose so that from both poetry and prose we shall benefit from inspiration which has been culled from the collective experience of mankind throughout the ages.

As regards obstacles, trials and calamities in life, whether inner or outer, the Holy Qur’an is replete with guidance and exhortation. A few examples will suffice. The Holy Qur’an not only tells us beforehand what to expect in life: *We have certainly created man to face difficulties* (90:4), and the kinds of trials we must expect: *And We
shall certainly try you with something of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits. And give news to the patient (2:155), but it also furnishes us with the response that will help us to develop our latent faculties in the path of success: *O you who believe, seek assistance through patience and prayer; surely Allah is with the patient... who, when a misfortune befalls them say: Surely we are Allah's, and to Him we shall return!* (2:153, 156) and it then holds out to us the reward of cheerful but creative acceptance of the degrees of the Almighty: *Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord and those are the followers of the right course* (2:157).

Furthermore, if we are assaulted by any kind of opposition in the pursuance of the right course, the Holy Qur’an again comes to our assistance: *And say to those who believe not: Act according to your power, surely we too are acting* (11:121-122).

These, too, are some of the things that our sage recommends to us in his own style and words and in the light of human wisdom:

"*Keep right on with your work.* It is comparatively easy to smile when blest with friends, fortune and fame. The supreme test of your real qualities, however, is when everything seems to be against you, when friends prove false, plans go wrong, illness overtakes you and money, position and those dearest to you are taken away. If a reverse comes to you, look at it philosophically and keep right on with your work. If a friend breaks faith with you, forgive the fault, and keep steadily to the main purpose of your life. If a seemingly overwhelming disappointment assails you, rise to your full stature and keep on courageously with your chosen task. If everything goes against you, don’t give up, don’t worry, don’t falter, but smile and keep right on with your work" (OP Ghai, *Quest for Inspiration*, p. 98).
At times we may feel snowed over by misfortunes, or overburdened with responsibilities, with no time for our own pleasures and enjoyments in life. Worse than self-pity is expecting pity from others according to Richard Nixon, former US President, in his memoirs. At other times when "success" comes we are tempted to indulge in some triumphal flourishes of our own. Again the Holy Qur'an comes to our rescue as it forces us to reflect soberly on our circumstances:

*No disaster befalls in the earth, or in yourselves, but it is in a book before We bring it into existence - surely that is easy to Allah - so that you grieve not for what has escaped you, nor exult in that which He has given you. And Allah loves not any arrogant boaster* (57:22-23).

Our poet friends, too, give us some of the fruits of their life's experience in these two beautiful poems:

*Life's lesson*

I learn, as the years roll onward
And I leave the past behind,
That much I had counted sorrow
But proved that God is kind;
    That many a flower I'd longed for
Had hidden a thorn of pain
    And many a rugged bypath
Led to the fields of ripened grain.
The clouds that cover the sunshine;
They cannot banish the sun,
And the earth shines out the brighter
When the weary rain is done.
We must stand in the deepest shadow
To see the clearest light;
And often through wrong's own darkness
Comes the welcome strength of Right

(OP Ghai, *Quest for Inspiration*, p. 11.)
and,

*This, too, shall pass away*
When some sorrow, like a mighty river,
Flows through your life with peace-destroying power,
And dearest things are swept from sight forever,
Say to your heart each trying hour:
“This, too, shall pass away.”
When fortune smiles, and full of mirth and pleasure,
The last days are flitting by without a care,
Lest you should rest with only earthly treasure,
Let those few words their fullest import bear:
“This, too, shall pass away.”
When earnest labour brings you fame and glory,
And all earth’s noblest ones upon you smile,
Remember that life’s longest, grandest story
Fills but a moment in earth’s little while:
“This, too, shall pass away.”
(OP Ghai, *Quest for Inspiration*, Lanta Vilson Smith, p. 29.)

And Rudyard Kipling encourages us:

If you can meet with triumph and disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same.

As Muslims, we are especially fortunate to have been gifted with the Holy Qur’an for Allah has given us in this Book, as supplications, two chapters (113 and 114) which are calculated to safeguard us from every conceivable kind of injury in life, both internal and external. Additionally He exhorts us in the following verses to strive a mighty striving to reach Him, and assures us that we are not alone - He knows our circumstances - and that help will come from whence we perceive not. However, we must persevere if Allah is to come to our assistance and we must not fear the attack of anyone if we are on the right way:
O man, thou must strive a hard striving (to attain) to thy Lord, until thou meet Him (84:6).

Now surely Allah's is whatever is in the heavens and the earth. He knows indeed your condition. And on the day when they are returned to Him, He will inform them of what they did. And Allah is Knower of all things (24:64).

And whoever keeps his duty to Allah, He ordains a way out for him, and gives him sustenance from whence he imagines not... and whoever keeps his duty to Allah He makes his affair easy for him... and whoever keeps his duty to Allah, He ill remove from him evils and give him a big reward... Allah brings ease after difficulty (65:2, 3, 4, 5, 7).

And those who strive hard for Us, We shall certainly guide them in Our ways. And Allah is surely with the doers of good (29:69).

O you who believe, take care of your souls - he who errs cannot harm you when you are on the right way. To Allah you will all return, so He will inform you of what you did (5:105).

Hazrat Mirza Sahib, in his own inspired way, has given us from nature a vivid example that lights up every corner of our minds and brings solace, strength, determination, courage and focus to our hearts. He gives us the likeness of a pool of water which, in the beginning, is clear, transparent, sweet to the taste and delightful to all. But with the passage of time, this pool becomes stagnant: the dirt and the worms begin to overtake it from beneath and that same sweet water now begins to smell badly and is repugnant to the taste. The lesson is that a human being may start off potentially with beautiful qualities of goodness but if he does not develop them he becomes a cause of sorrow and distress to others.
Maybe this is what the Holy Qur’an is drawing our minds to when it says:

\[\text{And surely We created man of sounding clay, of black mud fashioned into shape} \ (15:26); \ \text{and}
\]

\[\text{Then He made him complete and breathed into him of His spirit, and gave you ears and eyes and hearts; little it is that you give thanks!} \ (32:9).\]

It is our life-long responsibility to struggle to keep the black mud under control and develop the spirit breathed into us by our Creator thus becoming birds that can soar to the high heavens.

In this regard, this \textit{hadith} quoted a few times by Hazrat Mirza in his writings, comes to mind:

"The descendants of Adam (as) have been created in various categories. Some are born believers and live and die believers; some are born infidels and live and die infidels; some are born believers and live as believers but die infidels; some are born infidels and live as infidels, but die believers" (Robson, \textit{Mishkat}, p. 1067).

On the other hand, Hazrat Mirza gives us the analogy of a stream that flows freely and the water of which is sweet and delightful to the drinkers as well as life-giving to the plants and animals of the earth. It is true that there is dirt in this stream but because of the force of the current, the mud remains below and is not apparent to the beholders. So, too, true believers may have their little faults, but they keep on flowing and Allah Who is \textit{Sattar}(the One Who screens) and \textit{Ghaffar} (the One Who covers up) screens their shortcomings from the public gaze and covers their defects until they expunge them from their systems.
Therefore, he advises us to keep on seeking means of beneficent service as does our poet friend:

_I shall not pass this way again_
Through this toilsome world, alas!
Once and only once I pass;
If a kindness I may show,
If a good deed I may do
To a suffering fellow man,
Let me do it while I can.
No delay, for it is plain
I shall not pass this way again.

(OP Ghai, *Quest for Inspiration*, p. 50.)

Hazrat Mirza Sahib reminds us also that whatever may be the opinion of others concerning us, it is by our works that we will be judged, as the Holy Qur'an tells us:

_He said: My Lord, help me against their calling me a liar. He said: In a little while they will certainly be repenting (23:39-40)._

_Surely Allah is with those who keep their duty and those who do good (to others) (16:128)._

This, too, is the sound advice of our philosopher friend:

"**Good work speaks for itself.** One of the most insistent things in life is that you are ultimately judged by what you actually accomplish. The busy world of workers gives scant attention to assertion, explanation, protest, apology, or complaint. What counts most is not promise, but performance. Good work speaks for itself; therefore achieve something first, and talk about it afterward if you must. Time spent in promises, regrets, and professions, is usually unavailing. The way to do things is not to dream about them, nor wish for them, but to do
them. The distinguished men in all times have been prodigious workers, earnestly intent upon securing actual results. The present age is intensely practical, and more than ever the race is to the alert, the energetic, and the industrious” (OP Ghai, *Quest for Inspiration*, p.99).

Finally, what really matters in life above everything else is our relationship with our Master Who created us to know Him, love Him, cherish Him, worship Him, beg Him and to colour ourselves with His colours and so fulfil our potential. The following extracts from Hazrat Mirza’s writings bring home this point to us with penetrating clarity.

The first is taken from *Kishti Nuh*.

“Our God is our paradise. Our greatest delight is in our God for we have seen Him and found every beauty in Him. This wealth is worth acquiring even though one may have to sacrifice one’s life to gain it” (p. 30).

Therefore, he warns us:

“He whose heart is dead derives all his pleasures from worldly things while the true believer does not love everything more than God” (*Malfuzat*, vol. 6, p. 64).

Instead, he affirms that God alone must be the Source of our comfort:

“It is simply not true that wealth can bring comfort to a person. Mere wealth cannot do that, for, if a man is blessed with riches but his health is poor, for example, his digestive system is defective, will his life be a paradise? That points to the fact that riches alone are not the source of comfort. On the other hand, it is only that person who has a strong connection with God who can enjoy a life in this world that can be called a paradise…. Again, who can protect us from millions of dangers that surround us? Who is there besides God who can
console man in his sorrow? It is God and God alone Who can
do that” (Malfuzat, vol. 11, p.335).

He then teaches us how to achieve realisation of God in our lives:

“God says in the Holy Qur’an that He will not forgive people
for associating others with Him. But the majority of mankind
do not understand the meaning of this statement. They think
that it refers only to idol-worship. That is not true. It includes
all those who are loved by man. There are people who sever
their connection with God when they are faced with minor
trials and tribulations or when one of their children passes
away. They begin to grumble and complain. Such people are,
in fact, among those who associate partners with God and
they are really harsh to themselves. You should not be like
them. You should drive away those kinds of evil suggestions
and ideas from your mind. And this is how you should do it.
You should offer your daily prayers in great humility and you
should pray to God to help you in this respect” (Malfuzat,
vol. 9, p. 115).

He emphasizes the primacy of putting God first when he says:

“The essence of religion is to put God first in our lives for
indeed we are His and He is ours. However many children we
may lose, yet if He is pleased with us, no pain shall we suffer
from our loss (Malfuzat, vol. 10, p. 90).

Finally, a couplet from one of his Urdu poems discloses the kind of
feeling the heart must have for our beloved Creator:

Sab ghair hain Wohi hai ik dil ka yar jani
Dil men mere yehi hai
Subhana many-yarani

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He alone my heart yearns for. Foreign to me is everything else.
Gratefully my heart is ever singing:
Glory to Him Who keeps me always under His eyes.
DUAL APPLICATION OF SOME VERSES OF THE HOLY QUR'AN:

Blowing of the Trumpet

Another notable contribution of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib to Qur'anic exegesis is his explanation that whatever is promised on the Day of Resurrection, whether of blessings or misfortunes, is enacted right here on earth in a smaller measure as a sign and a foretaste of the Great Day when scales will fall from the eyes and man will have to stand before his Lord in judgement. There he will witness the full manifestation of his deeds and will have to enjoy or suffer the consequences of his action, for he will be given spiritual insight and perhaps additional senses to perceive things to which he was blind in this life on earth.

An example of this kind of exegesis is given to us by Hazrat Mirza in his tafsir (explanation) of the blowing of the trumpet mentioned in 18: 98-99 and other verses of the Holy Qur'an like 39:68 and 74:8-9.

Many, if not all the Qur'anic commentators of the past, erroneously regarded these and other similar verses as referring only to occurrences on the Day of Resurrection and they quoted other Qur'anic verses and some ahadith to support their point of view. For example, the Holy Qur'an tells us of the agony of the disbelievers thus:

For when the trumpet is sounded, that will be - that day - a difficult day (74:8-9).

The Qur'an also speaks of two blowings of the trumpet (39:68) and the Hadith mentions them in the following words:

“`Ibn `Abbas said regarding the words of Him Who is exalted: ‘When the naqur (trumpet) is sounded’ (74:48); that is, the sur (trumpet or horn). He said the rajifah is the first blast and
the *radifah* is the second" (*Mishkat*, pp. 1166-1167).

However, Hazrat Mirza disagrees with this limited application of these and similar verses and strongly affirms that these verses have a dual application with the primary meaning relating to this life and the other to the Day of Resurrection when there will be, of course, a greater manifestation of the events mentioned. He explains his point thus:

"Let not a person lacking in experience think that because these passages, after this point, speak of hell, the context requires that the topic here must be about the Day of Judgement. It must be remembered that it is a common form of expression in the Holy Qur'an, of which hundreds of examples can be found in the Divine Word, that an account in connection with this world has appended to it an account in connection with the Hereafter, but each part in its subject matter is distinct from the other. The Qur'an is full of this technique. For instance, take the miracle of the rending asunder of the moon as mentioned in the Qur'an. That was a sign, but the Day of Judgement is mentioned in the same place, and consequently some unwise people who ignore the context say that the rending asunder of the moon did not occur, but will take place on the Day of Judgement" (*Testimony of the Holy Qur'an*, footnote, p. 17).

He therefore explains that the *blowing of the trumpet* mentioned above pertains first of all to this life and refers to the coming of a reformer, in this case the advent of the Promised Messiah. In his explanation of 18:98-99 (*He said: This is a mercy from my Lord, but when the promise of my Lord comes to pass He will crumble it, and the promise of my Lord is ever true. And on that day We shall let some of them surge against others and the trumpet will be blown, then We shall gather them all together*) he writes:

"The meaning is that when the promise of God approaches,
He will crumble the wall which was restraining Gog and Magog, and the promise of God is true. And on that day, during the rule of Gog and Magog, God shall let various sects surge against one another like waves. In other words, every sect will strive to make its religion and faith overcome others. Just as an ocean wave seeks to subdue under itself everything that it falls upon, in like manner shall each of the various sects fall upon the others to overwhelm them, and none shall do less than its utmost. Every sect will strive to make its religion supreme. They will be engaged in these struggles when ‘the trumpet’ (sur) will be blown by Divine command, and God will unite all actions upon one faith.

The blowing of the trumpet here indicates that at that time, in accordance with the Divine law, a reformer will appear from God, coming with heavenly support. Life (spiritual) shall be breathed into his heart, and that life will penetrate into others. It is to be remembered that the word sur (trumpet) always points to great revolutions, so that when God moves His creation from one state (sura) to another, the time of that change of form is described as ‘the blowing of the trumpet (sur).’ And the mystics, in their visions, can perceive even a physical existence for this trumpet. These are the wonders of a realm the secrets of which are not disclosed to anyone in the world but those who have severed all worldly connections” (ibid. pp. 16-17).

As regards the second blowing of the trumpet mentioned in 39:68: And the trumpet is blown, so all those in the heavens and the earth will swoon, except such as God please; then it will be blown again, and they shall arise, awaiting. Hazrat Mirza explains:

“‘There are in fact two kinds of ‘blowing’ (naifkh): one is that of error, and the other is that of guidance, as indicated in the following verse: And the trumpet is blown, so all those in the
heavens and the earth will swoon, except such as God please; then it will be blown again, and they shall arise, awaiting (39:69). This verse has a dual aspect, applying to the Day of Judgement and also to the present world, as do verses such as, Know that God gives life to the earth after its death (57:17) and He sends down water from the clouds, according to their measure, then water courses flow (13:17). As applying to this world, this verse (39:69) means that in the last days there shall come two periods of time: a period of error when everyone, whether of a worldly or heavenly nature, shall become indifferent and negligent, save him whom God protects. And then shall come the second period, of guidance, when suddenly people will ‘stand up and see’. That is, the indifference will depart and true knowledge will enter the hearts, and the wicked will become warned of their evil, though they may not accept the true faith” (ibid. p. 28).

In his *Malîzat* Volume 2, Hazrat Mirza comments on the same verses (18:98-99) and includes verse 100 (*And We shall bring forth hell exposed to view, on that day before the believers*), and again makes the point that all these things refer to this life when Allah will bring mankind all together in unity in order to complete the circle which He started when He created man alone then spread him and his descendants throughout the earth (4:1). First, he says, there was individual unity when man was created alone. Now there will be unity of the species before the world comes to an end and this period of *gathering together* will be initiated by the Promised Messiah.

Concerning the *jahannam* (hell) of verse 100, Hazrat Mirza states that this does not refer only to the life after death but to the plagues that ravaged the world in his time and news of which was conveyed to him by Allah through revelation which promised safety to those who followed him and punishment for those who fought against him.

The *blowing of the trumpet* he likens to the voice of revelation as he
explains:

"Those people who come from God are spoken to by Him through the voice (trumpet) of revelation by means of which voice (trumpet) Divine gnosis is conveyed to the whole world. Such a powerful attraction is created in the souls of these God-sent ones that people, in spite of differences in thought, disposition and condition, begin to gather around them until finally that time will come when there will be only one flock and one shepherd" (Malfuzat, vol. 10, p. 102).

In like manner, Dr Basharat Ahmad, one of Hazrat Mirza’s disciples, has discerned an earthly application of some descriptions and characterisations of Qur’anic verses which may properly relate to the day when mankind will stand before its Lord to give account for its actions on earth. In his commentary of 79:6-7, he agrees that rajifah refers to the first blowing of the trumpet on the Day of Resurrection when this entire worldly dispensation will be destroyed and will give way to a new order. Radifah, he says, refers to the second blast of the trumpet when all peoples, first and last, will be gathered together before their Lord to receive their respective rewards of success or failure, of happiness or sorrow, of triumph or disgrace and shame and regret, of gardens and streams or fire rising over the hearts in columns.

While conceding that this may be the true meaning of rajifah and radifah, Dr Basharat Ahmad makes the point that there was a time on earth, unsurpassed in any other era, when the world witnessed the perfection of deeds and their consequences and also saw the repercussions of the rejection of and opposition to truth. And that was the short period of twenty-three years in the life of the Holy Prophet (sas) - in a time which paralleled and heralded and foreshadowed the Day of Resurrection.

In this regard, rajifah (first blowing of the trumpet) refers to the earth-
quakes that came about at the Prophet’s advent - tremors and convulsions in the shape of wars and persecution against the religion of Islam and its early converts. It was also a revolution in thought that shook Arabia to its foundation as would a mighty earthquake and one which transformed the course of the history of mankind.

Radifāh relates to the consequences of the great revolution or earthquake. Those who, in those times of trials and tribulations had persevered steadfastly and had accomplished the five stages of progress given in 79:1-5 now found themselves in a happy situation of peace, prosperity and rulership, as benefactors of mankind, whilst the opponents had to endure confusion, shame and regret.

In like manner, every period of history will contain events that will approximate in a small measure those on the Day of Resurrection and by extension, every day of our lives may be the same. We should all be acutely aware of this and benefit from it.

Allah has blessed the Muslim ummah immensely by sending mujaddids at the turn of every century and in particular this khalīfa of the latter days who, according to the Hadith would excavate from below the Ka’bah pearls and jewels which he would distribute to the Muslim community. This, Hazrat Mirza explains as the uncovering of treasures from beneath the Qur’anic verses which will be disseminated to the whole world. He himself said that he came to give us the deeper meanings of the Holy Qur’ān - meanings from which our eyes were covered as if by a veil. And indeed, how marvellously have he and his disciples done so. May we in our own little way follow in their footsteps and disclose to the world the mirror of the excellence of the Holy Qur’ān.
The Meaning of Shihab Mubin
(Brightly Shining Flame)

And certainly We have made strongholds in the heaven, and We have made it fairseeming to the beholders (15:16).

And We guard it against every accursed devil (15:17).

But he who steals a hearing; so there follows him a visible flame (15:18).

The above verses of the Holy Qur’an have given rise to great controversy among Muslim commentators of the Holy Qur’an and their explanations of verse 18 have resulted in non-Muslim Orientalists painting a false picture of the purity, sanctity and inviolability of the Qur’anic revelation.

We shall first take a brief look at some of the views of non-Ahmadi commentators and then examine what has been explained to us concerning verse 18 by Maulana Muhammad Ali in his Bayan-ul Qur’an and also Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s elucidation of shihab saqib or shihab mubin (a brightly shining flame) in verse 18.

If we consider the verse under examination, that is, verse 18, we shall see that the following questions logically spring to the mind:

- What is the meaning of stealing a hearing? Can Satan really eavesdrop on Allah’s communication to His angels?
- What is the nature of the shihab mubin (brightly shining flame)?
- What is the significance of the shihab mubin that pursues Satan?

Some Muslims commentators of the Holy Qur’an quote a certain hadith and say that this verse (18) refers to the time when Allah is
about to vouchsafe revelation to a prophet. What happens in the heav-
ens, they opine, is that the angels fall down in a swoon because of the
majesty of the occasion and the first to rise is Angel Gabriel who asks
Allah: “What has Thou spoken?” to which Allah replies: The truth
which is most exalted and great. (One hadith says that the angels, on
recovering from their unconsciousness, question one another con-
cerning the announcement and then Allah responds. But in any case,
the response of Allah is the same, that is, The truth which is most
exalted and great.)

What happens then according to these commentators is that Satan
steals a hearing either before or after the angels come out of their
swoon and he then passes on Allah’s communication to his friends on
earth - the soothsayers and astrologers who now mix this truth from
Allah with a hundred lies and begin to make predictions concerning
the future. When one of their predictions happens to come true, the
rejecters of the prophet seize upon it gleefully and regard them (the-
soothsayers etc.) as really versed in their knowledge of the Unknown.
However, this explanation does not take into consideration the clear
verses of the Holy Qur’an which emphatically negate such a possibil-
ity of Satan eavesdropping on the conversation between Allah and
His angels. For example: And the devils have not brought it, and it
behoves them not, nor do they have the power to do (it). Surely they
are far removed from hearing it (26:210-212).

If someone should argue that the Qur’anic revelation is not meant
here in the above verses but rather some other affair is referred to,
then this, too, is expressly denied in the following verse of the Holy
Qur’an:

Or do they have the means by which they listen? They let
their listener (Satan) bring a clear authority (52:3 8).

Some commentators even attribute a report to Ibn Abbas which al-
legedly says that originally there was no obstacle to Satan ascending
to the heavens until Prophet Jesus was born when three heavens were closed off. However, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) came on earth, all the heavens were sealed off from Satan. But this report has no basis in the Holy Qur’an or the Hadith.

As regards the shihab mubin (piercing flame) which pursues Satan, some commentators say that this refers to stars that are actually thrown at Satan. When faced with the objection that if that were so then by now all the stars would have disappeared or at least there would have been a great reduction in the number, they change their view and assert that it is really a fragment of a shining star that is thrown at Satan. But this contradicts the express verse of the Holy Qur’an which states:

And certainly We have adorned this lower heaven with lamps and We have made them means of rajuman (conjectures) for the devils and We have prepared for them the chastisement of burning (67:5).

(Rajuman, plural of rajmün, comes from rajama which means to stone but also to speak conjecturally or with doubt, as in rajman bil ghaib (18:22). That is, speaking conjecturally of that which is hidden, or unknown. - Lane)

As such, by the devils are meant the soothsayers and astrologers who claim to have access to the Unseen through their knowledge of the stars.

According to Maulana Muhammad Ali, if Satan can really steal a hearing from Allah’s secret communications then this results in a slur on Allah’s perfect power. That is, is Allah not powerful enough (Allah forbid!) to preserve His secrets from Satan (or from others for that matter)? If it is argued that Allah sends a shihab mubin (piercing flame) when He discovers that a secret is stolen by Satan, still it can be argued that:
Satan can mix the truth he has eavesdropped from Allah with many untruths. It still casts a bad reflection on Allah’s complete power over all His affairs if the arch-enemy of man can steal messages of Allah to His chosen ones. Again, this is contrary to the clear verses of the Holy Qur’an in which the diviners and astrologers confess in the following words:

*And we sought to reach heaven but we found it filled with strong guards and shuhuban (pl. of shihab) (flames). And we used to sit in some of the sitting places thereof to steal a hearing. But he who tries to listen now finds a shihab (flame) lying in wait for him (72:8-9).*

These two verses also clear up whatever misconception may arise in the minds of the believers when reading the following two verses:

*They give ear and most of them are liars (26:223).*

*Except him who snatches away but once, and there follows him a shihabun saqib (brightly shining flame) (37:10).*

After reading 72:8-9, no one can now believe that Satan can steal a hearing or snatch away any secret from Allah, Most High, Most Powerful. So what do these verses (15:18, 26:223, 37:10) really mean? Maulana Muhammad Ali says that sometimes the soothsayers and astrologers make certain conjectures or certain predictions about the future from their own intellectual reasoning and sometimes a few of these predictions do come true. Just as the prophets have a relationship with Allah, so, too, the soothsayers and astrologers have a bond with Satan and when these few “prophecies” are fulfilled they make grandiose claims about themselves and claim to be on the same level with the prophets in the matter of knowledge of the Unseen. This, of course, is sufficient to convince the rejecters of truth, for all they look for is any excuse that will justify their refusal to accept the prophets
of Allah.

As regards the visible flame (*shihab mubin*), Maulana Muhammad Ali explains that, according to the dictionary meaning, it refers to any flame but also to the phenomenon of the shooting star which we sometimes witness in the open expanse above us. Whatever the physical reason for this is open to conjecture, but the belief that these shooting stars really attack Satan is not far-fetched for it is reported in the *Hadith* that these occurrences were very frequent just before the birth of the Holy Prophet. However, from the verse already quoted above (72:9) it is clear that *shihab mubin* does not refer to the shooting stars which existed from eternity but to a new occurrence which came into existence later in time. In other words, the expression *shihab mubin* is used to mean that light which destroys the influence of the soothsayers and astrologers whose weak conjectures were having an effect on the gullible people. And what is this light? Two things according to Maulana Muhammad Ali:

1. The powerful God-given prophecies of the prophets which put to flight the feeble predictions of the diviners as light puts darkness to flight. This is supported by the Holy Qur’an itself which refers to the Holy Prophet as *an najmus saqib* (the star of piercing brightness- 86:3) and *wan-najmu idha hawa* (by the star when it sets - 53:1).

2. The Holy Qur’an itself, according to 56:75: *Fala uqsimu bi mawaqi ‘in nujum* (But nay, I swear by revelations of portions of the Holy Qur’an in which *nujum* (pl. *najim*), which, according to commentators of the Holy Qur’an, mean portions of the Holy Qur’an, because every portion of it testifies to the truth of the Holy Qur’an and the falsity of the astrologers.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s explanation of *shihab saqib*
Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Mujaddid of the fourteenth century and Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, has given an ex-
planation of *shihab saqib* or *shihab mubin* which goes as follows.

When a believer puts Allah first in all his affairs he then begins to ascend to Allah so that in this life he is transported to Him and he is made resplendent with a distinctive light. His elevation is so high that he soars beyond the range of Satan who cannot reach him.

For every (spiritual) matter Allah has given us a tangible sign in this physical world and accordingly, He has given us a physical example of Satan's attempt to rise high. When he begins to climb towards the heavens he is pursued by a piercing flame which attacks him and throws him to the ground.

Hazrat Mirza Sahib then gives us four meanings of *saqib* which he says are:

1. A brightly shining star.
2. Something that pierces or penetrates.
3. Something that soars very high. In this there is a clear description and likeness of the human condition which contains within itself not only a manifest but also a hidden reality. He explains: "When a man attains full faith in Allah, he begins to rise towards his Creator and he is then blessed with special strength and power and light by means of which he throws Satan to the ground."
4. One who defeats or kills.

According to Hazrat Mirza Sahib:

"It is the duty of every believer to try to defeat his satan and to destroy him completely. Those who are unacquainted with the science of spirituality scoff at these matters but in truth they are the ones who are deserving of ridicule for they do not know that just as there is a manifest law of nature, so, too, there is a hidden (spiritual) law and the former serves as an
indication of this hidden law. Allah, Most High, has vouchsafed to me the revelation, *You are to Me like a brightly shining star.* By these words Allah is telling me: ‘I have created you to defeat Satan and at your hands Satan will be destroyed.’

Satan will never be allowed to rise high. If a believer should rise high, Satan can never overpower him. Therefore, a believer should pray to Allah for such power as will make him defeat Satan. In this regard, it is incumbent upon the believer if he is to destroy Satan, to drive away, immediately, all evil thoughts that may come to him. On this rests his ability to defeat Satan” (*Malfuzat*, vol. 10, pp. 91-92).

From the above explanation of Hazrat Mirza Sahib, it is clear that our salvation and elevation lie in removing ourselves far from the reach of Satan and in developing our own individual *shihab mubin* (bright flame) or *shihab saqib* (light of piercing brightness) to destroy him if he dares to interfere with our spiritual ascent to the heavens. This is not impossible as Hazrat Mirza Sahib after warning us that Satan is our greatest enemy who is waging a fiercer battle against us than he did against our parents when he misled them, holds out this message of hope and conviction:

“When man suffers pain in the path of Allah and is not defeated by Satan he receives a light from Allah (*Malfuzat*, vol. 10, p. 91).

Finally, the Holy Qur’an points out the ideal goal to us in one of the verses quoted above (15:16):

*And certainly We have made strongholds in the heaven, and We have made it fair-seeming to the beholders.*

The same point is made in 67:5:
And certainly We have adorned this lower heaven with lamps (that is, stars).

Just as the stars adorn the physical world above us, so, too, must we imitate the spiritual stars of the spiritual firmament and become adornments and embellishments for the social world - even more, we must become moral and spiritual guides and also protectors of our human world against satanic influences and assaults through the medium of human beings. That is the legacy bequeathed to us by the Holy Prophet (the spiritual sun) and his companions (the spiritual stars) as mentioned in 22:78 of the Holy Qur’an:

that the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you and that you may be bearers of witness to the people....

May Allah bless us all in our efforts.
The Future of the Ahmadiyya Movement

Allah raised up in the fourteenth century AH Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib as the *Mujaddid* of the Age, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, and entrusted him with several tasks for the regeneration of our noble religion, Islam, to revive the hearts of Muslims by infusing zeal and enthusiasm into them after torpor and defeatism: to break the cross and kill the swine, to kill the *Dajjal* and to overpower Gog and Magog (with arguments); to usher in the final triumph of Islam in the last thousand years of this dispensation.

The *Hadith* also predicts that in the latter days (of the triumph of Islam) the sun will rise in the West and this is interpreted as the sun of Islam that will overspread the Western world as it has done in the East.

The Messiah has come and gone, but he has given us inspiration, and the arguments that are needed for the final triumph of Islam worldwide, especially in the West. This is the assignment that he has bequeathed to his followers.

However, in order to succeed, it is incumbent on us to study the characteristics of the Western nations, to go back to their roots in order to understand their present attitudes and behaviour so that we may better formulate the correct approach that Ahmadis must adopt in our efforts to transform them.

Superficially, Western civilisation seems to be derived from and based on Christianity, but if we delve deeper we shall see that the origins of this civilisation go back to thousands of years to ancient Greece and Rome.

According to Nadwi (*Islam and the World*): “The real fundamentals of the Greek civilisation may be summed up as follows:
1. Disregard of transcendental truths
2. Want of religious feeling and spirituality
3. Worship of material comfort
4. Exaggerated patriotism.”

Dr Hass, a German scholar, in explaining the question “What is European civilisation?” answers that the first stage “was the aim to develop man harmoniously. The supreme measure was physical education - games and dancing - and mental education - poetry, music, drama, philosophy, even the sciences were kept in proportion so as to develop the mind but not at the expense of the body. Its religion had no spirituality, no theology, no mysticism” (p. 114).

Nadwi himself opines on the absence of spirituality in the Greeks (and by extension in their progeny of today): “The repudiation of the attributes of God and of His personal control over the universe and the replacement of Him as the Creator and Sustainer of the worlds by a self-supposed Active Intellect could only lead to the destruction of spiritual enthusiasm…. The Greeks did not strictly deny God, but they had no place for Him in their practical scheme of things. They supposed that He had, after having brought forth the Active Intellect, retreated into seclusion (Islam and the World, p.115).

How closely have the descendants of today imitated their ancestors and how devastating the consequences to mankind in general! Didn’t the Holy Qur’an warn us: Certainly man is inordinate, whenever he thinks of himself self-sufficient (96:6-7).

As regards the second ancestors, the Romans, Lecky (as quoted by Nadwi) in his book History of European Morals, writes: “The Roman religion was purely selfish. It was simply a method of obtaining prosperity, averting calamity and reading the future. Ancient Rome produced many heroes, but no saints. Its self-sacrifice was patriotic, not religious. Its religion was neither an independent teacher nor a source of inspiration…” (Islam and the World, p. 118).
And, in addition to the gross materialism of the Romans, was their imperialistic drive which resulted in the exploitation of weaker nations for the benefit of the Master nation.

Muhammad Asad explains further in *Islam at the Crossroads*: “The underlying idea of the Roman Empire was the conquest of power and the exploitation of the nations for the benefit of the mother country alone. To promote better living for a privileged group, no violence was for the Romans too bad, no injustice too base. The famous ‘Roman Justice’ was justice for Romans alone. It is clear that such an attitude was possible only on the basis of an entirely materialistic concept of life and civilisation, a materialism certainly refined by intellectual taste, but nonetheless foreign to all spiritual values. ‘The Romans never in reality knew religion.’ neither do their modern progeny, for all of the above anti-religious attitudes have been inherited in whole or in part by Europe and America” (pp. 38-39).

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) has indeed given to us a most sharp-sighted description of these nations when he spoke metaphorically and symbolically of the *Dajjal* as being “heavily built, white and shining, whose one eye (the materialistic eye) is brilliant like a shining star”.

Muhammad Asad explains the reason for the anti-religious mindset of the Western nations as:

1. The heritage of materialistic Roman civilisation.
2. The revolt of human nature against Christian world contempt and the suppression of natural desires and legitimate desires of man.
3. The anthropomorphic conception of God; that is, that Prophet Jesus is God and/or Son of God.

He then describes the new religion that has replaced Christianity thus: “The average Occidental - be he Democrat or Fascist, a Capitalist or a Bolshevik, a manual worker or an intellectual - knows only one
positive ‘religion’ and that is the worship of material progress, the belief that there is no other goal in life than to make that very life continually easier…. The temples of this ‘religion’ are the gigantic factories, cinemas, chemical laboratories, dancing halls, hydro-electric works, and its ‘priests’ are bankers, engineers, movie stars, captains of industry, record airmen. The unavoidable result of this craving after power and pleasure is the creation of hostile groups armed to the teeth and determined to destroy each other whenever and wherever their respected interests come to clash. And on the cultural side, the result is the creation of a human type whose morality is confined to the question of practical utility alone, and whose highest criterion of good and evil is material success” (Ibid. pp. 55-56).

This situation in itself is dangerous, but what is more pernicious and deadly is their attitude towards Islam, an attitude mixed with hatred and fear and the desire to neutralise at all cost and even to obliterate Islam from the face of the earth. That is a central part of the New World Order envisaged by President George Bush Senior.¹

Muhammad Asad also examines this attitude of Westerners to Islam. Their feeling of racial superiority over the rest of mankind is not sufficient to explain the dark feeling of the West against Islam, he says, but Westerners are still bitter over their defeats in their Crusades against Islam centuries ago and they are forever trying to blunt or kill the rise of Islam by using whatever means possible from bribery to outright force. A recent example of this is the way the Western nations master-minded the destruction of Iraq² under the umbrella of the United Nations. It was not tiny Iraq they feared but what they dreaded was the rise of a Muslim leader who would rally Muslims around him as Salahuddin did in earlier times. Muslims must never unite. Islamic civilisation must never be a threat to the Western way of life. That is their motive as they bribe and cajole and threaten one Muslim country after another to fight against its Muslim brothers. And how readily our Muslim leaders line up to collect their pieces of silver!
Proof of this irrational fear comes from Graham Fuller, a Middle-East specialist with the CIA during the 1980's. He writes: "There was genuine fear of Islam in Washington as a force that was utterly alien to American thinking, and that really scared us. Senior people at the Pentagon and elsewhere were much more concerned about Islam than Communism. It was an almost obsessive fear, leading to a mentality on our part that you should use any stick to beat a dog to stop the advance of Islamic fundamentalism. That stick was Iraq (versus Iran)" (Time magazine, March 1991). Of course, we all know what happened to Iraq when they "threatened the American way of life" as George Bust termed it.

This, brothers and sisters, gives us a clear picture of what we have to face in the last battle between the forces of good and evil. As predicted by our Founder, the task is a difficult one that calls for the complete sacrifice of property and person to ensure success. And this task is made all the more difficult because of several factors which conspire to prevent Lahore Ahmadis from presenting true Islam in a manner that would appeal to the hearts and intellects of all people. And all these are internal and more deadly for that.

Firstly, we are branded as kafirs by the so-called orthodox Muslims and are persecuted not only in Pakistan but in other parts of the world as well.

Secondly, the split in the Ahmadiyya Movement has complicated matters further for we now have to fight against their wrong belief also.

Thirdly, the Muslim world is in a state of disorder and chaos with mutual hatred and internecine warfare, not to mention the fragmentation of the religion into multitudinous sects. This in no way encourages non-Muslims to consider Islam as an alternative way of life.

Fourthly, the belief by many orthodox groups that Islam allows the
use of the sword for political revolution further repels non-Muslims from even considering the beauties of our religion in a rational and unbiased manner.

Fifthly, there is the myopic attitude of isolation preached by many Muslim sects, that is, that everything Western is evil so we must avoid all contacts with them in order to save our religion from contamination. They do not seem to realise that this is impossible given the advances in science and technology that have transformed the world into a global village.

And lastly, the poverty - financial, personnel and otherwise - of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, as compared to other religious groups, has left Lahore Ahmadis a prey to the seduction of other groups.

Which approach shall we choose - the militant one, the isolationist one or the passive one? None of these. We are fortunate in that the Founder has already charted the way for us both in words and behaviour - the true path in the propagation of religion, he explained, is the part of the peaceful jihad with the Qur’an and the pen; of appealing to the hearts and intellect by means of convincing arguments, clean hearts and exemplary lives. Political glory and economic power - yes- but we need first a spiritual revolution that will put to naught the threat of materialism and military domination of the world of Islam by the Western world.

The Holy Qur’an tells us what we must do: So obey not the disbelievers and strive against them a mighty striving (jihad) with it (the Holy Qur’an) (25:52); and also how we must proceed: Call to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation and argue with them in the best manner (16:12); and: Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their inner selves (13:11).

And the Founder further clarified the concept that jihad with the sword is suspended: “Considering the divine Law and present condition of
the Muslims, we have said that this is not the time of the sword" and: "Before all, I thank the Government under which we can publicly ... teach the religious doctrines of our pure faith without any interference whatsoever, and we can pay back our opponents whether they are Christian or others in their own coin."

Peaceful propagation of Islam was the hallmark of the Founder’s *modus operandi*. The situation in Pakistan is the opposite today. The Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement is, I believe with all my heart, the only group that gives the world the truest picture of Islam, a concept that can be understood by all people of whatever capacity and temperament. My heart weeps when I reflect on the present state of our organisation: we lack a missionary school, we witness the non-existence of missionaries to service the various centres world-wide that are now shrinking. When I see the naked hatred of ‘orthodox’ Muslims for Ahmadies; when I observe the false beliefs and the psychological wiles and blandishment of the Rabwah *Jama‘at* with their efficient propaganda machinery; when I hear the snide and boastful taunts of some Rabwah missionaries echoed by their servile rank and file: “The Lahoris are dead!”; my heart bleeds and every atom of my being cries out to Allah: “O Allah, when will Thy promised help and victory come?”

In these times of despondency, fear and grief, my chief resort besides *salah* and the Holy Qur’an is to the life-giving prophecies of the Founder, some of which I will now quote in order to breathe new zeal and enthusiasm into our hearts, to refresh and invigorate our flagging spirits. This is how the Founder inspired the heart of despondent and despairing Muslims: “There is no need to be disappointed and dismayed, nor to be afraid of the attacks of false religions. Islam is a living religion and the God of Islam, too, is a living God Who is even today as He was 1000 years ago or ever since the world began. He is the very same God Who revealed the Holy Qur’an and called Islam His own everlasting religion. He has sent me as a *mujaddid* and *khalifah* of the Holy Prophet so that I may, in accordance with the divine prom-
ise, 'cause Islam to prevail over all religions and all materialism', although the political predominance has arrived and the Word of God shall be fulfilled in all splendour and glory.'

As regards the certainty of Divine assistance and ultimate success, he wrote in Lajjahnun-Nur: 'In a vision bringing good news, I beheld a congregation of sincere believers and righteous kings, some of which belonged to this country, some to Arabia, some to Persia, some to Syria, some to Rome and some to the countries which I know not. Then I heard a voice from the Most High God intimating that these people 'will vouch for and attest thee, and believe in thee, and invoke benediction on thee; and I shall shower My blessings on thee so that kings shall seek benison from thy garments, and then I shall cause to enter the list of the sincere'. It is the vision which I beheld, and it is the revelation that came to me from God, the Knowers of the Great Unseen.'

Regardless of opposition, persecution and even martyrdom, we should never renge, for the Founder assures us that Allah revealed to him this promise: 'I shall show My splendour and raise thee (Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad) up, displaying My power. A warner came into the world, and the world accepted him not; but the Most High God will accept him, and establish his truthfulness by means of powerful onsets.'

"Oft and oft again the Most High God has communicated to me splendid greatness and dignity He shall be pleased to confer on me, and infuse and instil love for me in the hearts of people, and spread my system all over the world, and cause my followers to excel and predominate over all others, and that the people of my following will get to attain much perfection in knowledge and wisdom that they will, in accordance with the light of their truth and arguments and signs, clinch and close all hostile mouths; and every nation will drink from this spring, and spiritual order will flourish and grow forcefully so that it will encircle and encompass this earth: there will arise many an ob-
stacle, and many a tribulation and trial will come, but the Most High God will brush aside and remove all, and bring His word of promise to pass. Ye, therefore, who hear, enshrine these things in your memory and preserve these prophecies in your iron chest, for it is the word of God which shall one day come to pass.”

Again, in his book, *Jesus in India*, he gives us the powerful assurance: “As you observe the fruit to appear in season, so also the Light descends at its appointed time; none can cause it to descend before; it comes of its own accord, nor can one obstruct its passage when it begins to descend. There will be disputes and controversies, but at the end Truth must prevail. It is so because this is not the work of man nor is it within the power of the children of Adam. It is the work of Almighty God Who rotates the seasons, changes times, and brings forth the day from the night and the night from the day. Though He creates darkness as well, it is the light which He really desires. He also permits idolatry to spread, yet it is Unity which He loves to see prosper. He does not will that His majesty be shared by others. Ever since man came to be born, until the time that he ceases to be, it is the unchanging law that God will remain on the side of Unity (belief in the Oneness of God)” (p. 65).

And finally, note the majesty of his conviction as he infuses power into our hearts: “Rest assured that this is a tree planted by the Hand of God. He will never permit it to go to waste. He will not be satisfied until He has seen it through to its fullness. He will see to it that it is well-irrigated and will build a protective fence around it. Thus God will bless my followers with astounding progress and prosperity. Have you, O enemies of truth, left any stones unturned? Had it been the work of man, this tree would have been cut and felled since long and no trace of it would have remained” (*Anjam-e Atham*, p. 64).

We must bear in mind that when the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, described the essential features of the *Dajjal* - that he would be blind in the right eye and resplendent in the left eye
- he was not only giving us an accurate representation of future events and dangers but he was also subtly intimating to us the substantive task that we had to perform in those days.

Rudyard Kipling wrote in one of his poems the following lines:

O East is East and West is West
And never the twain shall meet,

but Allah, Most High, has refuted that notion when He says in the Holy Qur’an:

Lord (Rabb) of the two Easts and Lord of the two Wests, which then of the bounties of your Lord will you deny (55:17-18).

And Allah’s is the East and the West, so whither you turn thither is Allah’s purpose. Surely Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing (2:115).

In other words, He is the Nourisher, the Provider, the Loving and Sustaining Lord of both East and West not only materially, but also spiritually, and in His sight both are one and also equal, for as He says elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an: ...So whoever believes in his Lord (Rabb), he fears neither loss nor injustice (72:13).

How then will the sun rise in the West as it does in the East? It is here that the Founder comes again to our rescue. He says that on the one hand the Western nations are a blessing to mankind as a result of their shining left eye, that is, their scientific and technological brilliance and their prowess in all areas of the material sciences. On the other hand, they are a pernicious example to the world for their right eye, that is, their moral and spiritual eye is blind and so they are bereft of the nobler principles of life. In fact, they are in some cases worse than the animals for animals are faithful to their covenant with Allah, that
is, their instincts, but when man rejects the messages of the Prophets he inevitably takes false gods and follows his lust (hawa) which brings him down from his God-given elevated pedestal and makes him prey to all kinds of degenerate, unnatural and perverted behaviour as the Holy Qur’an states in the following verses: *Certainly We created man in the best make. Then We render him the lowest of the low* (95:4-5).

Our mission, in fact, our sacred task, therefore, according to Hazrat Mirza Sahib, is to borrow from their left eye and put light into their right eye and thus will the ideal of universal brotherhood come into being. Unfortunately, the majority of Muslims are blind in both eyes. They are strangers to scientific research and experimentation and this in part has caused them to engage in deviating and fanatic behaviour so that spiritually superstition and erroneous doctrines have clouded their rationality and have infused them with narrow and misguided zeal. For example, physical confrontation with the Western world and a mistaken concept of jihad are causing them to waste their energies in vain and fruitless endeavours. As a result, they are sullying the good name of Islam and instilling hatred, aversion and fear in the hearts of people for our religion, not to mention giving the opponents of Islam a welcome and gratuitous opportunity to launch once more a concerted attack against the Holy Prophet, the Holy Qur’an, the religion of Islam and against even innocent, peace-loving Muslims. As the Holy Qur’an states, wittingly or unwittingly, they are encouraging others to *lie in wait on every road, threatening and turning others* away from Allah’s way and *seeking to make it crooked* (7:86).

In today’s world there is only one party that is divinely equipped to put light in the blind right eye of the Dajjal and Gog and Magog and that party is the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement. There is no other group that sufficiently possesses the intellectual arguments, the unswerving faithfulness to pristine Islamic doctrines and the spiritual qualities to carry out this Divine mission. So, although small in number and seemingly insignificant, we must realise that ours is a God-given role and we must never despair nor relax in our efforts to bring
about the reformation for which we were chosen by the Divine will.

*Remember you were few, then He multiplied you, and see what was the end of the mischief-makers (7:86).*

And:

*How often has a small party vanquished a numerous host by Allah’s permission! And Allah’s is with the steadfast (2:249).*

Remember, as pointed out by the Founder, himself that the same promise of victory has been given to the second Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Sahib, as was given to the first Messiah, Prophet Jesus: *O you who believe, be helpers (in the cause) of Allah, as Jesus, son of Mary, said to the disciples: Who are my helpers in the cause of Allah? The disciples said: We are helpers (in the cause) of Allah. So a party of the Children of Israel believed and another party disbelieved; then We aided those who believed against their enemy, and they became predominant (61:14).*

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Allah, Most High, has favoured us with the most enlightened school of thought, the most correct interpretation of Islam. I pray that He will give us the courage, resources and determination to fulfil our God-given mission of making the sun rise higher in the West and of making Islam predominate over all religions.

1 The policy of George Bush Senior is being carried out by his son and namesake, the present President of the USA.

2 The destruction of Iraq was completed in 2003 without the approval of the U.N. by George Bush, Junior.