

Priorities of The Islamic Movement in The Coming Phase

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GLOSSARY

Forward

Of all the conspiracies hatched against Islam in modern times, the most dangerous is a false claim to Prophethood made in the beginning of this century. This claim has been the main cause of wide spread mental chaos amongst the Ummah for the last sixty years. Like all other schisms, the root cause of this mischief is that the Muslims are generally ignorant of their religion. Had they been truly imbued with its knowledge and developed a clear understanding of the article of faith relating to the finality of Prophethood, it would have been well-nigh impossible for any false claimant to Prophethood to take root and thrive among the people of Islam after the last ministry of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). At this juncture the most perfect and effective remedy for eradicating this evil is to educate the maximum number of people in the best possible manner about true faith in the finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and stressing the importance and value of this article of faith in the religion of Islam.

It is also imperative that all doubts and skeptical notions about the final ministry of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) should be dispelled through reason and logic. This booklet has been prepared to serve this very purpose. Readers who find it useful should take a step further and extend their full co-operation in the propagation of its contents. This booklet ought to reach all literate people and they having studied it themselves should read it out to the non-literate. It is hoped that a study of this booklet will not only immunize people who have not been contaminated with this malady but would also make the truth manifest to the right-minded persons among those who have received some of its germs. However, those who have fallen victim to falsehood and are impervious to all reason--for them, hope and salvation lies only with Allah.

Abul A'la Maududi

Lahore:

February 12, 1962.

Introduction

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful and the Most Beneficent

"O people ! Muhammad has no sons among ye men, but verily, he is the Apostle of God and the last in the line of Prophets. And God is Aware of everything." (Surah Al Ahzab: 40)

This verse has been revealed in the fifth Ruku' (para or passage) of Surah al-Ahzab. In this Ruku' Allah has provided answers to all those objections raised by the hypocrites, which had given rise to a storm of calumnies, slander and mischief in respect of the marriage of Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) with Hadrat Zainab (may Allah be pleased with her).

These hypocrites argued that Zainab was the wife of an adopted son of the Holy Prophet and by this connection she stood in the position of the Prophet's daughter-in-law. Hence, after her divorce from Zaid, the Prophet had taken his own daughter-in-law as wife.

In order to refute this allegation Allah told clearly in verse 37 that this marriage had Divine sanction behind it and was made to serve as a lawful precedent for Muslim men to marry the wives of their adopted sons after they had been divorced by their husbands. Later in verses 38 and 39, Allah affirmed that no power could hinder the Prophet from discharging a Divine obligation. The Prophets are ordained to fear God, not the people. It has been an invariable practice of the Apostles to transmit the Divine message without any extraneous care and to perform the duties enjoined upon them by Allah without fear or hesitation. Afterwards a verse was revealed which extinguished the basis of all objections. In the first place, they had charged "You have taken your daughter-in-law as wife, in contravention of your own law that the wife of a son is forbidden to his father."

In refutation of this charge it was affirmed by the Almighty:

"Muhammad had no sons among ye men..."

thereby making absolutely clear that the man whose divorced wife was taken into wedlock by the Prophet being not his real son; the act, therefore did not imply violation of it.

The argument of their second charge ran thus: "Admitted that the adopted son is not the real one, and on that basis a father might lawfully marry the divorced spouse of his adopted son, but where was the compulsion for the Prophet to do so?"

Allah affirmed in answer to this charge:

"But, verily, he is the Apostle of Allah".

The implication is that it was Allah's mandate to the Holy Prophet to wipe out all prejudices and declare all taboos that pagan custom had unnecessarily imposed upon the people, as lawful. In this respect the Prophet's action was unequivocal and left no room for doubt.

[At this point those who deny the finality of Muhammad's Prophethood (PBUH) demand to know the tradition in which this allegation has been reported. This query in fact lays bare their ignorance. The Holy Qur'an furnishes answers to the charges of the mischief-mongers at several points without actually mentioning the charge. In each case, however, the relevant text bears unmistakable evidence as to which allegation is being answered. In the present case also the answer contains the substance of the question. The use of the conjunctive word "but" at the end of the first sentence presupposes that part of the question had yet to be dealt with. The second sentence, therefore, furnishes answer to the remaining part of the question. The first sentence had revealed to the objectors the answer to their charge that 'Muhammad had married his daughter-in-law.' However, the second point of the question "where was the compulsion for the Prophet to do so" still called for an answer. This answer was provided by the next sentence in the text.

"But verily, Muhammad is the Apostle of God and last in the line of Prophets of God."

The point may be further explained by taking an illustration from ordinary conversation. Someone says "Zaid had not risen, but that Bakr has stood up." Now this conveys the sense that Zaid has not risen, but the matter does not end there, as it gives rise to the query, "If Zaid has not risen, who has stood up then?" The subordinate clause of the above sentence "but Bakr has stood up" supplies an answer to this query. It is the same in the above case.]

In order to lay particular emphasis upon this point Allah observes: (Khatim Al-Nabbiyeen)

"And he is the last in the line of Prophets,"

which means that no messenger nor even a Prophet charged with the mission of carrying out reforms in the sphere of Law or society which might have been omitted (God forbid) during the lifetime of Muhammad (PBUH) will ever succeed him. Since Allah ordained the ministry of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to be final, it was, therefore, imperative that he should accomplish the task of uprooting this pagan custom.

Later the point has been further emphasized in the revelation (Wa Kan ul-Allahi Be-kulle Shai-in 'Aleema):

"God is Aware of everything."

The true import of this revelation is that Allah deemed it best to remove this pagan custom through the agency of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and that Allah only could take cognisance of the harm that the perpetuation of this infidel custom would have entailed. Allah was well aware that the line of Prophethood ended in Muhammad (PBUH) whose precedent the whole ummah would follow, and had he not done away with this custom, there would arise no man comparable in status to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who could accomplish the task. And suppose a reformer had arisen in later times who would break this custom, his act would not have constituted a universal or permanent precedent for Muslims of all ages and all countries to follow. No other person that follows will embody the Divine sanctity which attaches to the person of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Hence the precedent of no man but Muhammad has the potential of wiping out the idea of all pagan customs from the souls of men for all times to come.

The Verdict of the Text of the Qur'an

A group who has raised the heresy of a new prophethood in modern times explains the meaning of the idea of the "Finality of Prophethood" as the 'Stamp of Prophethood' thereby implying that all prophets who would succeed Muhammad (PBUH) will bear his stamp and will attain to prophethood by his seal alone. No one, in other words, who does not bear the seal of Muhammad (PBUH) will attain the status of Prophethood. But the context in which the term

"the last in the line of Prophets"

has been revealed in the Holy Qur'an leaves no scope for such speculation. If indeed the term

"last in the line of Prophets"

does bear the meaning intended by this group, then this term is surely out of place in the context in which it has been revealed. Furthermore, when the term is charged with this meaning it distorts the whole purpose of the revealed verse.

In this verse God refutes the charge and dispels doubts created by the mischievous people about the marriage of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) with Zainab (may Allah be pleased with her), the divorced wife of the Prophet's adopted son, Zaid. Does it stand to reason to make a sudden interpolation in this context of the point that Muhammad

(PBUH) was the 'seal of Prophets' and that Allah had delegated to him the authority of attesting the bonafides of succeeding prophets ?

This interpretation bears no connection with the context-not the least even and is contrary to the purpose of Divine argument against the heretics. If this interpretation were true the non-believers might well have argued: "There is no hurry in doing away with this custom now. You might safely leave this task for your successor prophets who will bear your stamp."

According to a second interpretation of the idea of the finality of Prophethood advanced by this group it is said that the term

"Last in the line of Prophets"

means the "exalted Prophet." They further explain that the line of Apostles will continue, though the excellence of Prophethood has been culminated in the person of Muhammad (PBUH). This interpretation is no less defective and harmful than the other one. It hardly bears any relation to the context and, in fact, conveys a contradictory sense of the verse. Taking this thread of argument the infidels and hypocrites would have plausibly pointed out, "Sir, there will be other prophets after you, howsoever inferior in status compared to you, to fulfil the Divine mission, why must you take it upon yourself to remove this custom also?"

The Dictionary Meaning of the Word 'Khatam-al-Nabiyyin'

It is evident that the text can bear one meaning and it is that Khatam-al-Nabiyyin stands for the Finality of Prophethood with a clear implication that the prophethood has been culminated and finalized in Muhammad (PBUH). It is not only the context that supports this interpretation but also the lexicography.

According to Arabic lexicon and the linguistic usage Khatam means to affix seal; to close, to come to an end; and to carry something to its ultimate end.

Khatama al-'Amala is equivalent to 'Faragha min al-'Almali' which means 'to get over with the task.' 'Khatama al-'Ina' bears the meaning 'The vessel has been closed and sealed so that nothing can go into it, nor can its contents spill out.'

'Khatam-al-kitab' conveys the meaning 'The letter has been enclosed and sealed so that it is finally secured.'

'Khatama-'Ala-al-Qalb' means 'The heart has been sealed so that it cannot perceive anything new nor can it forswear what it has already imbibed.'

'Khitamu-Kulli-Mashrubin' implies 'the final taste that is left in the mouth when the drink is over.'

Katimatu Kulli Shaiinn 'Aqibatuhu wa Akhiratuhu means "The end in the case of everything denotes its doom and ultimate finish." Khatm-ul-Shaii Balagha Akhirahu conveys the sense, "To end a thing means to carry it to its ultimate limit."

The term Khatam-i-Qur'an is used in the similar sense and the closing verses of Qur'anic Surahs are referred to as Khawatim. Khatim-ul-Qaum Akhirhuum means "The last man in the tribe." (Refer to Lisan-ul-'Arab; Qamus and Aqrab-ul- Muwarid). [We have referred to three lexicons here, yet the elucidation of this point is not confined to these works alone. All authoritative dictionaries of the Arabic language interpret the word Khatam in the sense that we have given to it. But the deniers of the Finality of Prophethood in their endeavor to make a sneaky assault on the religion of God argue that if we refer to someone as 'Last of the Poets' or 'Last of the Legists' or 'Last of the Commentators', we do not necessarily mean that no poet, legist or commentator will come after them; rather we only mean to say that all excellence of their act has been concentrated in such men. The actual position, however, is that when we do use these exaggerated epithets for someone we do not thereby replace or remove the original meaning of the word 'Last'. It is preposterous to assume that by its metaphorical use to refer to the excellence or perfection of a man, the word 'Last' loses its original or real significance which is 'Final'. Such an assumption can only be accepted by a person who lacks elementary knowledge of the rules of grammar. There is no grammatical principle in any language by which the metaphorical meaning of a word may be taken as its real or original meaning. Besides, the metaphorical meaning in no case replaces or obliterates the real and basic meaning of the word. When you tell an Arab 'Ja Khatam ul-Qaum', he will certainly not take it to mean that 'the perfect or the most excellent man of the tribe has come.' He will, on the other hand, take it to mean that 'the whole tribe, even to the last man, has come.' There is another point to be considered. Such terms as the 'Last Poet', the Last Legist' or the 'Last Narrator of hadith' are eulogies used by men for other human beings whom they deem to be perfect and excellent. Those who use these hyperboles for other men certainly can not say, nor do they know, that people of such excellence will come in later times or not. So in human language these appellations are hyperboles, but when God uses for a person that such and such quality has been culminated in him, there is no reason to take it in the metaphorical sense in the strain of human expression. If Allah had pronounced someone as 'Last Poet', he would have been last poet in the literal sense of the word. If Allah appoints someone as His 'Last Prophet', there is absolutely no possibility of any other person attaining to that dignity after that. God is Omniscient. Man has but limited knowledge. This being so, how can one construe the human praise of a person as 'Last Poet' or the last of the jurists in the same sense as God's pronouncement of a person as the 'Last Prophet'?]

For this reason all linguists and commentators agree that Khatam-ul-Nabiyyin means 'The Last in the line of Prophets.' The word Khatam in its dictionary meaning and linguistic usage does not refer to the post office stamp which is affixed on the outgoing mail. Its literal meaning is the 'seal' which is put on the envelope to secure its contents.

The Observations of the Holy Prophet(PBUH) About the Finality of Prophethood

The meaning of the word Khatam that emerges out of the context of the Holy Qur'an and which is the same as given in all lexicons of the Arabic language is also affirmed by the observations of the Holy Prophet(peace and blessings be upon him). We quote some authentic traditions to illustrate the case in point:

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) observed: "The tribe of Israel was guided by prophets. When a prophet passed away, another prophet succeeded him. But no prophet will come after me; only caliphs will succeed me." (Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Manaqib).
The Prophet of God (PBUH) affirmed: "My position in relation to the prophets who came before me can be explained by the following example:

A man erected a building and adorned this edifice with great beauty, but he left an empty niche, in the corner where just one brick was missing. People looked around the building and marvelled at its beauty, but wondered why a brick was missing from that niche? I am like unto that one missing brick and I am the last in the line of the Prophets." (Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Manaqib).

(In other words, with the advent of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) the edifice of Prophethood has been completed and there is no empty niche in this edifice to provide room for another prophet.)

Four traditions relating to this subject are recorded, in Muslim, Kitab-ul-Fada'il, Babu Khatimin-Nabiyyin. The latter tradition contains the following additional sentence. "So I came and in me the line of Prophets has ended."

The very same tradition in similar words has been reported in Tirmidhi, Kitab-ul-Manaqib, Bab-Fadlin Nabi and Kitab-Adab, Bab-ul-Amthal. In Musnad Abu Dawud Tayalisi this tradition has been incorporated among other traditions reported by Jabir bin Abdullah; and its last sentence reads, "It is in me that line of Prophets came to its final end."

Musnad Ahmad contains traditions reported by Hadrat Ubayyi bin Ka'b, Hadrat Abu Sa'id Khudri and Hadrat Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with them) on the same subject with a slight variation of words here and there.

I have been endowed with the gift of pithy and perfect speech. I was granted victory owing to my awe. The spoils of war were made lawful unto me. The whole earth has been made the place of worship for me and it has become the means of purification for me also. In other words in my religion, offering of prayers is not confined to certain specified places of worship. Prayers can be offered at any place over the earth. And in case water is not available it is lawful for my people to perform ablutions with earth (Tayammum) and to cleanse themselves with the soil if water for bathing is scarce. I have been sent by Allah to carry His Divine message to the whole world. And the line of prophets has come to its final end in me. (Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah)

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) observed: "God has bestowed upon me six favors which the former Prophets did not enjoy:

The Prophet of Allah (PBUH) affirmed: "The chain of Messengers and Prophets has come to an end. There shall be no Messenger nor Prophet after me." (Tirmidhi, Kitab-ur-Rouya Babu Zahab-un- Nubuwwa, Musnad Ahmad, Marwiyat-Anas bin Malik)

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) observed: "I am Muhammad, I am Ahmad, I am the effacer and infidelity shall be erased through me; I am the assembler. People shall be assembled on Doomsday after my time. (In other words Doom is my only successor.) And I am the last in the sense that no prophet shall succeed me." (Bukhari and Muslim, Kitab-ul-Fada'il, Bab: Asmaun-Nabi; Tirmidhi, Kitab-ul-Adab, Bab: Asma-un-Nabi; Muatta', Kitab-u-Asma in-Nabi, Al- Mustadrak Hakim, Kitab-ut-Tarikh, Bab: Asma-un-Nabi.)

The Prophet of God (PBUH) observed: "God Almighty hath sent unto the world no apostle who did not warn his people about the appearance of Dajjal (Anti-Christ, but Dajjal did not appear in their time). I am the last in the line of Prophets and ye are the last community of believers. Without doubt, then, Dajjal shall appear from amongst ye". (Ibn Majah, Kitabul-fitan, bab: Dajjal).

'Abdur Rahman bin Jubair reported: "I heard Abdullah bin 'Amr ibn-'As narrating that one day the Holy Prophet (PBUH) came out of his house and joined our company. His manner gave us the impression as if he were leaving us.' He said, 'I am Muhammad, the unlettered prophet of Allah' and repeated this statement three

times. Then he affirmed: "There will be no prophet after me'." (Musnad Ahmad, Marwiyat'Abdullah bin Amr ibn'-As.)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Allah will send no Apostle after me, but only Mubashshirat. It was said: what is meant by al-Mubashshirat. He said : Good vision or pious vision". (Musnad Ahmad, Marwiyat Abu Tufail, Nasa'i, Abu Dawud) (In other words there is no possibility of Divine revelation in future. At the most if some one receives an inspiration from Allah he will receive it in the form of "pious dream."

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said: "If an Apostle were to succeed me, it would have been 'Umar bin Khattab." (Tirmidhi, Kitab-ul- Manaqib)

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) told Hadrat 'Ali, "You are related to me as Aaron was related to Moses(peace be upon him). But no Apostle will come after me." (Bukhari and Muslim, Kitab Fada'il as-Sahaba)

This tradition is recorded in Bukhari and Muslim in the account of the Battle of Tabuk also. Musnad records two traditions narrated by Hadrat Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him) on this subject. The last sentence in one of these traditions runs as follows : "Behold there is no prophethood after me."

Detailed accounts of the traditions incorporated in Abu Dawud Tayalisi, Imam Ahmad and Muhammad bin Ishaque report that on the eve of his departure for the battle of Tabuk, the holy Prophet (PBUH) had resolved to leave Hadrat 'Ali behind him in order to look after the defense and supervise the affairs of Medina. The hypocrites thereupon began to spread insinuations and rumours about Hadrat 'Ali. Hadrat 'Ali went to the Prophet and submitted : 'O Prophet of Allah, are you leaving me behind among women and children?' On this occasion in order to set his mind at peace the Holy Prophet (PBUH) observed: "You are related to me as was Aaron with Moses." In other words "as Hadrat Moses on the Mount Tur had left Hadrat Aaron behind to look after the tribe of Israel, so I (Muhammad) leave you behind to look after the defense of Medina." At the same time apprehending that this comparative allusion to Hadrat Aaron might later on give rise to heresies, the holy Prophet (PBUH) immediately made it clear that "There will be no Prophet after me."

Thauban reports: "The Holy Prophet (PBUH) observed: And there will arise Thirty imposters in my Ummah and each one of them will pronounce to the world that he is a prophet, but I am the last in the line of the Prophets of God and no Apostle will come after me." (Abu Dawud, Kitab-ul-Fitan)

Abu Dawud in 'Kitab-ul-Malahim' has recorded another tradition reported by Abu Huraira in the same subject. Tirmidhi has also recorded these two traditions as reported by Hadrat Tauban and Hadrat Abu Huraira. The text of the second tradition runs thus: "It will come to this that thirty imposters will arise and each one of them will put forth his claim to be the Apostle of God."

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) observed: "Among the tribe of Israel who went before you there indeed were such people who held communion with God, even though they were not his Prophets. If ever there arose a person from among my people who would hold communion with God, it would be none else but 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with him)." (Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Manaqib)

A version of this same tradition in `Muslim' contains Muhaddithuna instead of Yukallimuna. But then Mukalima and Muhaddith bear identical meaning i.e., a man enjoys the privilege of holding direct communion with God or a person who is addressed by the Almighty from the unseen. Thus we conclude that if there had been any person among the followers of Muhammad who could hold communion with God without being raised to the dignity of prophethood, it would have been `Umar.

The Prophet of God (PBUH) said: "No Prophet will come after me and there will, therefore, be no other community of followers of any new prophet."

(Baihaqi, Kitab-ul Rouya; Tabarani)

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) observed: "I am the last in line of the prophets of God and my Masjid is the last Masjid (referring the holy Masjid of the Prophet)."

[Referring to this tradition disbelievers in the Finality of Prophethood argue that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) called his mosque (Masjid) 'the last mosque' despite the fact that it is not the last mosque, as countless other mosques have been built after it all over the world. Similarly when the Holy Prophet (PBUH) observed: 'I am the last Prophet,' it did not mean that the line of prophets had ended, but that Muhammad (PBUH) was the last as regards his excellence amongst the Prophets of God and Mosque was the last one in the same sense. Such foolish reasoning is an irrefutable proof of the fact that these people have lost the faculty of perceiving the true meaning of the words of God and those of His Prophet (PBUH). Even a cursory glance through the whole chain of traditions in the context of which this particular tradition has been recorded makes true import of the words of the Holy prophet clear to any man. In this context the various traditions which Imam Muslim has recorded on the authority of Hadrat Abu Huraira, Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and the mother of the Faithful Hadrat Maimuna narrate that there are only three mosques in the world to which the greatest sanctity is attached, and these are sacred above all other mosques. Worship in these mosques is rewarded with thousandfold blessings in comparisons to offering prayers in other mosques. It is because of this reason that it has been declared lawful to undertake a journey to these mosques to offer prayers therein. No other mosque, save these three, can claim such sanctity that a person should make a journey to offer worship there leaving all other mosques. Among the three mosques which bear the greatest sanctity in Islam, the first one is 'Masjid Al-Haram' which was built by Hadrat Abraham (peace be upon him); the second one is the 'Masjid al-Aqsa' which was erected by Hadrat Sulaiman (peace be upon him); and the third mosque is 'Masjid-i-Nabawi' in the Holy city of Medina which was founded by the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The observation of the Holy Prophet in regard to 'the last mosque' should be viewed in this context. The words of the Prophet (PBUH) meant that no Prophet would come after him, hence there would be no fourth mosque after the last Masjid-i-Nabawi (a mosque of the last Prophet). It follows, therefore, that no other mosque should bear such sanctity, that worship in it should be rewarded with more blessings in comparison with worship in other mosques and further there shall be no fourth mosque towards which it is lawful or even desirable for people to make a journey in order to offer prayers.] (Muslim, Kitab-ul-Hajj; Bab: Fadl-us-Salat bi Masjidi Mecca wal Medina)

A large number of such traditions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) have been reported by the companions and a great many compilers have recorded them from authoritative sources. A study of these traditions shows that the Holy Prophet on several occasions, and in various ways and in different words made it explicitly clear that he was the last Prophet of God; That no prophet would follow him and that the line of prophets had ended in him. Furthermore, those would claim to be Prophets and Messengers of God after his time would be imposters and liars. [In contrast to the observations of the Holy Prophet the deniers of the Finality of Prophethood quote the following words scribed to Hadrat 'Aisha: "Say, indeed, that the Holy Prophet is the Final Apostle of God; but say not that no prophet will come after him." In the first place it is an audacity to quote the words of Hadrat 'Aisha for contradicting the explicit command of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Moreover the very words attributed to Hadrat 'Aisha are not authentic. No authoritative work on Hadith contains this observation of Hadrat 'Aisha nor any notable compiler of traditions has recorded or referred to it. This tradition is derived from a commentary entitled Durr-i- Manthur and a compilation of Hadith Known as Takmilah Majma-ul- Bihar, but its source and credentials are unknown. It is the height of audacity to put forward a statement of a lady companion in order to contradict the explicit observations of the Holy Prophet which the eminent traditionists have transmitted on the most authentic chains of transmission.]

There can be no authentic, creditable and conclusive interpretation of the words of the Holy Qur'an, Khatam-un- Nabiyyin, than that given by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) for the credentials of the Holy prophet (PBUH) need no proof and the authority of his words is unassailable. His words are authentic and a proof in itself. When the Prophet is explaining a Nass of the Holy Quran, his explanation is the most authentic and a proof positive.

The question is who else besides the Holy Prophet (PBUH), to whom the Qur'an was revealed, is better qualified to comprehend its meaning and to explain its contents to us? And he who advances an alternative explanation, shall we regard his claims as worthy of our consideration let alone our acquiescence?

The Consensus of the Companions

After the Holy Qur'an and sunnah, the consensus of the companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) holds the third position. All authentic historical traditions reveal that the companions of the prophet (PBUH) had unanimously waged a war on the claimants to the prophethood and their adherents after the demise of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

In this connection the case of Musailama is particularly significant. This man did not deny that Muhammad (PBUH) was the Prophet of God; he claimed that God had appointed him as a co-prophet with Muhammad to share his task. The letter which had addressed to the Holy Prophet just before the Musailama's death reads:

"From Musailma the prophet of God to Muhammad the Prophet of God(PBUH). I wish to inform you that I have been appointed as your partner to share in the burden of prophethood." The historian Tabari has recorded a tradition which says that the `call to prayers'(Adhan) which Musailama had devised for his followers included the words, "I testify that Muhammad is the Prophet of God."

Despite Musailama's clear affirmation of the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), he was declared an apostate and ostracised from the society of Islam. Not only this but a war was waged on Musailama. History also bears witness to the fact that the tribe of Hunaifa (Banu Hunaif) had accepted Musailama's claim to prophethood in good faith. They had been genuinely led to believe that Muhammad (PBUH) had of his own accord declared Musailama as his partner in prophethood. A man who had learnt Qur'an in the Holy City of Medina went to the tribe of Banu Hunaifa and falsely represented the verses of the Qur'an as having been revealed to Musailama.

Though Banu Hunaifa had been deliberately misinformed, nevertheless the companions of the Holy Prophet did not recognize them as Muslims and sent an army against them. There is no scope here for taking the view that the companions had fought against them as rebels and not as apostates. Islamic Law lays down that in the event of a war against the rebel Muslims, the prisoners taken in battle shall not be taken into slavery. The law further requires that even the rebellious Dhimmis, when taken as prisoners in battle, shall not go into slavery. But when military action was taken against Musailama and his followers, Hadrat Abu Bakr declared that the women and children of the enemy would be taken as slaves; and when they were taken prisoner in battle, they were enslaved. From among these a girl was given as a slave to Hadrat `Ali. She bore him a son named Muhammad bin Hanfiya, who is a renowned figure in the history of Islam. (Al-Badaya wan-Nihaya, Vol. VI, pp. 316 & 325)

This event is a clear proof of the fact that when companions fought against Musailama, they did not charge him with rebellion. The charge against him was that he had preferred a claim to prophethood after the line of Prophets had ended in Muhammad (PBUH) and he had thus misled other people to affirm faith in his claim of prophethood. The action against Musailama was taken immediately after the death of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) under the leadership of Hadrat Abu Bakr Siddique (may God be pleased with him), and it had the unanimous support of the entire body of the companions. There can be found no better and explicit example of the consensus of the companions than this.

The Consensus of all the Ulema of the Ummah

Next in line of authority after the consensus of the Companions stands the consensus, in matters of religion, of those ulema of the Muslims who came after the time of Companions (may God be pleased with them). A glance through the history of Islam from the first century up to the modern times reveals to us the fact that the ulema of all periods in every Islamic country of the world are unanimous in their conviction that no new prophet can be raised after Muhammad (PBUH). They all agree in the belief that anyone who lays a claim to Prophethood after Muhammad (PBUH) and anyone who puts faith in such a claim is an apostate and an outcast from the community of Islam.

The following facts are appended as an illustration of this:

A man in the time of Imam Abu Hanifa (80 A.H.-150 A.H.) laid claim to Prophethood and said "Let me show you the proofs of my prophethood." The great Imam thereupon warned the people: "Anyone who asks of this man the credentials of prophethood, shall become an apostate, for the Prophet of God (PBUH) has explicitly declared: "No prophet will come after me." (Manaqib al-Imam-i-Azam Abi Hanifa, Ibn Ahmad al-Makki, Vol. I, p.161, published in Hyderabad, India, 1321 A.H.)

`Allama Ibn Jarir Tabari (224 A.H.-310 A.H.) in his renowned commentary of the holy Qur'an gives the following interpretation of the verse, 'walakin Rasul Allahi wa Khatam-ul Nabiyyin': "He has closed and sealed the prophethood and the door (of prophethood) shall not open for anyone till the end of the world." (Vide Commentary of Ibn-i-Jarir, Vol. 22, p.12)

In his book `Aqida-i-Salfia, while explaining the beliefs of the pious forbearers and particularly those of Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad, Imam Tahavi (239 A.H.-321 A.H.) writes that Muhammad (PBUH) is a highly venerable servant of God. He is the chosen Prophet and the favorite Messenger of Allah. He is the last of the Prophets, Leader of the pious, chief of the Messengers of Allah and the beloved one of the Lord. After him every claim to Prophethood is an error manifest and worship of one's evil-self." (Sharah al-Tahawiya Fil-'Aqidat-ul-Salfia, Dar-ul-Ma'arif, Egypt, pp. 15, 87, 96, 97, 100, 102)

`Allama Ibn Hazm Andulasi (384 A.H.-456 A.H.) writes: "It is certain that the chain of Divine revelations has come to an end after the death of the Holy Prophet(PBUH). The proof of this lies in the fact that none but a prophet can be the recipient of Divine revelations and God has affirmed that Muhammad has no sons among ye men and he is the Messenger of God and that He has sealed the office of Prophethood." (Al-Mohallah, Vol. 1, p.26)

Imam Ghazali (450 A.H.-505 A.H.) says ` If the right of denying the authority of consensus be admitted, it will give rise to many absurdities. For example, if someone says that it is possible for a person to attain the office of Prophethood after our Apostle Muhammad(PBUH), we shall not hesitate to pronounce him as an infidel, but in the course of a controversy the man who wishes to prove that any reluctance in pronouncing such a person as an apostate is a sin shall have to seek the aid of consensus in support of his arguments, because reason is no arbiter against the possibility of the existence of a `new prophet.' As regards the followers of the `new prophets' they will not be utterly incapable of making various interpretations of La Nabiya Ba`di, "There will be no Prophet after me" and Khatam-ul-Nabiyyin, `Last of the Prophets.' A follower of the `new prophets' might say that Khatam-ul-Naibiyyin, `Last of the Prophets' bears the meaning

"last of the prominent Messengers." If you argue that "prophets" is a common word, he would very easily give this term a particular significance with regard to his own `prophethood.' In respect of `No Prophet will come after him', such a man would contend that this expression does not say that `No Messengers will follow him.' There is a difference between a Prophet and a Messenger. The status of a Prophet is higher than that of the Messenger. The fact is that such absurdities can be indulged in ad infinitum. It is not difficult, in our view, to make different interpretations of a word. Besides, there is no ample scope for people to commit blunders ever and beyond these points in the exposition of these clear words. We cannot even say that those who make such interpretations are guilty of the denial of clear injunctions. But to refute those who have but their faith in the false expositions we shall say that the entire Ummah by a consensus of opinion recognizes that the words `No Prophet shall come after him' and the context of the traditions suggests that the Holy Prophet meant that `No Prophet, nor Messenger shall follow him.' Furthermore, the Ummah is agreed on the point that above words of the Holy Prophet leave no scope for a different interpretation than given to it by the consensus of the Ummah and he who would not join the consensus is no more than a dissident. (Al-Iqtisad Fil Aiteqad, p.114, Egypt)

[We have quoted here the original Arabic text (in the Urdu Edition) of the opinion of Imam Ghazali because the deniers of the idea of the Finality of Prophethood have vehemently challenged the authenticity of this reference.]

Mohy-us-Sunnah Baghawi (died 510 A.H.) writes in his commentary Ma` lam-al-Tanzil: "God brought the line of Prophets to an end with him. Hence he is the final Prophet.....Ibn `Abbas affirms that God(in this verse) has given His verdict that no Prophet will come after the Prophet Muhammad(PBUH)." (Vol. 3, p. 158) `Allama Zamakhshri (467 A.H.-538 A.H) writes in his commentary entitled Kashshaaf, "If you ask how Muhammad can be the last of the Prophets when Hadrat `Isa (Jesus Christ) will appear towards the end of the world? I shall reply that the finality of Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH) means that no one will be endowed with prophethood after him. Hadrat 'Isa is among those upon whom prophethood was endowed before Muhammad(PBUH). Moreover, Hadrat 'Isa will appear as a follower of Muhammad and he will offer prayers with his face towards the Qiblah of Islam, as a member of the community of the Muslims." (Vol. 2, p. 215)

Qazi 'Iyad (died 544 A.H.) writes: " He who lays a claim to prophethood, affirms that a man can attain the office of prophethood or can acquire the dignity of a prophet through purification of soul, as is alleged by some philosophers and sufis; similarly a person who does not claim to be a prophet, but declares that he is the recipient of Divine revelation, all such persons are apostates and deniers of the prophethood of Muhammad(PBUH), for Muhammad (PBUH) has conveyed the message of God to us that he is the final Prophet and no Prophet will come after him. He had also conveyed to us the Divine message that he has finally sealed the office of Prophethood and that he has been sent as a Prophet and a Messenger to the whole of mankind. It is the consensus of the entire Ummah that these words of the Holy Prophet are clear enough and eloquently speak of the fact that they can admit of no other interpretation or amendment in their meaning. Hence there is no doubt that all these sects are outside the pale of Islam not only from the view-point of the consensus of the Ummah but also on the ground of these words having been transmitted with utmost authenticity." (Shifa, Vol. 2, pp. 270- 271) `Allama Shahrastani (died A.H. 548), in his renowned book, Almilal wan Nahal, writes: "And similarly who says that a prophet shall come after Muhammad

(PBUH), there are no two opinions that such a man is an infidel." (Vol. 3, p. 249) Imam Razi (543 A.H.-606 A.H.), in his work Tafsir Kabir while explaining the meaning of the verse Khatam-un-Nabiyyin states: "In this context the term Khatam-un Nabiyyin has been used in the sense that a Prophet whose ministry is not final may leave some injunctions or commandments incomplete or unexplained thus providing scope for a succeeding prophet to complete the task. But the Prophet who will have no successor is more considerate and provides clear guidelines for his followers, for he is like a father who knows that after him there will be no guardian or patron to look after his son."(Vol. 6, p. 581)

Allama Baidawi(died A.H. 685), in his commentary, Anwar-ul-Tanzil, writes: "In other words he, Muhammed (PBUH), is the last of all Prophets. He is the one in whom the line of Prophets ends or the one whose advent has sealed the office of Prophethood. The appearance of Hadrat 'Isa (peace be upon him) after Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) is not a contradiction of the finality of Muhammed's Prophethood, because Hadrat Isa will appear as a follower of the Shariah of Muhammed." (Vol. 4, p. 164)

'Allama Hafiz-ud-Din Al-Nasafi (died A.H.710), in his commentary, Madark-ut-Tanzil, writes: "And he Muhammad(PBUH) is the one who has brought the line of prophets to an end...in other words he is the last of all prophets. God shall not appoint another prophet after him. In respect of Hadrat `Isa(peace be upon him) it may be stated that he is among those who were appointed Prophets before the time of Muhammad(PBUH). And when Hadrat `Isa appears again, he will be a follower of the Shar'iah of Muhammad, and one among faithful." (p. 471)

`Allama `Alau-din Baghdadi (died A.H. 725) in his commentary, Khazin, writes: "Wa Khatam-un-Nabiyyin,' in other words, God has ended prophethood in him, Muhammad(PBUH). Henceforth there is no prophethood after him, nor is there any partner with him in prophethood...Wa Kan Allahu Bikulle Shaiin `Alima, God is aware that no prophet will come after him." (pp. 471-472)

Allama Ibn Kathir (died A.H. 774) writes in his well- known commentary, "Hence this verse is a clear proof of the fact that no prophet will come after Muhammad(PBUH) and when it is said that no prophet will come after him it is a foregone conclusion that no messenger will succeed him either, for the office of a messenger holds prominence over the office of a prophet. Every messenger is a prophet, but all prophets are not messengers. Any one who lays a claim to prophethood after Muhammad(PBUH) is a liar, a disruptionist, an imposter, depraved and a seducer despite his wonderous jugglery and magical feats. Any one who would make this claim in future till the end of the world belongs to this class. (Vol. 3, pp. 493-494)

Allama Jalal-Ud-Din Suyuti (died A.H. 911) writes in his commentary entitled Jalalain, "God is aware of the fact that no prophet will succeed Muhammad (PBUH) and when Isa (PBUH) will reappear in the world he will act according to the Shariah of Muhammad (PBUH)." (p. 768)

Allama Ibn Nujaim (died A.H. 970) in his renowned work of the canons of Fiqh entitled, 'Al-Ashbah wan-Nazair', Kitab- us-Siyyar: Bab: al-Raddah, writes: "A person who does not regard Muhammad (PBUH) as the last Prophet of God is not a Muslim, for the finality of Muhammad's prophethood is one of those fundamental articles of faith which a Muslim must understand and believe." (p. 179)

Mulla Ali Qari (died A.H. 1016) in his commentary Fiqh Akbar, writes: "To lay a claim to Prophethood after the ministry of our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is a sheer infidelity by the consensus of Ummah." (p. 202)

Shaikh Isma'il Haqqi (died 1137 A.H.) while elucidating this verse in his commentary Ruh-ul-Bayan, writes: "Asim reads the word Khatam with a vowel stress on the letter ta which means the instrument of stamping and sealing, just

as 'Printer' is the machine which imprints. The connotation of the word is that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was the last of all prophets and God has sealed the office of prophethood through his agency. In Persian the same meaning will be expressed by the term 'Mohar Paighambran'. The seal of Prophets i.e., his (Muhammad's) advent sealed the door of prophethood and the line of prophets ended in him. Other reciters pronounce the word Khatim with the vowel point under the letter ta which means to say that Muhammad (PBUH) was the one who sealed the doors of prophethood. In Persian the same meaning will be expressed by the term 'Mohar Konindai Paighambran,' 'Sealer of the prophets,' so both ways the word Khatam bears one and the same meaning.....Henceforth the Ulema of the Ummah of Muhammad(PBUH) will inherit only spiritual eminence from him. The inheritance of Prophethood is extinct, for Muhammad(PBUH) has sealed the office of Prophethood for all time to come. The appearance of Hadrat Isa (PBUH) after Muhammad(PBUH) is not a contradiction of the finality of Muhammad's prophethood. The term Khatam-un-Nabiyyin makes it clear that no one will be appointed a prophet after Muhammad(PBUH).

Hadrat Isa (PBUH) was appointed Prophet before Muhammad(PBUH) and Isa(PBUH) will appear as a follower of the Shari'ah of Muhammad(PBUH). He (Isa)(PBUH) will offer prayers with his face turned towards the Qiblah designated by Muhammad(PBUH). Hadrat Isa (PBUH) will be one among the faithful of Islam. He will neither receive any Divine revelation nor will issue new injunctions; he will act as a follower of Muhammad(PBUH). `Ahl-Sunnat wal Jam'at (the Sunni sect) believe that no prophet will come after our holy Prophet Muhammad(PBUH) because God has affirmed wa-lakin Rasul Allehe wa Khatam-un- Nabiyyin, and the Prophet has said: La Nabiya Ba` di (There will be no Prophet after me.) Henceforth anyone who says that a prophet will succeed Muhammad(PBUH) will become an apostate, because he has denied a basic article of faith. Similarly anyone who casts doubt about the finality of Muhammad's prophethood, will also be declared an infidel, because the foregoing discussion has distinguished right from wrong. And any claim to prophethood after Muhammad(PBUH) is absolutely false."

In Fatawa-i-Alamgiri which was compiled by the eminent scholars of the Indian sub-continent at the command of Aurangzeb Alamgir, in the 12th century Hijri, it is recorded: "A man who does not regard Muhammed (PBUH) as the final Prophet of God, is not a Muslim, and if such a man claims to be a messenger or prophet of God, he shall be proclaimed an apostate." (Vol. 2, p. 263)

Allama Shoukani (died 1255 A.H.) in his commentary, Fath-ul-Qadeer, writes: "A majority of people have read the word Khatam with the vowel point under the letter ta but 'Asim reads the same word with vowel stress on ta. The first reading means that Muhammed (PBUH) ended the line of Prophets (peace of Allah be upon them) i.e., in other words the Holy Prophet came last of all the Prophets. The second reading means that the Holy Prophet was the seal by which the office of Prophethood was finally closed; and that his advent lent grace to the group of Allah's Prophets.

Allama Alusi (died 1270 A.H.) in his commentary, Ruh-ul-Ma'ani, writes: "The word 'Prophet' is common, but the word 'Messenger' has a particular significance. Hence when the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is called the 'Seal of Prophets,' it necessarily follows that he is also the 'Seal of Messengers.' The implication of the Holy Prophet's position as 'the Last of all Prophets and Messengers of God' is that by his(PBUH) elevation to the dignity of Prophethood in this world, the same dignity has henceforth been abolished and no man can attain that dignity now." (Vol. 22, p. 32)

"Anyone who claims to be the recipient of Divine revelations as a prophet after the advent of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), shall be declared an infidel. There is no difference of opinion among Muslims on this point." (ibid., vol.22, p.38) "The affirmation in the Book of God of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as 'the Last of the Prophets' is unequivocal. The Sunnah has clearly explained this and the Ummah has reached a consensus on it. Hence anyone who lays a contradictory claim against this position shall be declared an apostate (ibid., vol.22, p. 39)

These are the expositions of the leading savants, jurists, scholars of Hadith and commentators of every realm of Islam, from the sub-continent of India to Morocco and Spain (Andulus) and from Turkey to Yemen. We have indicated their years of birth and death in each case so that the reader may realise at first glance that this list includes eminent authorities of every century of the Islamic History falling between the first and thirteenth century. We might even have added expositions by the learned doctors of Islam belonging to the fourteenth century; but we omitted the Ulema of the 14th century purposely because someone might state that these scholars had explained the meanings of Khatam-i-Nabuwat as 'the Seal of all Prophets' to refute the claim of the 'new prophets' of the modern age.

It cannot, however, be said that the ulema of the past centuries entertained feelings of animosity against a later day personality claiming to be a prophet. These writings also make it clear beyond doubt that from the first century up to the present-day the entire Muslim world has unanimously taken the expression Khatam-un-Nabiyyin to mean 'the Last of all Prophets.' Muslims of all periods have been unanimous in the belief that the office of prophethood has been sealed after the advent of the holy Prophet(PBUH). There has never been any difference of opinion among muslims that any person who prefers a claim to prophethood and those who believe in such a claim to prophethood are outside the pale of Islam. It is now up to all reasonable persons to judge that in the face of all this massive evidence- the plain dictionary meaning of the phrase 'Khatam-un-Nabiyyin' the interpretation of the Quranic verse in its true perspective, the exposition of the Holy Prophet himself and the consensus on the finality of prophethood of Muhammad(PBUH) of the entire body of muslims all over the world from the time of the companions of the Holy prophet to the present day followers of Islam-what scope is left for an alternative interpretation and what justification can they give for opening the door of prophethood for a new claimant. Furthermore, how can those people be recognized as Muslims who have not only expressed their opinion in favour of opening the door to prophethood, but they have, in fact, catapulted a man into the mansion of the Prophets of God and have become the followers of this trespasser? In this connection three more points are noteworthy.

Is GOD the Enemy of our Faith?

In the first place, Prophethood is a delicate matter. According to the Holy Qur'an the idea of Prophethood is such a fundamental article of faith that one who believes in this idea is a believer and he who disbelieves is an infidel. If a man does not put his faith in a prophet, he is an apostate; similarly if he believes in the claim of an imposter to be a prophet, he becomes an infidel. In such a delicate and important matter Omniscient God certainly cannot be expected to have made a slip. If there were to be a Prophet after the time of Muhammad (PBUH), God would have made this possibility clear in the Holy Qur'an or He would have commanded His Apostle Muhammad to make a clear declaration of it. The Apostle of God would never have

passed away without having forewarned his people that other Apostles would succeed him and that his followers must put their faith in the succeeding prophets.

Had God and His Messenger (PBUH) any intention of undermining our faith by hiding from us the possibility of opening the door of Prophethood after the advent of Muhammad (PBUH) and the coming of a new prophet, thus leaving us in a quandary that if we did not believe in the ministry of a new prophet we would apostate from Islam? Further than this, not only were we kept in the dark by God and His Messenger (PBUH) about all this, but, on the contrary, they made observations and affirmations which the Ummah for the last thirteen [now fourteen] hundred years has taken to mean and even today holds the view that no prophet will come after Muhammad (PBUH). Could God and His Messenger really temper with our faith? Supposing for a moment that admittance to the office of Prophethood is open and a new Prophet does appear, we shall refuse him without fear. For this refutation, God might call us to account on the Day of Judgement; but we shall place the whole record of His own affirmations and injunctions before Him and this evidence will prove that (God-forbid) Allah's Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger had led us to disbelieve the new prophet and had thus condemned us to be infidels. We have no fear that after considering this record God Almighty will consider it fit to punish us for blasphemy against the new Prophet. But if the door of Prophethood is in fact closed and no Prophet will arise after Muhammad (PBUH), and despite this fact a person puts his faith in the claim of a new prophet, that person should think well indeed as to what record can be presented before God in his defense to avoid the punishment for blasphemy and to achieve salvation? Such a man should look through the material of his defense before he is produced in the August Court of the Almighty. He should compare this material with the record that we have presented and then judge for himself if the material upon which he is relying for his defense is worth the trust of a reasonable man and can he court the risk of facing the charge of blasphemy and be punished for it with the kind of defense that he has at his disposal?

Do We Need a Prophet Now?

The second point which requires consideration is that Prophethood is not a quality to be acquired by any person who proves himself worthy of it by devoting himself to prayers and righteous deeds. Nor is it anything like a reward given in recognition of good service. Prophethood is an office and Allah appoints some person to this office to fulfill a special need. When such a need arises, God appoints a Prophet to fulfill it. Allah does not send prophets in rapid succession when there is no need or when the need has been fulfilled. When we refer to the Quran in order to find out conditions when the Prophets were appointed by Allah, we come to know that there are only four conditions under which the Prophets have been sent unto the world.

Firstly there was need for a prophet to be sent unto a certain nation to which no prophet had been sent before and the message brought by the Prophet of another nation could not have reached these people.

Secondly, there was need for appointing a prophet because the message of an earlier Prophet had been forgotten by the people, or the teachings of the former prophets had been adulterated and hence it had become impossible to follow the message brought by that Prophet.

Thirdly, the people had not received complete mandate of Allah through a former prophet. Hence succeeding prophets were sent to fulfill the task of completing the religion of Allah.

Fourthly, there was need for a second prophet to share the responsibility of office with the first prophet.

It is obvious that none of the above needs remains to be fulfilled after the advent of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The Holy Quran says that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has been sent as a bearer of instructions for the whole mankind. The cultural history of the world bears testimony to the fact that since the advent of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) up to the present time such conditions have always prevailed in the world which were conducive to transmitting his message to all nations at all times. It follows, therefore, that different nations no longer need different prophets after the time of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The Holy Quran and the records of Hadith and the biographical details of the life of Muhammad (PBUH) stand witness to the fact that the Divine message brought into this world by the Holy Prophet is extant in its original and pure form. The Prophet's message has suffered no process of distortion or falsification. Not a single word has been added to or expunged from the Holy Book which the Prophet (PBUH) brought unto the world from Almighty Allah, nor can anyone make additions to or delete anything from it till the Day of Resurrection.

The message which the Holy Prophet (PBUH) conveyed by word and action has been transmitted to us in such comprehensive, pure and original form that we feel as if we were living in the environment and period of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

In this way the second condition under which prophets are sent unto the world has also been fulfilled.

Thirdly the Holy Qur'an clearly affirms that God has finally completed His Divine Mission through the agency of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Hence there is no room for a new prophet to carry the divine mission to completion.

As regards the fourth condition, if a partner were really needed he would have been appointed in the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to share the burden of his ministry. Since no co- prophet was appointed, this condition also stands fulfilled.

We should, therefore, look around for a fifth condition under which a new prophet might be needed after Muhammad (PBUH). If a man argues that people have fallen into depravity, hence there is need for a new prophet to reform the degenerate people, we shall ask him: when did a prophet ever come to introduce reforms only that we should need one now to carry out the work of reformation? A prophet is appointed so that he may be the recipient of Divine revelation and Divine revelations are made with express purpose of transmitting a new message or to correct the wrongs that have crept into an earlier religion.

When the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) have been preserved in their original and comprehensive form and when the Divine mission has been completed by Muhammad (PBUH), all possible need for the transmission of Divine revelations have now been fulfilled and there is further need only of reformers to cleanse the evils of mankind, but there is no room for the prophets.

A New Prophethood is a Curse Rather than a Blessing for the Ummah

The third point which needs consideration is that whenever a prophet is sent unto a certain people the question of faith and infidelity invariably arises among these people. The faithful form one Ummah and the disbelievers automatically form different community. The difference that keeps these two communities apart is not peripheral or superficial but a basic and fundamental difference of belief or disbelief in a prophet; and those two communities can never merge with each other unless people of one side decide to surrender their faith.

In addition, these two Ummahs obtain guidance and derive their law from two different sources. One sect follows the law emanating from the Divine message and Sunnah of the Prophet they believe in; the other community is fundamentally opposed to the idea of this Prophet being the law-giver. On this basis, it becomes an impossibility for these two sections to join in a unified and cohesive society. It will be perfectly clear to a man who keeps the above facts in view that the Finality of Prophethood is a great blessing from Allah for the people of Islam. It is due to this that the Ummah has been able to form a permanent universal brotherhood.

The belief in the finality of Prophethood has secured Muslim society from the danger of any fundamental dissension which might result in permanent division in its ranks. Now every man who accepts Muhammad (PBUH) as a divinely appointed Guide and Leader and also is not inclined to seek instruction from any other source except the Divine message of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is a member of the brotherhood of Islam and on this basis, can join this brotherhood at any time.

If the office of Prophethood had not been sealed once and for all after Muhammad (PBUH), the people of Islam could never have forged a cohesive society; for every new prophet would have shattered the unity of the Ummah.

A reasonable man after a little deliberation will come to the conclusion that when a prophet has been sent to the whole mankind (not just to a certain group or nation), and when the Divine message has been completely transmitted through this Prophet and further when the teachings of the Prophet have been fully preserved, the office of prophethood should be sealed after him in order that the whole world may unite in allegiance to this Prophet and form one brotherhood of the faithful. Only in this way can universal brotherhood of Islam be secured against needless dissensions which might have repeatedly erupted on the appearance of every successive prophet.

A prophet may be a shadow or a buruzi prophet; or "a prophet who is law-giver and the bearer of a Divine book." The appearance of anyone of the above God-appointed prophets will invariably have the social consequence of his followers forming one Ummah and his detractors being condemned as infidels and hence outside the pale of Islam. This division of mankind is unavoidable when the need for a prophet is inevitable. But in the absence of such a need, it is utterly impossible to expect that Allah in His Wisdom and Beneficence will needlessly cause strife among His creatures on the question of faith and disbelief, thus for ever preventing His creatures to form one Ummah. Hence what is confirmed by the Qur'an and what is clearly affirmed to be true by the Sunnah and the consensus of the Ummah, is also corroborated by reason. Reason demands that the office of prophethood should remain sealed hereafter for all time to come.

The Reality of 'Masih' i.e. "The Incarnation of Jesus Christ"

The propagandists of the new prophethood usually tell the Muslim laity that the traditions have foretold the arrival of a 'Christ incarnate'. They argue that Christ was a prophet, hence his re-emergence is not contrary to the concept of the finality of prophethood. The concept of the finality of prophethood is valid, but, nevertheless the idea of the arrival of 'Christ incarnate' is also tenable.

Further on, they explain that 'Christ incarnate' does not refer to the Christ, son of Mary(PBUH). Christ(PBUH) is dead. The person whose arrival has been foretold in the tradition is a 'man like Christ', 'An incarnation of Jesus. And he is such and such a person who has already arrived. To follow him is not contrariwise to belief in the Finality of prophethood.'

To expose the fallacy of this case we record here authentic traditions on this subject with full references to the authoritative works on Hadith. After going through this collection of Ahadith, the reader can judge for himself as to how the observations of the Holy Prophet(PBUH) are being presented today in a form which bears no relation to their original shape and content.

Traditions Relating to the Descent of Christ, Son of Mary

Hadrat Abu Huraira reports that the Prophet (PBUH) of God said: "I swear by Him Who hath power over my life, the son of Mary shall descend among ye as a Just ruler. He will break the cross and kill the swine; [The implication of "breaking the Cross" and "killing of the swine" is that Christianity will become defunct as a religion. The whole edifice of the Christian religion is based on the belief that God crucified His only son (i.e. Hadrat Isa (PBUH) on the Cross and caused him to suffer this 'accursed' death so that he might thus expiate for the sins of man. Among the followers of God's Prophets, the Christians are unique in having rejected the entire Shariah of God and retaining this belief only.

The swine has been declared unlawful by all the Prophets, but the Christians have gone as far as to make it lawful. Hence when Jesus(PBUH) will proclaim on his appearance, "I am not the son of God; I did not die on the Cross, nor did I expiate for the sins of anyone," the whole basis of Christian belief will be demolished. Similarly, the second distinctive characteristic of Christianity will vanish when Jesus(PBUH) will say: "I never declared the swine lawful for my followers nor did I proclaim them free from the restraints of Divine Law." and he will put an end to war." (Bukhari, Kitab Ahadith al-Anbiya; Bab: Nuzul 'Isa Ibn Maryam; Muslim, Bab: Bayan Nuzul 'Isa; Tirmidhi, Abwab-al-Fitan; Bab Fi Nuzul 'Isa; Musnad Ahmad, Marwiat Abu Huraira)

In another tradition the word jizya has been substituted for harb, "war", i.e., he will abolish the jizya on non-believers. [In other words this expression means that differences between the followers of various religions will vanish and the whole mankind will join the brotherhood of Islam. Consequently, there shall no longer be any war or cause for imposing religious tax on anyone. This interpretation is supported by Tradition No. 5 and 15 quoted hereafter.]

Another tradition reported by Hadrat Abu Huraira says, "The Doomsday shall not be established before the descent of Jesus, son of Mary," and these words are followed by the text as given in the tradition above. (Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Muzalim: Bab: Kasr-ul- Salib Ibn Majah, Kitab-ul-Fitan al-Dajjal.)

Hadrat Abu Huraira reports that the Apostle (PBUH) of Allah observed: "What will you be like when the son of Mary shall descend among ye and a person among ye will discharge the office of Imam (leader in Prayers)."[The implication is that Jesus(PBUH) will not act as the leader of Prayers. He will offer Prayers behind the already existing Imam of Muslims.] (Bukhari, Kitab Ahadith Anbiya, Bab: Nuzul Isa; Muslim, Nuzul Isa; Musnad Ahmad, Marwiat Abu Huraira)

Hadrat Abu Huraira reports the Apostle (PBUH) of Allah having said: "Christ, son of

Mary, will then kill the swine and remove the Cross. A congregation for prayer will be held for him. He will distribute such an enormous quantity of goods that none will be left in need of anything. He will abolish taxes. He will encamp at Rauha (a place situated at a distance of 35 miles from Medina) and from there, set out to perform Hajj or Umrah or both." (The reporter is in doubt as to which of these two had been mentioned by the Holy Prophet (PBUH)). (Musnad Ahmad, Silsila Marwiyat Abi Huraira; Muslim, Kitab-ul-Hajj; Bab Jawaz-ul- Tamatttu fil-Hajj wa- al-Qir'an)

Hadrat Abu Huraira relates that the Prophet (PBUH) of God after mentioning the exile of Dajjal said: "The Muslims will be preparing for war with Dajjal and they will be falling in line in preparation for offering Prayers and the Takbir will have been said for Prayers when in the meantime Christ (PBUH), son of Mary, will descend and lead Muslims in Prayer. The enemy of God, Dajjal, on seeing him will start melting like salt in water. If Christ (PBUH) would leave Dajjal alone, he would melt and die anyway, but God will cause Dajjal to be slain at the hand of Christ (PBUH) and Christ will display his spear strained with the blood of Dajjal to the Muslims." (Mishkat, Kitab-ul-Fitan, Bab: al-Malahim, quoted by Muslim)

Hadrat Abu Huraira reports that the Apostle (PBUH) of Allah affirmed: "No Prophet shall come during the period between me and Jesus (PBUH). And Jesus shall descend. Recognize him when you see him; he is a man of medium height and of a rudy, fair complexion. He will be dressed in two pieces of yellow garment. The hair of his head will appear as if water is trickling out of them, though his hair would not be wet. He will fight for the cause of Islam. He will break the Cross into pieces. He will slay the swine. He will abolish the Jizya on non-believers. In his time God will put an end to all other faiths except the religion of Islam. And Christ will kill Dajjal. He will live on this earth for a period of forty years and at the end of this period he will pass away. The Muslims will offer the funeral prayers of Christ (PBUH). (Abu Dawud, Kitab-ul-Malahim, Bab: Khuruj-ul-Dajjal; Musnad Ahmad, Marwiyat Abu Huraira)

Hadrat Jabir bin Abdullah reports that he heard the Prophet (PBUH) as saying: "Then Christ, son of Mary, will descend. The leader of the Muslims will say to him, "Come, lead us in Prayer," but he will reply, "No be thou your own leaders in prayer." [The implication of this observation of Christ (PBUH) is that "Someone from amongst you should act as your leader."] He will say this out of respect for the dignity that God has bestowed on the people of Islam." (Muslim, Bayan Nuzul Isa ibn Maryam; Musnad Ahmad, Basilsila Marwiyat Jabir bin Abdullah)

In connection with the episode of Ibn Sayyad, Jabir bin Abdullah relates that Umar bin Khattab (RAA) submitted: "O Apostle of God, allow me to slay him. In reply the Prophet of God observed, "If indeed this man is he (referring to Dajjal), then he shall be slain by Christ, son of Mary. You shall not slay him. But if this man is not he (Dajjal), then you have no right to kill an individual from amongst those with whom we have guaranteed protection (Dhimmies)." (Mishkat, Kitab-ul-Fitan, Bab: Qissa Ibn Sayyad, quoted by Shara al-Sunnah al-Baghawi).

Jabir b. Abdullah relates that while narrating the episode of Dajjal, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) observed: "At that time Christ, son of Mary, will suddenly descend among the Muslims. A congregation will be assembled for prayer and he shall be asked: " O Spirit of God, come forward and lead (us in Prayer)." But he will say, 'No, your own Imam shall step forward and act as the leader.' Thus when the Muslims will have offered the morning Prayer, they will set out to do battle against Dajjal. When that liar will look on Christ (PBUH), he will start melting like salt in water. Christ (PBUH) shall advance towards him and slay him. And it will come to pass that every stone will cry out: 'Spirit of Allah, this Jew is hiding behind me.' Not a single follower of Dajjal will escape slaughter." (Musnad Ahmad, Basissila

Riwayat Jabir b. Abdullah)

Hadrat an-Nawas b. Sam'an (while relating the story of Dajjal) reports: "Meantime when Dajjal will be engaged in perpetrating such deeds, God shall send Christ, son of Mary. Christ (PBUH) will descend near the white tower in the eastern quarter of Damascus, wearing two pieces of yellow garment and resting his hands upon the arms of two angels. When he will bend his head, it would seem that drops of water would fall down from his head and when he will raise his head it would seem as if pearls would be trickling in the form of drops. Any infidel who will be within reach of the air of his breath, and the air of his breath will reach as far as his eye would see - will not escape death. Later the son of Mary will pursue Dajjal and will overtake him at the gate of Lydda [Please note that Lod (modern Lydda) is situated at a distance of few miles from Tel Aviv, the capital of the State of Israel in Palestine. The Jews have built a large air-base at this place.] and put him to death." (Muslim, Dhikr Dajjal; Abu Dawud, Kitab ul-Malahim, Bab: Khuruj; Dajjal; Tirmidhi, Abwab-ul-Fitan; Bab: Fi Fitna al-Dajjal; Ibn Majah, Kitab ul-Fitna, Bab: Fitna al-Dajjal)

Abdullah b. Amr b. al-As says that the Apostle of God (PBUH) observed: "Dajjal will arise in my people and will survive for forty (here the reporter is not certain whether the Prophet mentioned forty days or forty months or forty years). Then God shall send Christ, son of Mary, unto the world. He will resemble in appearance with 'Urwa b. Masud (a companion of the Prophet). Christ will pursue Dajjal and put him to death. Following this for a period of seven years the state of the world will be such that a quarrel between two individuals will be unknown." (Muslim, Dhikr-ul-Dajjal)

Hudhaifa b. Usaid al-Ghifari reports that "once the Holy Prophet(PBUH) visited us when we were sitting in company and talking to each other. The holy Prophet(PBUH) enquired: "What are you talking about?" The people said, "we were talking about the doomsday." The holy Prophet(PBUH) observed : "Doomsday shall not be established before the appearance of ten signs. He then enumerated those signs as:

Smoke	Appearance of Yajuj and Majuj
Dajjal	Formation of three huge cavities or landslide on the earth, one in the east,
Daabba	Second in the west,
Rising of the sun in the West	and third in the Arabian Isles,
The descent of Christ son of Mary (PBUH)	Finally, a huge conflagration which will arise in Yemen and drive people towards the plain of Doom."

(Muslim, Kitab ul-Fitan wa Ashtrat-us Sa'h: Abu Dawud, Kitab ul- Malahim, bab: Amarat ul-Sa'h).

It is reported by Thauban, the freed slave of the Holy Prophet that the holy Prophet (PBUH) observed: "God will grant protection from Hell-fire to two groups from among the people of my Ummah. One group consists of those who will invade India; the other group will consist of those who will align themselves with Christ, son of Mary(PBUH)." (Nasa'i, Kitab ul-jihad; Musnad ahmad, Bisilsila Riwayat Thauban)

Mujamme b. jaria Ansari reports: "I heard the Holy Prophet(PBUH) as saying: Christ, son of Mary will slay Dajjal at the gate of Lod(Lydda)." (Musnad Ahmad , Tirmidhi, Abwab-ul-Fitan).

Abu Umama al-Bahli(mentioning Dajjal in the course of a long tradition) reports

"Exactly when the Imam of the Muslims will step forward to lead the morning prayers, Christ son of Mary(PBUH) will descend among them. The Imam will retreat to make room for Christ to lead the prayers. But Christ patting the Imam in the middle of his shoulders will say "Nay thou shall act as leader, for this congregation has assembled to follow you in prayer." Hence the Imam will lead the prayers. When the prayer is over Christ(PBUH) will command, `Open the Gate.' The gate shall be thrown open.

Dajjal will be present outside the gate with a host of seventy thousand Jewish troops. As soon as Dajjal catches the sight of Christ (PBUH), he will say to him, " I shall strike you with such force that you will not survive the blow." Christ (PBUH) will pursue and overtake him at the Eastern gate of Lod(Lyddā). God will cause the Jews to be defeated. Earth shall be filled with Muslims as a vessel is filled to the brim with water-the entire world shall recite the same Kalima and worship shall be offered to none else except God Almighty." (Ibn Majah,Kitab-ul-Fitan ; Bab : Fitan Dajjal)

Uthman b. Abi al-As reports that he heard the Prophet of God (PBUH) as saying: "And Christ son of Mary will descend at the time of morning prayer. The leader of the Muslims will say to him, "O spirit of God, Be thou our leader in prayer." He will answer "The people of this Ummah are leaders unto each other." At this, the leader of the Muslims shall step forward and lead the prayers. When the prayer is over, Christ(PBUH) will take hold of his weapon and advance towards Dajjal. Dajjal, on seeing Christ shall start melting like lead. Christ (PBUH) will slay him with his weapon. The companions of Dajjal will be defeated. They will flee away, but will not find a hiding place anywhere. Even the trees will cry out,"O pious, this infidel is hiding behind me," and the stones will say, "O pious, this unbeliever has taken cover behind me." (Musnad Ahmad, Tabarani, Hakim)

Samura b. Jundub (in a long tradition) ascribes this saying to the Holy Prophet (PBUH): "Then at morning time Christ, son of Mary, shall descend among the Muslims. And Allah shall cause Dajjal and his hosts to suffer a most crushing defeat. Even the walls and roots of the trees will cry out, "O pious, this infidel is hiding behind me. Come and strike him to death." (Musnad Ahmad, Hakim)

A tradition related to 'Imarn b. Husain says that the Prophet of God (PBUH) observed: "There will always be a group of people among my followers who will keep firm faith in right and they shall overwhelm their opponents till God issues a decree and Christ son of Mary (PBUH) descends upon earth." (Musnad Ahmad) With reference to the episode of Dajjal, Hadrat 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) reports that "Hadrat 'Isa (PBUH) will descend and slay Dajjal. After this Hadrat 'Isa (PBUH) shall rule over the earth as a just leader and a benevolent sovereign for a period of forty years." (Musnad Ahmad)

Safina, the freed slave of the Apostle of God (PBUH) reports (in connection with the episode of Dajjal) that "Hadrat 'Isa (PBUH) will descend and God shall put an end to the life of Dajjal near the slope of Afiq." [Afiq known as Fiḡ in modern times is a city in Syria, situated on the borderline between Syria and Israel. There is a lake called Tibriya a few miles toward the west of the city. This lake is the source of river Jordan. Towards the southwest of this lake, there is a path between the mountains which descends two thousand feet to the point in the lake of Tibriya where the river rises. This mountainous path is called the slope of Afiq.] (Musnad Ahmad)

Hadrat Hudaifa b. Yama relates (with reference to Dajjal), "When the Muslims will fall in lines to offer prayers, Christ son of Mary (PBUH) shall descend from heaven before their eyes. He will lead the prayers. When the prayers are over he will say to the people: "Clear the way between me and this enemy of God." God will give victory to the Muslims over the hosts of Dajjal. The Muslims will inflict dire punishment upon the enemy. Even the trees and stones will cry out, "O Abdullah, O Abdul Rahman, O Muslim, come, here is a Jew behind me, kill him." In this way God will cause the Jews to be annihilated and Muslims shall be the victors. They

will break the Cross, slaughter the swine and abolish Jizya (levied on non-Muslims)." (Mustadrak Hakim - A brief version of this tradition has been recorded in Muslim. Hafiz Ibn Hajar in Fath-ul-Bari Vol. VI, p. 450 declares this tradition to be authentic.)

The above are twenty-one traditions which have been transmitted on the authority of fourteen companions of the Holy Prophet and have been recorded with correct references in the most authoritative books on Hadith. In addition to these, there are numerous other traditions relating to the same subject, but we have not reproduced them here for the sake of brevity. We have taken as example only those traditions which are sound and authentic as regards chain of transmission.

The Verdict of these Traditions

Anyone who reads the above traditions will come to the conclusion that they do not mention the advent of a promised Masih or a like Masih or projection of Masih. The texts referred to above leave no scope for any man who is born of human sperm from the womb of a woman to declare "I am that Masih whose advent was foretold by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)." All the above traditions clearly and definitively proclaim the descent of that Holy Christ who was born to Mary without the instrumentality of father two thousand years ago. It is certainly of no avail at this juncture to open the debate as to whether the Holy Christ is dead or exists alive somewhere in the world. Supposing he is dead, God has the power to raise him alive [Those who deny this possibility should go through verse 259 of Surah al- Baqarah, in which God affirms in clear words that He let one of His creatures lie dead for a hundred years and at the end of this period He raised the man alive.], otherwise also it is not beyond the Divine power of God to keep a man alive somewhere in the cosmos for as long as thousands of years; and to bring the man back to the world at His Will. At any rate, a believer in the veracity and sanctity of the traditions will have no doubt that the traditions foretell the advent of 'Christ son of Mary' and no one else. On the contrary, if a person has no faith in the traditions, he would not be a believer in the descent of anyone, for traditions are the only bases of the doctrine of Descent. In view of all this, it is a strange kind of funny logic to take the doctrine of Descent derived from the traditions and having torn out the clear reference to Christ son of Mary, establish a modern day 'Christ incarnate' in place of Mary's son.

Yet another point which is made equally clear by the traditions is that Christ son of Mary will not descend in the capacity of a newly appointed Apostle of God. He will not receive any Divine revelations. He will not be the bearer of any new message or repository of a fresh mandate from God, nor will he amend, enlarge or, abridge the Shariah of Muhammad (PBUH), nor indeed will Christ son of Mary be brought into the world to accomplish the renewal of faith. Christ son of Mary (PBUH) will not call upon the people to put their faith in his own prophethood, nor will he found a separate community of followers [The Ulema of Islam have explained this question in detail. 'Allama Taftazani (722 A.H. - 792 A.H.) in Shara 'Aqaid-i-Nasafi writes: "It is established that Muhammad (PBUH) is the Final Prophet.....If it is said that according to the Hadith the descent of Christ (PBUH) will take place after Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) we shall say, "Yes, this fact has been mentioned in the traditions. But Christ (PBUH) will appear as a follower of Muhammad (PBUH). The Shariah of Christ stands abrogated. Hence he will neither receive any Divine revelations, nor will he establish any canon. In all his actions he will represent Muhammad(PBUH) only."

The same view point has been re-affirmed by 'Allama Alusi in Tafsir Ruh- al-Ma'ani: Later when Christ (PBUH) appears, he will retain his dignity as a former Prophet. After all, God will certainly not divest him of this dignity, but he will not follow his former mandate, because the Shariahs of all prophets, including that of Christ (PBUH), stand abrogated. Hence it will be a Divine obligation upon Christ (PBUH) to follow in letter and spirit the law of

Muhammad (PBUH). He will receive no Divine revelation, nor will he be charged with the duty of giving new religious laws. In all his deeds, Christ will act as a representative of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and he will function as a deputy and one among the rulers of the followers of Muhammad (PBUH). Imam Razi further elucidates this point like this: The period of the Prophets extended as far as the advent of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). When Muhammad (PBUH) was raised as a Prophet, the era of the advent of new Prophets came to an end. It is not beyond comprehension that Christ (PBUH), after his descent, will act as a follower of Muhammad (PBUH).]. He will be appointed to accomplish a particular task and this will be to root out the mischief of Dajjal. To serve this purpose, Jesus(PBUH) will descend in such manner that those Muslims among whom he appears, will have no doubt at all about his identity as Jesus son of Mary whose advent at a most opportune time was foretold by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Jesus(PBUH) will join the community of Muslims and will offer prayers behind the incumbent Imam of the Muslims. [Although two traditions (No.5 and 21) bear ample evidence that Jesus (PBUH) will act as leader in the first prayer after his descent, the majority of the traditions which are comparatively more authentic (vide No. 3,7,9,15,16) speak of the fact that Jesus(PBUH) will decline to lead the prayers. He will call upon the incumbent Imam of the Muslims to step forward and lead the prayers. All scholars of traditions and commentators are agreed on this latter point.] He will allow the incumbent Imam of the Muslims to supersede him so as to make it clear beyond any shadow of doubt that he has not descended to assert his position as a Prophet or to carry out the office of Prophethood. There is no doubt that in the presence of a Prophet among a community of people no other person can assume the office of an Imam or a leader. Hence when Jesus(PBUH) will become an individual member of the Fraternity of Islam, this fact will in itself proclaim to the world that he has not descended to assume the office of a Prophet. On this basis, therefore, the question of opening the seal of Prophethood at the second coming of Christ is completely irrelevant.

It might be said (without actually comparing the two situations) that Jesus's advent will be like the appointment of a former Head of State to render some State service under the regime of the present Head of State. It is not too difficult for a man of ordinary common sense to understand that the appointment of a former Head of State to render some State duty under the regime of present Head is not a violation of the constitution of the State. Two cases, however, do violate the State Law. In the first case, if a former Head of State makes a bid to assume that office once again. In the second case, if a person refutes the existence of the former regime of a defunct Head of State, for this would be tantamount to challenging the validity of the tasks carried out by the former regime. In the absence of any one of the above two eventualities, the mere appointment of a past Head of State to a State duty does not change the constitutional position. The same applies to the second advent of Christ, son of Mary. The seal of Prophethood is not violated by his second advent. However, if he assumes the office of Prophethood once more and starts performing the duties of a Prophet or conversely a man repudiates the sanctity of Christ (PBUH) as a former Prophet, both these cases constitute a violation of God's law in respect of the creation of Prophets. The traditions have clearly ruled out the existence of both these possibilities. On the one hand, the traditions affirm that no Prophet shall come after Muhammad (PBUH). At the same time, they foretell the second coming of Christ, son of Mary. This is sufficient to make it clear that during his second advent in the world, Christ will not discharge the duties of a Prophet.

In the same manner, his advent will not give rise to a new question of faith or apostasy among the followers of Islam. Any one who repudiates the sanctity of Christ as a former Prophet is an apostate. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) himself affirmed Christ's sanctity as a former Prophet. The followers of Muhammad (PBUH) therefore, have from the beginning, always believed in the sanctity of Christ as a former Prophet. This belief will hold good even at the time of the second advent of Christ. At that time Muslims will not put faith in the ministry of a new Prophet. They will retain

their belief in the sanctity of Christ as a former Prophet. This position is neither contrary to faith in the Finality of Prophethood today nor will it be derogatory to this belief at the time of Christ's second advent in the world.

The last point which is made clear by these other traditions and numerous others pertains to the fact that Dajjal (for the suppression of whose grave misdeeds God will send Christ, son of Mary (peace be on him), will arise among the nation of Jews and that he will impose as 'Masih.'

No one can understand the reality of this fact without studying the history of the Jews and their religious beliefs. After the death of Hadrat Sulaiman (PBUH) [i.e. Solomon], the tribe of Israel suffered perpetual decline until it came to pass that they became slaves of the Babylonian and Assyrian Empires and their imperial masters dispersed them over the face of the earth. At that moment in their history the Prophet of the Jews began to deliver the glad tidings of the arrival of a 'Masih' from God who will redeem them from disgrace. On the basis of such prophecies the Jews had long awaited the advent of a 'masih' who would be a king. This king would fight and win territories. He would gather Jews from all over the world and assemble them in Palestine. He would create a mighty Jewish Empire. Contrary to all their eager expectations when the God-appointed 'Masih', Christ son of Mary (PBUH) came without an army to win countries, the Jews repudiated his Prophethood and determined to put an end to his life. Since then the Jews all over the world have awaited the rise of a 'Masih Mau'ud,' 'The Promised Messiah,' the glad tidings of whose arrival had been delivered to them by their Prophets of yore. Their literature abounds with the wishful dreams of this millennium. The Jews have for centuries been savoring the imaginary pleasure afforded by the description of this millennium in Talmud and the works of the Rabbis. The Jewish nation has cherished the hope that this 'Promised Messiah' would be a great military and political leader. He will restore to them the country between the rivers Nile and Euphrates (which the Jews have always coveted as their patrimony). He will gather Jews from all parts of the world and assemble them once again in this country.

Today when we look at the affairs of the Middle East in the perspective of the prophecies of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), we perceive at once that the stage has been set for the emergence of the Dajjal who as was foretold by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) would rise as a 'Promised Messiah' of the Jews. The Muslim people have been ejected from a large part of Palestine and in that part a Jewish State named 'Israel' has been set up. Jews from all over the world are converging at this place. America, Britain and France have helped to make this Jewish State a formidable military power.

The Jewish scientists and technocrats are developing this country fast with the massive aid of Jewish capital. The military and technical potential of Israel poses a grave threat to the neighboring Muslim countries. The leaders of Israel have never concealed their design of redeeming 'the land of their patrimony.' The map of the future Jewish State which they have been publishing for a long time is given on the following page. [Map omitted] It shows that they wish to include in the Jewish State the whole of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, nearly all the area of Iraq besides taking Askandron from Turkey, Sinai and Delta area from Egypt and Upper Hejaz and Najd areas from Saudi Arabia. This of course includes the Holy City of Madina also. In this context, it is quite clear that taking advantage of the critical conditions created by a World war, the Jews will certainly make a bid to grab these areas. And at this juncture will arise Dajjal whom the Jews will deem as their 'Promised Messiah.' The Holy Prophet (PBUH) not only prophesied the advent of this Dajjal but also had

warned the Muslims that they would suffer colossal hardships and one day will seem like one year of suffering and calamity. It was for this reason that the Prophet of God (PBUH) used to pray for protection against the great evil of 'Dajjal Masih' and he used to enjoin his followers to implore Allah to save them the severity of these evil times.

It is certain that Allah will not send any 'Christ Incarnate' to combat with this 'Dajjal Masih.' He will appoint the real Christ, the Christ who was born of Mary, and whom the Jews had declined to acknowledge as a Prophet two thousand years ago. He will send the same Christ whom the Jews believed they had put out of their way by killing him. The place where the real Christ will descend is not in India, Africa or America. It is in Damascus that he will appear, because this place will be the actual battle ground at that time. Look at the map no. 1

[map has to be omitted]

and you will find that Damascus lies at a distance of hardly 50-60 miles from the orders of Israel. If you recall the text of the traditions we have cited above, you will find it not too difficult to understand that Dajjal will penetrate into Syria with 70,000 Jewish troops and will take position before Damascus. At this moment of crisis, Christ son of Mary (PBUH) will descend near a white minaret in the Eastern quarter of Damascus. After the morning prayers, Christ (PBUH) will advance with the Muslims for fighting against Dajjal. The enemy will retreat before the powerful assault of Christ son of Mary, and Dajjal will run away towards Israel by way of the slope of Afiq (Reference to Tradition No. 21). Christ (PBUH) will pursue Dajjal and destroy him on the airfield of Lydda (Traditions No. 10-14- 15).

A great slaughter of the Jews will ensue and every one of them will be annihilated. The nation of Jews will be exterminated (Traditions No. 9-15-21).

At the proclamation of truth by Christ, the Christian religion will become extinct (Traditions No. 1-2-4-6). And the followers of all religions, their former having renounced allegiances, will amalgamate to form the one and only brotherhood of Islam. The traditions reveal this fact clearly beyond any doubt.

In view of the above, the propaganda network that has been set up in our country in the name of Masih Mau'ud, 'the Promised Messiah', is unquestionably a false and bogus venture.

One of the funniest aspects of this base movement is that the person who deems himself the subject of the prophecies of Muhammad (PBUH) has given this interesting explanation of his identity as 'Christ son of Mary':

"He (God Almighty) named me Mary in the third part of Barahin-i-Ahmadia. Later, as is evident from Barahin-i--Ahmadia I was reared in the form of Mary for two years. Then, my body was filled with the soul of Christ just as the body of Mary was filled with Christ's soul and in a metaphorical sense I became pregnant with the soul of Christ. At last after a period of many months (lasting not more than ten months) I was metamorphosed from Mary into Christ by a Divine revelation which has been

recorded at the end of part four of Barahin-i-Ahmadia. Hence in this way I became the son of Mary." (Kashti-e-Noah, pp. 87-89).

In other words he became Mary in the first place, then got pregnant, and lastly from his own abdomen he issued forth as Christ son of Mary. There was one snag left, however. According to the traditions, Christ son of Mary, would appear in Damascus, which has been a prominent and famous place in Syria for several thousand years and still exists by this name on the map of the world.

This difficulty was explained away by another fanciful statement: "Let it be known that in respect of the interpretation of the word 'Damascus', God Almighty has explained to me in a revelation that in this place the name Damascus has been given to a village whose inhabitants possess the characteristics of Yazid and are followers of the habits and ideas of the impure Yazid. This town of Qadian, because of the reason that most of its residents possess the traits of Yazid in their character, is akin to and bears certain resemblance to Damascus (marginal note of Izala-i-Auham, pp. 63-73).

But that was not all. Yet another problem demanded clearance, i.e., the traditions had prophesied that Christ would descend near a white pillar. This problem was finally solved when the new 'Christ' got a white pillar built for him. The traditions mentioned that the white pillar would be standing prior to the descent of Christ near it and in Qadian the pillar was built after the appearance of 'Masih Mau'ud.' But never mind the discrepancy. Anyone who reads the above interpretations of this 'Masih Mau'ud' with open eyes will arrive at the conclusion that a clear fraud has been openly perpetrated by an imposter.

Fellow Workers!

We are about to disperse after four days of Convention. We have completed the task that we intended to do in this Convention. In our special session we have also reviewed our previous work, to a certain extent. Now, before we leave, I would like to have a few words with you—members and associates all—and give the necessary instructions needed to carry on *Iqamat al-Din* (establishment of Islamic way of life) properly, in the future .

Ta'alluq Billah

(Attachment with Allah)

The first and foremost instruction, always given by all the Prophets, the rightly-guided caliphs and the pious among the *Ummah* (Muslim Community) to their companions had been to inculcate fear of Allah, implant His love in one's heart and to promote attachment with Allah. Hence following their footsteps, I also have chosen it as the first advice to the workers and in future I will continue to do so whenever I get a chance, for it deserves a preferential and priority treatment.

Belief in Allah is the most important over all other articles of faith. Hence association of heart with Allah should have priority in prayers. Fear of Allah should have priority in morals and soliciting the pleasure of Allah should have priority in all personal dealings. In short, the proper orientation of our entire life is to be based on the desire to win the pleasure of Allah and this should have priority over all other motives, efforts and endeavours. Particularly this hard task of ours, for which we stand as an Islamic *Jama'ah* (organised group) and a Movement, can only thrive on the motivating force of our attachment with Allah. It will be strong or weak in proportion to our attachment with Allah.

It is an admitted fact that whatever task a man stands for, be it worldly or heavenly, the main force behind has been the purpose for which one has risen, and zeal can only engender when he has deep interest and enthusiasm towards achieving that aim. A self-seeker cannot succeed without being selfish. Intensity in love for self leads him to the service of his self with the eagerness of the same strength. A man working for his children, by being devoted to their love, sacrifices his own pleasures and comforts for the welfare of his children, and sometimes stakes not only his worldly gains but even the benefits of the *Akhirah* (Hereafter), so that they may prosper to the utmost. A man working for his nation or country is a captive of its love and because of this love he endures monetary losses, as well as hardships of detentions and jails. He works hard day and night and sometimes even sacrifices his life for the freedom, defence and supremacy of his nation or state.

Now, if we are struggling to establish the Islamic way of life, not for our own selfish ends; neither for any motive of family interests nor any national or state interest but only with sincere desire to please our Creator, Allah Almighty alone, and if we have engaged ourselves in this work only because we are convinced that this is His work, you can certainly realise that this work cannot be advanced unless and until our attachment with Allah is real, strong and deep. Zeal for this work develops only when all our inclinations are concentrated in the endeavours for propagating the Word of Allah. For all those who have joined hands in this work, it is not enough that they might be connected with "Allah also", but that their connection should be with "Allah only". In other words, it should not be 'a' connection but 'the' only real and true connection. We should always be vigilant and conscious that our attachment with Allah does not decrease but always increase and gets deeper and deeper with time.

Attachment with Allah is the main guiding spirit of our mission. Praise be to Allah, no member of our *Jama'ah* is unmindful of this fact and ignorant about its significance. Yet many are often not clear as to what does the term *Ta'alluq Billah* exactly mean, what is the method of inculcating and promoting it, and how to find out whether one really has any connection with Allah or not and if one has, then to what degree. I have often felt that lack of knowledge and under-standing in this respect leaves

people in wilderness, knowing not where do they stand and where are they to go and how much distance have they yet to cover. Consequently some of the workers get lost in vague ideals and some get inclined towards ways and methods that never lead them to their destination. Some find difficulty in differentiating between closely related and far-related things—and someone is just astounded.

I shall not, therefore, only confine myself to advice about *Ta'alluq Billah* but also, try to present clear cut answers to the said questions, to the best of my knowledge.

The Meaning of *Ta'alluq Billah*

Its meaning according to the Qur'an are that a person should live and die for Allah, and his worship and sacrifices should also be meant for Him alone.

Surely my prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allah the Cherisher of the worlds. (An'am: 162)

He should worship Allah with full devotion and subject his life exclusively to unqualified submission to Allah. The Qur'an says:

They had been ordered nothing but that they should worship Allah with sincere devotion and being true in faith to Him. (Bayinah: 5)

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has, on different occasions, explained this relationship in such clear terms that there is no ambiguity left in its meaning and purpose. It is explicitly clear from his statements that the nature of this relationship is nothing but—

To fear Allah in all matters—open or secret— (Bayhaqi)

And to rely on the might of Allah rather than one's own resources. (Bayhaqi)

He should be ready to face the anger of men to solicit the pleasure of Allah, and never prepared for the vice versa. And when this attachment with Allah rises to the extent that all love, enmity, giving and withholding by a person is for the sake of Allah alone, and with no other motive behind, it means that he has attained perfection in his attachment with Allah. The Prophet (p) said:

Whoever loved for Allah, and hated for Allah gave for Allah and withheld for Allah, is the person who has perfected his faith. (Bukhari)

Now look into the meanings of the Qunut which you recite every night. Every word of it points towards the connection you should have with Allah. Just ponder over its words and see for yourself the promise you make with Allah about the kinds of connections you should have with Him.

O Allah, we seek Your help and crave for pardon from You We believe wholly in You and solely depend upon You, (so) we praise You in the best words, we are thankful to You, and not ungrateful to You, (Hence) we abandon and reject (leave) all those who transgress Your Commands. O Allah, we worship You alone, offer prayers for Your sake, bow down to You and all our endeavours and efforts are meant to lead us towards You. We are hopeful of mercy from You and are afraid of Your punishment. Undoubtedly Your punishment is to fall on the rejecters.

This attachment with Allah is also clearly reflected in the special *Du'a* (Supplication) of the Prophet (p) which he used to recite at the time of *Tahajjud*. He used to say:

O Allah, I have bowed down to you, declared my faith in You, placed my reliance in You, always took recourse to You, fought for You and placed my case before You.

How to Increase *Ta'alluq Billah* ?

The above mentioned is the correct interpretation of this study time and again to retain it in your attachment that a firm believer should have with Allah. Now let us consider the method of acquiring and increasing it. The only method of acquiring it is to believe in Allah and accept Him the One with no partner, as the Provider, the Deity and the Master of his own self as well as of the whole Universe, and to accept all the attributes, the rights and the privileges of divinity as reserved for Allah alone, and thus cleaning one's heart from all possible effects of polytheism (*Shirk*). When this is achieved, connection with Allah is duly established.

Now the strengthening of this relationship with Allah is that you are His vicegerent, custodian factors. One is of thinking and understanding and the other is to practice.

First you are required to fully grasp and understand your relationship with Allah by nature as well as logically incumbent upon you in practical life with the help of the Qur'an and the *Hadith* (sayings of the Prophet (p)). The correct perception, discernment and appreciation of this relationship is only possible through deep and intensive study of the Qur'an and *Hadith* and by repetition of this study time and again to retain it in your mind. Consequently whatever aspects of your relationship with Allah dawn upon you, ponder over them and look into yourself as to how much are you meeting the demands of that relationship and where and to what extent are you failing. Your attachment with Allah will increase in proportion to your self assessment and understanding of your required role.

For example, your first and foremost relation with Allah is that of a worshipper with the worshipped. Your other of and responsible for innumerable trusts (*Amanat*). Your third relationship with Allah is that you have executed a sale deed by declaring your faith and conviction in Him and through this Contract you have bartered your life and property to Him and He has purchased it in consideration of paradise for you in return. Your fourth relationship with Allah is that you stand responsible to Him. You are not accountable to Him only for your acts and deeds that are open and visible but also a record is being maintained concerning your intentions and aspirations. In short, these and many other relations exist between you and Allah. Hence the strengthening or weakness of your relationship with Allah depends upon proper understanding, realisation and fulfilment of the demands of these relationships. Your relation with Allah will grow weaker and weaker if you do not care for the demands of this relationship and will get deeper and stronger if you are duly conscious of and attentive to its demands.

But this conceptual method can neither be fruitful nor maintained for long unless it is strengthened and reinforced through practical means. And that practical method is the unqualified obedience of the command of Allah and all out efforts to perform these tasks which please Allah. True obedience to Allah's commands means total compliance—open as well as secret— not unwillingly but with full eagerness and zeal, without any worldly aim and solely to please Allah. At the same time, abstain openly, as well as in secret, from all activities forbidden by Allah, with full abhorrence and deep contempt and fearless of any worldly loss, save the fear of the wrath of Allah only. This conduct in life will raise you high up to the position of *Taqwa* (abstention from the displeasure of Allah). Further when you engage yourself in spreading all that pleases Allah and suppressing and eliminating all that displeases Allah, you do not hesitate in sacrificing any thing including your life, money, time, efforts and intellect for this purpose. Moreover you do not boast of any of your such sacrifices,

nor do you consider it any favour to anyone. Instead you regard your biggest sacrifice short of the due right of your Creator. Then this is the attitude that elevates you to the position of *Ihsan* (beautiful submission to the will of Allah).

Means of Growing *Ta'alluq Billah*

In reality it is not so easy to develop such attitude. It is an uphill task which requires a lot of energy. This energy can be generated with the help of the following four things.

1. **Salah (Prayers):** You should offer not only the obligatory prayers (*Fard*), but also the *Sunnah* (additional prayers) offered punctually by the Prophet (p) and the *Nafl* (supererogatory prayers) as many as easily possible. But make it a point that you offer the *Nafl* indoors and in secrecy, so that your personal attachment with Allah might increase, and sincerity of purpose develop in you. Show of *Nafl* or *Tahajjud* prayers gives way to hypocrisy and self-importance which is detrimental to sincere belief. Same is the case with other *Nafl* deeds which are diminished by show and publicity.
2. **Dhikr-Allah (Remembrance of Allah):** Remembrance of Allah is a continuous process throughout the life in all circumstances. The best and most appropriate way to remember Allah is the one the Prophet (p) practised himself, taught to his companions, and not the techniques invented or borrowed from others by the *sufis* in the later period. Try to learn by heart, as many *Du'as* as possible, taught by the Prophet (p), fully grasp their meanings and recite them off and on keeping the meanings present in your mind. It is very effective in maintaining your attention and devotion to Allah.
3. **Sawm (Fasting):** Apart from the obligatory fasting of the month of *Ramadan*, observe some *Nafl* fasts also. The easiest and most practical way is to fast for three days every month with a determination to attain the same degree of *Taqwa* during these three days which is the real purpose behind fasting according to the Qur'an.
4. **Infaq-fi-Sabilillah (Spending in the way of Allah):** This spending, *Fard* as well as *Nafl* to the extent of one's means, should be continuously done. But one thing should always be kept in mind. The real worth is not of the quantity of what you spend but of the spirit of sacrifice for the sake of Allah. A penny from a poor man by cutting his food expenses is much more precious before Allah than the thousands spent by a millionaire that amount to only one-tenth or one-twentieth of his expenses on luxuries. You should also realise the importance attached to *Sadaqah* (spending in the way of Allah), which is described by Allah and His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the best means of purifying one self. you can yourself experience the effects of *Sadaqah*. Suppose you commit a wrong unintentionally. When you realise it you repent (*Tawbah*) and beg His pardon. Then again the same thing happens. This time you add some *Sadaqah* to your repentance. You shall yourself feel the difference it makes. You shall note that the repentance followed by *Sadaqah* makes you purer and stronger to resist the vily inclinations.

This is the pure and simple method of getting closer to Allah, taught to us by the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. If you follow this method, you can increase your attachment with Allah, without adopting the typical *sufic* techniques and methods, and leading a normal life at home with your family and carrying on all your worldly activities as usual.

Measure of *Ta'alluq Billah*:

Now comes the question of assessing the extent and degree of relationship with Allah and that how can we know of any increase or decrease in this attachment. Let me tell you that you need not wait for any revelation in dreams, any divine inspiration, any supernatural power or heavenly light in dark solitary cells. The measure has already been provided by Allah in every man's heart. You can judge it awake and in full day light. Recount your lifelong activities, efforts and desires. Check yourself as to how far you are honouring the commitment you have made by declaring your belief and conviction in Allah. Are you true to Allah in the discharge of trusts and responsibilities or flouting the trust? What proportion of your time, efforts, ability and property is devoted to the cause of Allah and what is reserved for other activities. Compare the degree of your annoyance, grief and uneasiness when your own personal interests and passions are hit, as against your feelings and reaction when Allah's authority and commandments are flouted. You can thus test your attachment with Allah in so many ways and find out daily whether your attachment with Allah is on the increase or decrease. Do not bother about the *sufic* technicalities of *Basharat* (glad tidings), *Karamat* (excellence), *Kashf* (inspiration) and *Tajalliat* (divine lights). In fact there is no awareness (*Kashf*) greater than the awareness of the oneness of Allah in this world of deceptions and fallacies. No excellence (*Karamat*) is higher than to stand firm in the face of apprehensions created and temptations offered by Satan and his followers. There is no better perception of Allah's lights than to witness the truth in the groping darkness of infidelity (*Kufr*), impiety (*Fisq*) and perdition (*Dalalat*) all around. The greatest possible *Basharat* that a believer may get is through his staunch belief in Allah and steadfastness in His way.

Surely those who said that Allah is our Provider and then they stuck to this declaration, Allah sends His angels to them who say "Do not be afraid, nor be grieved, but be delighted to hear the happy news of being awarded the Paradise as promised to you. (*Ha-Mim: 30*)

Preference of the *Akhirah* (Hereafter)

My second advice to you after *Ta'alluq Billah* is to give preference to Hereafter over this world, in each and every matter. In every affair of this life, your aim should be to attain success and blessing in the life Hereafter. The Qur'an tells us that our eternal abode is the Hereafter; we are in this world only temporarily, to be examined as to who of us are going to prove their competency of winning the eternal life of Paradise, by acting properly within the limits imposed by Allah—of course within the limits of our resources, our authority, time stipulated to us, and opportunities afforded by Him. We are here being tested not for our achievements in industry, commerce, agriculture or statecraft, nor for the splendid buildings and roads we construct, nor even for the extent of our success in establishing a grand culture. But the real test pertains to the extent of our ability to perform our duties as Allah's vicegerent in respect of the trusts placed in us, and whether we lead our life as an outlaw and a rebel or as an obedient and law-abiding person? Whether we comply with the will of Allah on His earth or the will of our own self or of other claimants to divinity other than Allah? Whether we are trying to adorn and administer Allah's world according to His standard or trying to corrupt and destroy it? And whether we struggle and fight the Satanic forces for the sake of Allah or meekly lay down our arms and surrender to those forces? The first test of Adam and Eve (peace be upon them) in the Paradise was just the same. Hence all persons selected for the eternal inhabitation of Paradise from the entire humanity shall have to pass this test. Thus the real criterion of determining success or failure does not lie in considering the status of the individual at the time of trial i.e., whether the individual's merit was tested as a king or by putting his head on the executioner's block. Also whether that individual was given a vast kingdom or he had to undergo the trial in his humble cottage. These temporary phases of success or failure in the mortal life are no proof of success or failure in the life Hereafter. The true success which should be our goal is that irrespective of the position we hold in this world and with whatever bounty we have been put to trial, we should prove ourselves obedient servants of Allah and followers of His Wishes in order that we may achieve that position in the Hereafter which is reserved for the faithful servants of Allah.

This is the reality. It is not enough to understand or accept it only once—but great effort is needed to refresh it time and again. Otherwise, there is always a possibility that, in spite of our not being a nonbeliever, we might step into the shoes of those who work for worldly gains forgetting the Hereafter. This happens because the Hereafter is imperceptible and it is evident only after death. In this world we can perceive its good or bad results only through intellect. On the contrary, this world is an easily perceptible thing, offering its sweet and sour tastes every now and then, and its achievements and failures are always there to deceive us. The loss of Hereafter may only give us a little pricking in our conscience if it at all exists. Whereas the loss of this world is felt by us physically. Our family, our relatives, acquaintances, friends and the people in general all not only feel it but also make it felt. Similarly the accomplishment of the Hereafter provides a little comfort and satisfaction to the conscience only if heedlessness has not deadened it. But the prosperity in this world serves as a pleasure for our whole existence. We feel it with all our senses and every one around us shares this feeling. Hence it is really very difficult to translate the faith in Hereafter into practice and base the whole outlook and working of day to day life upon this faith, although it may not look so difficult to

accept it as a faith and belief. It might be easy to say that world is a trifle, but to face and reject the worldly attractions and refuse to concede to the worldly desires is not at all an easy job. It can only be possible after a great struggle and can be retained with persistent efforts.

Means to Develop Concern for *Akhirah*

You might ask me as to what is the method to acquire this quality and what are its requirements? I would again say there are two methods, reflective and practical.

The reflective method is that you should not be contented only after declaring 'I believe in Hereafter' rather make it a habit to study the Qur'an fully grasping its spirit and meaning. This method of studying the Qur'an will gradually develop such a conviction in Hereafter as if you have seen it with your own eyes. There is not perhaps a single page in the Qur'an where the Hereafter is not mentioned in one way or the other. At places you will find the Hereafter portrayed in such a detail as if an eye witness account is being reported. At many places in the Qur'an, life in Hereafter is projected in such an exquisite manner that the-reader feels himself present as an observer. Only if the camouflage of this world is removed, one can witness with his own eyes whatever is being narrated in the Qur'an Hence continuous study of the Qur'an with full comprehension can gradually raise one to a position where the concern for the Hereafter gets complete hold of his mind, and he begins to feel actually at all times that he is to prepare himself in this temporary worldly life for his permanent abode of life after death.

This attitude and perspective gets stronger by the study of the *Hadith* wherein details about life after death are often described just like eye-witness accounts. This reminds us of the fact how the conviction and firm belief in the Hereafter dominated the lives of the Prophet (p) and his companions.

This conviction in Hereafter is further strengthened by visits to graveyards which should be made solely to achieve the purpose of remembering ones own end as advised by the Prophet (p). One should remember while living in this world of desires and passions that a day will come when he will also depart from this world like his predecessors. However one should be careful that those tombs and shrines will not serve any purpose which the wayward people claim to be the centres where every wish is granted and all problems are resolved. Instead you should visit the graveyards of the common men or the grand mausoleums of monarchs deprived of the pomp and show of body-guards and aide de-camps to make the people observe the formalities in the presence of such monarchs.

Now let us take the practical method. While living in this world and taking part in the affairs of your community, friends, acquaintances, your city, country or in the matters of your own efforts. Outside help can only be acquired by profession or finances you often find yourself at the crossroads. Belief in the life Hereafter calls you towards one way while material gains and interests press you to go the other way. Try your level best to proceed on the way mentioned first. If you have chosen the other way because of any weakness or unawareness retrace your steps as soon as you realise the mistake, unmindful of how far have you gone the wrong way. Look unto yourself and try to find out how often did the worldly interests and attractions succeed in getting you absorbed in it and how many times did you succeed in avoiding detraction from the right path, and consideration for the life Hereafter dominated over you. This assessment of your own self shall tell you exactly how much your concern for the life Hereafter has increased and to what extent you are required to make up the deficiency. Whatever deficiency you feel, try hard to make it up keeping away from the companionship of materialists and by developing friendship with the pious people who prefer the gains of the life Hereafter over this world. But remember, there is no way yet known to develop or discard any quality in

you without your own efforts or potentials.

Avoid Takabbur (Arrogance)

My third advice to you is that you should not feel proud of the improvements you have made in your person and in your collective morality. You should not, individually or as a Jama'ah and Movement, fall into the fallacy that you have achieved perfection and that you have reached your goal and there is no room left for any further improvement in your practical life and that no more target to be achieved. Often I and the other responsible persons of the Jama'ah are faced with a teasing problem. Some people have been trying to belittle the position of the Jama'ah and, in fact, of the Islamic Movement, which is real purpose of the Jama'ah. They label it as a political party working for the same goal that of the other political organizations. Piety and purity as well as spiritualism is no where traceable in it. It utterly lacks attachment with Allah and concern for Hereafter; its leadership has no link with any school of sufism and have got no grooming, in any sufic centre of piety and excellence in spiritualism. Hence there is no chance for its associates to get such grooming. The idea behind this campaign is to spread dissatisfaction among the workers of the Jama'ah so that they might recapitulate to the same old religious centres that consider any partial service to Islam under the over all patronage of Kufr (infidelity) as a great achievement and those who can never even imagine to establish Islam as a complete and comprehensive code of life. They have labelled every such attempt as an anti-religious move with all the eloquence at their command. They have always opposed any move to establish Islam as a dominant force in the society against infidelity and impiety (Fisq) by painting all such attempts as purely mundane and motivated by material ambitions and worldly gains.

Under these circumstances we are constrained to explain the real difference between the concept of piety put forward by the sufic spiritualism and the concept of Islamic piety and purity. We have to explain what is real Taqwa (fear of Allah) and Ihsan (excellence in submission to Allah) as desired in Islam and how it differs with the Taqwa and Ihsan which is taught by the so called authorities on peity and religiosity. Simultaneously we have also to explain in detail the technique and methods of reform and training adopted by the Islamic Movement and its consequences, so that anybody sincere to Islam and having a correct and unadulterated concept of Islamic order may easily know that once convinced and impressed by the revolutionary message of Islam one automatically undergoes a great change in his outlook and concepts. This conviction develops true piety, fear of Allah and excellence in submission to His Will. Such a sort of sincerity and conviction is altogether missing in the stereotype sufic methods of training of piety and excellence not only in the trainees but in their teachers and guides as well.

We have to explain all this because of the unjust and unfair attitude of our critics. We do not mean to defend ourselves. but we feel this explanation necessary in the interest of the Islamic Movement. We seek the protection of Allah against any vanity or pride about our own selves by the above exposition or any misconception that we have perfected ourselves. Allah forbid, such a misconception and deceitful pride may deprive us of all that we have achieved so far.

To avoid this mishap I would like you to fully understand the following three points and never forget them:

My first point is that perfection knows no limits and its point of excellence is out of our sight. You go on climbing up and never consider any point as the highest one. In fact you are never perfect. The moment one considers himself perfect, his strife for

the better and consequently his development stops, and decline begins. Never forget that a continuous struggle is needed for not only reaching a height but also for keeping yourself there. The moment you stop striving upward the downward pull starts working. The wise never look down to assess their achievement but look up to know how much is left unattained, and how far is their target.

My next point is that the standard of humanity set by Islam is so high that it starts from where the other isms and ideologies conclude their excellence and perfection. It is not at all an utopic ideal. It reflects in the practical life of the Prophets as well as in the lives of the devoted companions of the Prophe Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the pious among the Ummah. Always keep that standard in mind. It will save you from misapprehension of having attained perfection. It will make you realise your own lowliness as well as present before you new heights to achieve. Even after a lifelong struggle you will feel that many a heights are yet unattained. Never feel proud of your health while patients around you are breathing their last every moment. Look at the monuments of morality and piety of the past, whom you are replacing in the fight against evil. A true believer is he who always keeps in mind those who are richer in Islamic knowledge and deeds so that the thirst for accumulating this wealth does not die out. As regards material wealth, he always compares, himself with the poorer and thanks Allah for what He has given him, satisfying his thirst with whatever he has got.

My third point is that the qualities actually acquired by us so far appear impressive only because deterioration has debased us and our society a lot. The little light provided in the pitch darkness has earned prominence, otherwise it is a fact that we lack a lot in our personal lives when we assess ourselves on the criterion and the minimum requirements of faith in Islam. Hence confession of our shortcomings should not be a formality. It must result in a thorough purging of all of our faults and vices that we find and locate in our own personal life.

Attend to your kith and kin

I would also advise you to pay special attention towards reforming your kith and kin. The Qur'an says:

Save yourselves and your kith and kin from Fire. (Tahrim: 6)

You are very much particular about the food and clothing of your families. But you should be much more particular to save them from the fuel of Hell. Try your best for the betterment of their life Hereafter and put them on the way to Paradise. If any one of them goes astray, in spite of your efforts, you shall not be held responsible for it. The point is that you should in no way be involved in his failure in the Hereafter. I often receive complaints that workers of the Jama 'ah do not pay much attention to the betterment and reform of their own family as they do for others. These complaints may be true in some cases, and may be exaggerated in some other. It is not possible for me to investigate the case of every individual. So I give a word of general advice. All of us should not only have a longing and desire but sincerely strive to put our near and dear ones on the path to peace and salvation to get real consolation.

I advise to all workers of the Jama'ah to take interest in each others lives and strive for the betterment of not only their own children but the children of their fellow workers too. Often a child is not influenced by his father but is greatly impressed by his father's friends.

Mutual Islah (Betterment)

I also advise you not only to strive for the betterment and reformation of your own self and your families but also for the betterment of your fellow workers. Those who have joined hands to work as an Islamic *Jama'ah* for the sake of Allah and to establish His authority and supremacy in the world needs to cooperate and co-ordinate with each other. They must know that they cannot attain their high ideal without getting strong in their collective morals and group discipline. This understanding should result in mutual help and co-operation in their moral improvement and betterment and proceeding in the way of Allah. This is the only way of collective purification (*Tazkiyah*) in Islam. If you find me going off the track, hurry up to bring me back on the track and if I find you slipping or staggering I should lend you a helping hand. If there is dust on my sleeve you blow it away and if I find a stain on your robe I clean it. Convey to me whatever you feel better for me and in my best interest and I should convey to you whatever I feel necessary for your betterment. We know that we flourish in our worldly life through our mutual transactions. The same is true in our moral and spiritual life and we profit and flourish as an Islamic *Jama'ah* in this sphere as well when we cooperate and supplement each other morally and spiritually.

The correct method of reformation is to wait and see and avoid any hasty action whenever you find anything wrong in your fellow worker or any complaint crops up against him. First try to understand the situation and then contact the person concerned and talk to him directly in confidence about the complaint without even mentioning the matter before anybody else or anywhere in the absence of the person concerned. The later is simple back-biting which is very much abhorred in Islam.

Collective Ihtisab (Criticism)

Mutual criticism is also a fruitful way of collective reform. Bring to the notice of your fellow workers their faults and shortcomings in a very polite and sincere manner. But be careful as it may prove disastrous if the etiquettes of sincere criticism are not duly observed. The etiquettes of fair criticism are as under:

1. Criticism should not be made every time and everywhere.
2. Before criticising anybody first examine your own heart considering Allah as a witness whether you are criticising out of sincerity and for the well being or it is motivated due to personal impulse. In the case of the former, the criticism is indeed fully justified otherwise you should hold your tongue and try to get rid of this impurity from your personality.
3. Your words and manner of criticism should make everyone feel that you really want reform and betterment.
4. Be sure that your complaint is based on real and hard facts before criticizing anybody. Baseless criticism without getting sure of its facts is a sin and create disorder.
5. The person who is criticised should give a calm hearing to the complaint, then ponder over it without any prejudice. He should concede to the truth plainly and counter the wrong with impassive reasoning. To get annoyed on criticism shows arrogance and vanity.
6. The criticism, and its rebuttal should not prolong and turn into a permanent altercation. Discussion is worth while till both the viewpoints are duly elaborated but if the matter is not settled, postpone discussion and let both of them reconsider the whole matter coolly and separately.

The criticism within such limits is not only helpful but also necessary to set right our social life. No Islamic Jama'ah can keep itself on right direction without such constructive criticism Nobody in the Jama'ah should be above criticism. I regard it indispensable for the stability of the Islamic Movement and I am sure that the day this healthy criticism is stopped, the Movement would succumb to various ills resulting in its destruction. That is why I had always been convening a special meeting after the general meeting of the Jama'ah ever since its inception, to critically assess the whole work of the organization and its structure. In such special meetings I offer myself first for criticism, so that any objection or complaint against me or my performance should be brought openly before all without any hesitation. Either the criticism will correct me, or my explanation will clear the misunderstanding of the critic as well as all those whose thinking are identical.

Sama'a and Ta'at(Obedience and Discipline)

One more fact that I consider necessary to bring to your notice is lack of discipline and submission. There is no doubt that we look very disciplined people when compared with other organisations. But when we look at the standard set by Islam, and also considering, the difficult task before us, we really find our discipline far below the mark.

You are fully aware that you are very few in number with still fewer resources at your command in the field. The task before you is to change, in its form and spirit, the whole system of life based on impiety and ignorance, a system which is a thousand times stronger and resourceful. Compare yourself in number or resources you are no match to it. There is nothing with you to bank upon for achieving success in this struggle except moral superiority and strict discipline. You can succeed in your great mission only when you establish your moral credibility and demonstrate such a discipline and organisation that you may be able to show your strength any moment and at any place with full confidence.

In an Islamic *Jama'ah* striving for the establishment of the Islamic way of life, obedience to the lawful commands of the *Jama'ah* authorities is in fact in submission to Allah and the Prophet (p). Whosoever contributes his time and energy to this mission for Allah's sake only, and who submits to the authority of his *Jama'ah* Chief (Amir or Nazim) in order to serve the cause of Allah, obeys Allah and the Prophet (p). The greater the attachment to Allah and the Prophet (p), the stronger is the spirit of obedience in him. Similarly the lesser the attachment the weaker is the spirit of obedience. Which sacrifice can be more valuable than that offered by you while obeying a person who has otherwise no authority over you, but you have accepted him as your Chief only to work for the sake of Allah, and you carry out his orders without any grudge like a loyal subordinate, even though his orders may sometimes go against your wishes and interest. As this sacrifice is for the cause of Allah, its reward also is very great with Allah. On the other hand, if anyone refuses to accept subordinate position, and regards this subordination below his dignity, or feels hurt when ordered to do a thing and shows uneasiness or hesitation in complying with the orders that go against his own wishes or interests, practically proves that he has not yet surrendered to Allah and his own self still dominates his thoughts and actions.

Advice to the Local Heads (Nazims):

Here I deem it necessary to say a word of advice to the organisational heads at various levels along with my above advice to the workers that they too should learn techniques of leadership. Anybody who is entrusted with any responsibility in the *Jama'ah* and who, by virtue of his responsibility, exercises any authority over others, is not supposed to assert himself unduly upon others and relish his authority as being superior to others. He should behave politely and courteously with his co-workers. He should take utmost care that any misbehaviour on his part might not create any disobedience or contentiousness in any of the workers. He must differentiate in his dealings and behaviour between the young and the old, the weak and the strong, and the well to do and the poor. He should have full knowledge of every individual's circumstances and should deal with everyone according to his position and circumstances and with due regard and leniency. He should imbibe such an spirit in his workers that they take the advice or appeal from their Chief as order and implement it with the same spirit. It would really be considered as lack of discipline if the appeal from the Chief brings no response and he is compelled to issue order. Orders are only given to mercenaries. Those who have voluntarily joined hands to work for the cause of Allah, do not need any orders from a person who is their Chief by their own choice. They only need a hint that they can serve their mission anywhere and they go ahead with it. The moment this spirit is generated among the workers and their leaders you will find no trace of any heart burning or ill-will.

Devotion and Sacrifice

My last advice is that all those who stand for this mission and movement should develop in themselves a trend to spend for the cause of Allah and give this cause preference over their own material Interests and pursuits. Try to cultivate such a deep attachment with this mission that may not let you rest till you spend every bit of your energy and resources for this cause.

Dedicate not only your person but your purse and finances too for the cause of Allah. Never forget that Allah has His right not only on you and your being but on your time and your money as well. Allah and the Prophet (p) has prescribed the minimum limit but for maximum there is no limit. It is for you to decide and assess as to what extent should you spend in the way of Allah to satisfy yourself that you have paid the due. None can judge it better than yourself. The best judge is your own conviction and conscience. I need not say any more than that you learn a lesson from those who have no faith in Allah or Hereafter and, yet they make such a great sacrifices for their fake ideals. We the believers in Allah and Hereafter should feel ashamed of ourselves.

I also find most of the workers lacking in the level of interest and devotion needed for the establishment of Islamic order. No doubt some of us do work with utmost zeal for which we should feel happy about and I pray for them from the core of my heart But most of the workers lack the required devotion. Only a few of us feel as a believer should feel upset on the rampant vices, wretchedness and helplessness of those who profess belief in the Allah Almighty. This state of affairs should cause at least as much worry and despair as you feel when your child is sick or your house is in danger of being under fire. Here too, it is very difficult for anyone to fix any limit or extent to which this despair and worry must go and the keenness one must show. It is again for individual to decide himself at the call of his own conscience as to what extent should he strive to satisfy himself that, as one who believes in the ultimate reality, has fulfilled his duty. Yet for the sake of contrast it is enough to cast a glance on the endeavours of those striving for the establishment of their fake and false ideals and staking all that they have at their command.

Advice to Women

Much of what I have already said is common to both men and women. Now, I will say something exclusively for the women who are in any way attached with the Islamic Movement.

The first and foremost requirement for you is to acquire as much knowledge of Islam as possible. Study not only the Qur'an but also Hadith and Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) with full understanding. Limit not yourselves only to the basic knowledge of Islam and requirements of faith (Iman) but try to know Islamic injunctions regarding your personal life, family life, and general social living. One of the main causes of un-Islamic customs and practices becoming common in Muslim families is the ignorance of our women folk about the teaching of Islam and Islamic injunctions.

Next thing for you to do is to try to mould your practical life, your morals and your character as well as the life and atmosphere at your home according to your knowledge of Islam. Muslim woman must be so firm and strict that she should stick to what she considers right despite the opposition and hurdle from her family or other relatives. She should not concede to anything wrong under any sort of pressure. No doubt, the parents, the husband and other elders of the family deserve obedience, respect and regard and they must never be treated with insubordination and arrogance, but the rights and will of Allah and His Prophet (p) reign supreme. Whosoever presses you to adopt the path of disobedience to Allah and His Prophet (p) flatly refuse to obey, be he your father or your husband Never bow to anyone in this respect. Rely on Allah and bravely face the worst of the consequences, even if it leads to the destruction of your worldly life. The stronger your determination to adhere to Islam, the better shall be its effect on your family environments by the grace of Allah. You shall, thus, get a golden opportunity to reform your homes. On the contrary, if you yield to unwarranted and anti-Islamic demands, your own personal life will be deprived of the blessings of Islam, and you will set a bad example of weakness in faith and morals for the people around you.

Your third responsibility is to give priority to your near and dear ones in the matter of reform and improvement in Islamic way of life Those of our sisters, whom Allah has gifted with children, are in fact appearing for a test in which if they fail, no other success can compensate this failure. Their own children deserve their best attention. It is their prime responsibility to train their children well in Islam and with its etiquettes. Married ladies also have the responsibility of keeping their husbands on the right path and to assist them in remaining steadfast in their march if they are already on the right path. A daughter can also convey the truth to her parents observing due respect and regard for them. The least she can manage to do is to offer them Islamic books to read.

Fourthly, spend as much time as you can spare from your household duties to convey the knowledge of Islam to the women folk around you. Impart education to young girls and uneducated elderly women . Provide useful Islamic literature to ladies who are literate. Arrange women gatherings and explain the teaching of Islam to them. If you cannot speak in public, just read out relevant and useful extracts from literature to them. In short, try your level best, using all possible ways and means to eliminate ignorance and illiteracy in the ladies around you.

CHAPTER ONE: HUMAN RIGHTS, THE WEST AND ISLAM

Before I discuss the human rights in Islam I would like to explain a few points about two major approaches to the question of human rights: the Western and Islamic. This will enable us to study the issue in its proper perspective and avoid some of the confusion which normally befalls such a discussion.

The Western Approach:

The people in the West have the habit of attributing every good thing to themselves and try to prove that it is because of them that the world got this blessing, otherwise the world was steeped in ignorance and completely unaware of all these benefits. Now let us look at the question of human rights. It is very loudly and vociferously claimed that the world got the concept of basic human rights from the Magna Carta of Britain; though the Magna Carta itself came into existence six hundred years after the advent of Islam. But the truth of the matter is that until the seventeenth century no one even knew that the Magna Carta contained the principles of Trial by Jury; Habeas Corpus, and the Control of Parliament on the Right of Taxation. If the people who had drafted the Magna Carta were living today they would have been greatly surprised if they were told that their document also contained all these ideals and principles. They had no such intention, nor were they conscious of all these concepts which are now being attributed to them. As far as my knowledge goes the Westerners had no concept of human rights and civic rights before the seventeenth century. Even after the seventeenth century the philosophers and the thinkers on jurisprudence though presented these ideas, the practical proof and demonstration of these concepts can only be found at the end of the eighteenth century in the proclamations and constitutions of America and France. After this there appeared a reference to the basic human rights in the constitutions of different countries. But more often the rights which were given on paper were not actually given to the people in real life. In the middle of the present century, the United Nations, which can now be more aptly and truly described as the Divided Nations, made a Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and passed a resolution against genocide and framed regulations to check it. But as you all know there is not a single resolution or regulation of the United Nations which can be enforced. They are just an expression of a pious hope. They have no sanctions behind them, no force, physical or moral to enforce them. Despite all the high-sounding ambitious resolutions of the United Nations, human rights have been violated and trampled upon at different places, and the United Nations has been a helpless spectator. She is not in a position to exercise an effective check on the violation of human rights. Even the heinous crime of genocide is being perpetrated despite all proclamations of the United Nations. Right in the neighbouring country of Pakistan, genocide of the Muslims has been taking place for the last twenty- eight years, but the United Nations does not have the power and strength to take any steps against India. No action has even been taken against any country guilty of this most serious and revolting crime.

The Islamic Approach:

The second point which I would like to clarify at the very outset is that when we

speak of human rights in Islam we really mean that these rights have been granted by God; they have not been granted by any king or by any legislative assembly. The rights granted by the kings or the legislative assemblies, can also be withdrawn in the same manner in which they are conferred. The same is the case with the rights accepted and recognized by the dictators. They can confer them when they please and withdraw them when they wish; and they can openly violate them when they like. But since in Islam human rights have been conferred by God, no legislative assembly in the world, or any government on earth has the right or authority to make any amendment or change in the rights conferred by God. No one has the right to abrogate them or withdraw them. Nor are they the basic human rights which are conferred on paper for the sake of show and exhibition and denied in actual life when the show is over. Nor are they like philosophical concepts which have no sanctions behind them.

The charter and the proclamations and the resolutions of the United Nations cannot be compared with the rights sanctioned by God; because the former is not applicable to anybody while the latter is applicable to every believer. They are a part and parcel of the Islamic Faith. Every Muslim or administrators who claim themselves to be Muslims will have to accept, recognize and enforce them. If they fail to enforce them, and start denying the rights that have been guaranteed by God or make amendments and changes in them, or practically violate them while paying lip-service to them, the verdict of the Holy Quran for such governments is clear and unequivocal:

Those who do not judge by what God has sent down are the disbelievers (kafirun). 5:44 The following verse also proclaims: "**They are the wrong-doers (zalimun)**" (5:45), while a third verse in the same chapter says: "**They are the evil-livers (fasiqun)**" (5:47). In other words this means that if the temporal authorities regard their own words and decisions to be right and those given by God as wrong they are disbelievers. If on the other hand they regard God's commands as right but wittingly reject them and enforce their own decisions against God's, then they are the mischief-makers and the wrong-doers. Fasiq, the law-breaker, is the one who disregards the bond of allegiance, and zalim is he who works against the truth. Thus all those temporal authorities who claim to be Muslims and yet violate the rights sanctioned by God belong to one of these two categories, either they are the disbelievers or are the wrong-doers and mischief-makers. The rights which have been sanctioned by God are permanent, perpetual and eternal. They are not subject to any alterations or modifications, and there is no scope for any change or abrogation.

CHAPTER TWO: BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS

The first thing that we find in Islam in this connection is that it lays down some rights for man as a human being. In other words it means that every man whether he belongs to this country or that, whether he is a believer or unbeliever, whether he lives in some forest or is found in some desert, whatever be the case, he has some basic human rights simply because he is a human being, which should be recognized by every Muslim. In fact it will be his duty to fulfil these obligations.

1. The Right to Life

The first and the foremost basic right is the right to live and respect human life. The Holy Quran lays down:

Whosoever kills a human being without (any reason like) man slaughter, or corruption on earth, it is as though he had killed all mankind ... (5:32)

As far as the question of taking life in retaliation for murder or the question of punishment for spreading corruption on this earth is concerned, it can be decided only by a proper and competent court of law. If there is any war with any nation or country, it can be decided only by a properly established government. In any case, no human being has any right by himself to take human life in retaliation or for causing mischief on this earth. Therefore it is incumbent on every human being that under no circumstances should he be guilty of taking a human life. If anyone has murdered a human being, it is as if he has slain the entire human race. These instructions have been repeated in the Holy Quran in another place saying:

Do not kill a soul which Allah has made sacred except through the due process of law ... (6:151)

Here also homicide has been distinguished from destruction of life carried out in pursuit of justice. Only a proper and competent court will be able to decide whether or not an individual has forfeited his right to life by disregarding the right to life and peace of other human beings. The Prophet, may God's blessings be on him, has declared homicide as the greatest sin only next to polytheism. The Tradition of the Prophet reads: "The greatest sins are to associate something with God and to kill human beings." In all these verses of the Quran and the Traditions of the Prophet the word 'soul' (nafs) has been used in general terms without any distinction or particularization which might have lent itself to the elucidation that the persons belonging to one's nation, the citizens of one's country, the people of a particular race or religion should not be killed. The injunction applies to all human beings and the destruction of human life in itself has been prohibited.

'The Right to Life' has been given to man only by Islam. You will observe that the people who talk about human rights if they have ever mentioned them in their Constitutions or Declarations, then it is clearly implied in them that these rights are applicable only to their citizens or they have been framed for the white race alone. This can clearly be gleaned by the fact that human beings were hunted down like animals in Australia and the land was cleared of the aborigines for the white man. Similarly the aboriginal population of America was systematically destroyed and the Red Indians who somehow survived this genocide were confined to specified areas called Reservations. They also penetrated into Africa and hunted down human beings like wild animals. All these instances go to prove that they have no respect for human life as such and if they have, it is only on the basis of their nationality, colour or race. Contrary to this, Islam recognizes this right for all human beings. If a man belongs to a primitive or savage tribe, even then Islam regards him as a human being.

2. The Right to the Safety of Life

Immediately after the verse of the Holy Quran which has been mentioned in connection with the right to life, God has said: "**And whoever saves a life it is as though he had saved the lives of all mankind**" (5:32). There can be several forms of saving man from death. A man may be ill or wounded, irrespective of his nationality, race or colour. If you know that he is in need of your help, then it is your duty that you should arrange for his treatment for disease or wound. If he is dying of starvation, then it is your duty to feed him so that he can ward off death. If he is drowning or his life is at stake, then it is your duty to save him. You will be surprised to hear that the Talmud, the religious book of the Jews, contains a verse of similar nature, but records it in altogether different form. It says: "Whoever destroyed a life of the Israelite, in the eyes of the Scripture, it is as if he destroyed the whole world. And whoever protected and saved one life of the Israelite, in the light of the Scripture, it is as if he saved the whole world." Talmud also contains the view that if a non-Israelite is drowning and you tried to save him then you are a sinner. Can it be given a name other than racialism? We regard it as our duty to save every human life, because it is thus that we have been enjoined in the Holy Quran. On the other hand, if they regard it necessary to save the life of a human being at all, it should be the life of an Israelite. As far as other people are concerned, according to this view, they do not seem to be human enough to deserve protection of their persons. In their literature the concept of 'Goyim' for which the English word 'Gentile' and the Arabic word ummi (illiterate) is used, is that they enjoy no human rights; human rights are reserved only for the children of Israel. The Quran has mentioned this belief of the Israelites and quotes the Jews saying: "**There is no blame on us (for anything we may do) with regard to the unlettered folk (i.e. the ummi)**" (3:75).

3. Respect for the Chastity of Women

The third important thing that we find in the Charter of Human Rights granted by Islam is that a woman's chastity has to be respected and protected under all circumstances, whether she belongs to our own nation or to the nation of an enemy, whether we find her in the wild forest or in a conquered city; whether she is our co-religionist or belongs to some other religion or has no religion at all. A Muslim cannot outrage her under any circumstances. All promiscuous relationship has been forbidden to him, irrespective of the status or position of the woman, whether the woman is a willing or an unwilling partner to the act. The words of the Holy Quran in this respect are: "Do not approach (the bounds of) adultery" (17:32). Heavy punishment has been prescribed for this crime, and the order has not been qualified by any conditions. Since the violation of chastity of a woman is forbidden in Islam, a Muslim who perpetrates this crime cannot escape punishment whether he receives it in this world or in the Hereafter. This concept of sanctity of chastity and protection of women can be found nowhere else except in Islam. The armies of the Western powers need the daughters of their nation to satisfy their carnal appetites even in their own countries, and if they happen to occupy another country, the fate of its women folk can better be imagined than described. But the history of the Muslims, apart from a few lapses of the individuals here or there, has been free from this crime against womanhood. It has never happened that after the conquest of a foreign country the Muslim army has gone about raping the women of the conquered

people, or in their own country, the government has arranged to provide prostitutes¹for them. This is also a great blessing which the human race has received through Islam.²

4. The Right to a Basic Standard of Life

Speaking about the economic rights the Holy Quran enjoins upon its followers:

And in their wealth there is acknowledged right for the needy and destitute.
(51:19)

The words of this injunction show that it is a categorical and un-qualified order. Furthermore this injunction was given in Makkah where there was no Muslim society in existence and where generally the Muslims had to come in contact with the population of the disbelievers. Therefore the clear meaning of this verse is that anyone who asks for help and anyone who is suffering from deprivation has a right in the property and wealth of the Muslims; irrespective of the fact whether he belongs to this nation or to that nation, to this country or to that country, to this race or to that race. If you are in a position to help and a needy person asks you for help or if you come to know that he is in need, then it is your duty to help him. God has established his right over you, which you have to honour as a Muslim.

5. Individual's Right to Freedom

Islam has clearly and categorically forbidden the primitive practice of capturing a free man, to make him a slave or to sell him into slavery. On this point the clear and unequivocal words of the Prophet (S) are as follows: "There are three categories of people against whom I shall myself be a plaintiff on the Day of Judgement. Of these three, one is he who enslaves a free man, then sells him and eats this money" (al-Bukhari and Ibn Majjah). The words of this Tradition of the Prophet are also general, they have not been qualified or made applicable to a particular nation, race, country or followers of a particular religion. The Europeans take great pride in claiming that they abolished slavery from the world, though they had the decency to do so only in the middle of the last century. Before this, these Western powers had been raiding Africa on a very large scale, capturing their free men, putting them in bondage and transporting them to their new colonies. The treatment which they have meted out to these unfortunate people has been worse than the treatment given to animals. The books written by the Western people themselves bear testimony to this fact.

The Slave Trade of Western Nations:

After the occupation of America and the West Indies, for three hundred and fifty years, traffic in slave trade continued. The African coasts where the black-skinned captured Africans were brought from the interior of Africa and put on the ships sailing out from those ports, came to be known as the Slave Coast. During only one century (from 1680 to 1786) the total number of free people who were captured and enslaved only for British Colonies amounts, according to the estimate of British

authors, to 20 million human beings. Over the period of only one year (1790) we are told that 75,000 human beings were captured and sent for slave labour in the Colonies. The ships which were used for transporting the slaves were small and dirty. These unfortunate Africans were thrust into the holds of these ships like cattle right up to the top and many of them were chained to the wooden shelves on which they could hardly move because these were only eighteen inches apart, kept one on top of the other. They were not provided with suitable food, and if they fell ill or were injured, no attempt was made to provide them with medical treatment. The Western writers themselves state that at least 20% of the total number of people who were captured for slavery and forced labour perished during their transportation from the African coast to America. It has also been estimated that the total number of people who were captured for slavery by the various European nations during the heyday of the slave trade comes to at least one hundred million. This is the record of the people who denounce Muslims day and night for recognizing the institution of slavery. It is as if a criminal is holding his finger of blame towards an innocent man.

The Position of Slavery in Islam:

Briefly I would like to tell you about the position and nature of slavery in Islam. Islam tried to solve the problem of the slaves that were in Arabia by encouraging the people in different ways to set their slaves free. The Muslims were ordered that in expiation of some of their sins they should set their slaves free. Freeing a slave by one's own free will was declared to be an act of great merit, so much so that it was said that every limb of the man who manumits a slave will be protected from hell-fire in lieu of the limb of the slave freed by him. The result of this policy was that by the time the period of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs was reached, all the old slaves of Arabia were liberated. The Prophet alone liberated as many as 63 slaves. The number of slaves freed by 'Aishah was 67, 'Abbas liberated 70, 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar liberated one thousand, and 'Abd al-Rahman purchased thirty thousand and set them free. Similarly other Companions of the Prophet liberated a large number of slaves, the details of which are given in the Traditions and books of history of that period.

Thus the problem of the slaves of Arabia was solved in a short period of thirty or forty years. After this the only form of slavery which was left in Islamic society was the prisoners of war, who were captured on the battlefield. These prisoners of war were retained by the Muslim Government until their government agreed to receive them back in exchange for Muslim soldiers captured by them, or arranged the payment of ransom on their behalf. If the soldiers they captured were not exchanged with Muslim prisoners of war, or their people did not pay their ransom money to purchase their liberty, then the Muslim Government used to distribute them among the soldiers of the army which had captured them. This was a more humane and proper way of disposing of them than retaining them like cattle in concentration camps and taking forced labour from them and, if their women folk were also captured, setting them aside for prostitution. In place of such a cruel and outrageous way of disposing of the prisoners of war, Islam preferred to spread them in the population and thus brought them in contact with individual human beings. Over and above, their guardians were ordered to treat them well. The result of this humane policy was that most of the men who were captured on foreign battlefields and brought to the Muslim countries as slaves embraced Islam and their descendants produced great scholars, imams, jurists, commentators, statesmen and generals of the army. So much so that later on they became the rulers of the Muslim world. The

solution of this problem which has been proposed in the present age is that after the cessation of hostilities the prisoners of war of the combatant countries should be exchanged. Whereas Muslims have been practising it from the very beginning and whenever the adversary accepted the exchange of prisoners of war from both sides, it was implemented without the least hesitation or delay. In modern warfare we also find that if one government is completely routed leaving her in no position of bargaining for the prisoners of war and the winning party gets its prisoners easily, then experience has shown that the prisoners of war of the vanquished army are kept in conditions which are much worse than the conditions of slaves. Can anyone tell us what has been the fate of the thousands of prisoners of war captured by Russia from the defeated armies of Germany and Japan in the Second World War? No one has given their account so far. No one knows how many thousands of them are still alive and how many thousands of them have perished due to the hardship of the Russian concentration and labour camps. The forced labour which has been taken from them is much worse than the service one can exact from slaves. Even perhaps in the times of ancient Pharaohs of Egypt such harsh labour might not have been exacted from the slaves in building the pyramids of Egypt, as has been exacted from the prisoners of war in Russia in developing Siberia and other backward areas of Russia, or working in coal and other mines in below zero temperatures, ill-clad, ill-fed and brutally treated by their supervisors.

6. The Right to Justice

This is a very important and valuable right which Islam has given to man as a human being. The Holy Quran has laid down: "**Do not let your hatred of a people incite you to aggression**" (5:2). "**And do not let ill-will towards any folk incite you so that you swerve from dealing justly. Be just; that is nearest to heedfulness**" (5:8). Stressing this point the Quran again says: "**You who believe stand steadfast before God as witness for (truth and) fairplay**" (4:135). This makes the point clear that Muslims have to be just not only with ordinary human beings but even with their enemies. In other words, the justice to which Islam invites her followers is not limited only to the citizens of their own country, or the people of their own tribe, nation or race, or the Muslim community as a whole, but it is meant for all the human beings of the world. Muslims therefore, cannot be unjust to anyone. Their permanent habit and character should be such that no man should ever fear injustice at their hands, and they should treat every human being everywhere with justice and fairness.

7. Equality of Human Beings

Islam not only recognizes absolute equality between men irrespective of any distinction of colour, race or nationality, but makes it an important and significant principle, a reality. The Almighty God has laid down in the Holy Quran: "O mankind, we have created you from a male and female." In other words all human beings are brothers to one another. They all are the descendants from one father and one mother. "**And we set you up as nations and tribes so that you may be able to recognize each other**" (49:13). This means that the division of human beings into nations, races, groups and tribes is for the sake of distinction, so that people of one

race or tribe may meet and be acquainted with the people belonging to another race or tribe and cooperate with one another. This division of the human race is neither meant for one nation to take pride in its superiority over others nor is it meant for one nation to treat another with contempt or disgrace, or regard them as a mean and degraded race and usurp their rights. **"Indeed, the noblest among you before God are the most heedful of you"** (49: 13). In other words the superiority of one man over another is only on the basis of God-consciousness, purity of character and high morals, and not on the basis of colour, race, language or nationality, and even this superiority based on piety and pure conduct does not justify that such people should play lord or assume airs of superiority over other human beings. Assuming airs of superiority is in itself a reprehensible vice which no God-fearing and pious man can ever dream of perpetrating. Nor does the righteous have more privileged rights over others, because this runs counter to human equality, which has been laid down in the beginning of this verse as a general principle. From the moral point of view, goodness and virtue is in all cases better than vice and evil.

This has been exemplified by the Prophet in one of his sayings thus: **"No Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab. Nor does a white man have any superiority over a black man, or the black man any superiority over the white man. You are all the children of Adam, and Adam was created from clay"** (al-Bayhaqi and al-Bazzaz). In this manner Islam established equality for the entire human race and struck at the very root of all distinctions based on colour, race, language or nationality. According to Islam, God has given man this right of equality as a birthright. Therefore no man should be discriminated against on the ground of the colour of his skin, his place of birth, the race or the nation in which he was born. Malcolm X, the famous leader of African Negroes in America, who had launched a bitter struggle against the white people of America in order to win civil rights for his black compatriots, when he went to perform the pilgrimage, and saw how the Muslims of Asia, Africa, Europe, America and those of different races, languages and colours of skin, were wearing one dress and were hurrying towards God's House-the Ka'bah and offering prayers standing in one row and there was no distinction of any kind between them, then he realized that this was the solution to the problem of colour and race, and not what he had been trying to seek or achieve in America so far. Today, a number of non-Muslim thinkers, who are free from blind prejudice, openly admit that no other religion or way of life has solved this problem with the same degree of success with which Islam has done so.

8. The Right to Co-operate and Not to Co-operate

Islam has prescribed a general principle of paramount importance and universal application saying: **"Co-operate with one another for virtue and heedfulness and do not co-operate with one another for the purpose of vice and aggression"** (5:2). This means that the man who undertakes a noble and righteous work, irrespective of the fact whether he is living at the North Pole or the South Pole, has the right to expect support and active co-operation from the Muslims. On the contrary he who perpetrates deeds of vice and aggression, even if he is our closest relation or neighbour, does not have the right to win our support and help in the name of race, country, language or nationality, nor should he have the expectation that Muslims will co-operate with him or support him. Nor is it permissible for Muslims to co-operate with him. The wicked and vicious person may be our own

brother, but he is not of us, and he can have no help or support from us as long as he does not repent and reform his ways. On the other hand the man who is doing deeds of virtue and righteousness may have no kinship with Muslims, but Muslims will be his companions and supporters or at least his well-wishers.

CHAPTER THREE: RIGHTS OF CITIZENS IN AN ISLAMIC STATE

We have discussed the human rights in general. Now we would like to take up the question of rights of the citizens in an Islamic State. As these rights are more extensive than the general human rights which have been described earlier, they need separate treatment.

1. The Security of Life and Property

In the address which the Prophet delivered on the occasion of the Farewell Hajj, he said: "Your lives and properties are forbidden to one another till you meet your Lord on the Day of Resurrection." God Almighty has laid down in the Holy Quran: **"Anyone who kills a believer deliberately will receive as his reward (a sentence) to live in Hell for ever. God will be angry with him and curse him, and prepare dreadful torment for him"** (4:93). The Prophet has also said about the dhimmis (the non-Muslim citizens of the Muslim State): **"One who kills a man under covenant (i.e. a dhimmi) will not even smell the fragrance of Paradise"** (al-Bukhari and Abu Dawud). Islam prohibits homicide but allows only one exception, that the killing is done in the due process of law which the Quran refers to as *bi al-haqq* (with the truth). Therefore a man can be killed only when the law demands it, and it is obvious that only a court of law can decide whether the execution is being carried out with justice or without justification. In case of war or insurrection a just and righteous government alone, which follows the Shari'ah or the Islamic Law, can decide whether a war is just or unjust, whether taking of a life is justified or not; and whether a person is a rebel or not and who can be sentenced to death as a punishment. These weighty decisions cannot be left in the hands of a court which has become heedless to God and is under the influence of the administration. A judiciary like this may miscarry justice. Nor can the crimes of state be justified on the authority of the Holy Quran or Traditions (hadith) when the state murders its citizens openly and secretly without any hesitation or on the slightest pretext, because they are opposed to its unjust policies and actions or criticize it for its misdeed, and also provides protection to its hired assassins who have been guilty of the heinous crime of murder of an innocent person resulting in the fact, that neither the police take any action against such criminals nor can any proof or witnesses against these criminals be produced in the courts of law. The very existence of such a government is a crime and none of the killings carried out by them can be called "execution for the sake of justice" in the phraseology of the Holy Quran.

Along with security of life, Islam has with equal clarity and definiteness conferred the right of security of ownership of property, as mentioned earlier with reference to the address of the Farewell Hajj. On the other hand, the Holy Quran goes so far as to declare that the taking of people's possessions or property is completely prohibited unless they are acquired by lawful means as permitted in the Laws of God. The Law of God categorically declares **"Do not devour one another's wealth by false and**

illegal means" (2:188).

2. The Protection of Honour

The second important right is the right of the citizens to the protection of their honour. In the address delivered on the occasion of the Farewell Hajj, to which I have referred earlier, the Prophet did not only prohibit the life and property of the Muslims to one another, but also any encroachment upon their honour, respect and chastity were forbidden to one another. The Holy Quran clearly lays down:

(a) **"You who believe, do not let one (set of) people make fun of another set. (b) Do not defame one another. (c) Do not insult by using nicknames. (d) And do not backbite or speak ill of one another"** (49:11-12).

This is the law of Islam for the protection of honour which is indeed much superior to and better than the Western Law of Defamation. According to the Islamic Law if it is proved that someone has attacked the honour of another person, then irrespective of the fact whether or not the victim is able to prove himself a respectable and honourable person the culprit will in any case get his due punishment. But the interesting fact about the Western Law of Defamation is that the person who files suit for defamation has first to prove that he is a man of honour and public esteem and during the interrogation he is subjected to the scurrilous attacks, accusations and innuendoes of the defence council to such an extent that he earns more disgrace than the attack on his reputation against which he had knocked the door of the court of law. On top of it he has also to produce such witnesses as would testify in the court that due to the defamatory accusations of the culprit, the accused stands disgraced in their eyes. Good Gracious! what a subtle point of law, and what an adherence to the spirit of Law! How can this unfair and unjust law be compared to the Divine law? Islam declared blasphemy as a crime irrespective of the fact whether the accused is a man of honour or not, and whether the words used for blasphemy have actually disgraced the victim and harmed his reputation in the eyes of the public or not. According to the Islamic Law the mere proof of the fact that the accused said things which according to common sense could have damaged the reputation and honour of the plaintiff, is enough for the accused to be declared guilty of defamation.

3. The Sanctity and Security of Private Life

Islam recognizes the right of every citizen of its state that there should be no undue interference or encroachment on the privacy of his life. The Holy Quran has laid down the injunction: **"Do not spy on one another"** (49:12). **"Do not enter any houses except your own homes unless you are sure of their occupants' consent"** (24:27). The Prophet has gone to the extent of instructing his followers that a man should not enter even his own house suddenly or surreptitiously. He should somehow or other inform or indicate to the dwellers of the house that he is entering the house, so that he may not see his mother, sister or daughter in a condition in which they would not like to be seen, nor would he himself like to see them in that condition. Peering into the houses of other people has also been strictly prohibited, so much so that there is the saying of the Prophet that if a man finds

another person secretly peering into his house, and he blinds his eye or eyes as a punishment then he cannot be called to question nor will he be liable to prosecution. The Prophet has even prohibited people from reading the letters of others, so much so that if a man is reading his letter and another man casts sidelong glances at it and tries to read it, his conduct becomes reprehensible. This is the sanctity of privacy that Islam grants to individuals. On the other hand in the modern civilized world we find that not only the letters of other people are read and their correspondence censored, but even their photostat copies are retained for future use or blackmail. Even bugging devices are secretly fixed in the houses of the people so that one can hear and tape from a distance the conversation taking place behind closed doors. In other words it means that there is no such thing as privacy and to all practical purposes the private life of an individual does not exist.

This espionage on the life of the individual cannot be justified on moral grounds by the government saying that it is necessary to know the secrets of the dangerous persons. Though, to all intents and purposes, the basis of this policy is the fear and suspicion with which modern governments look at their citizens who are intelligent and dissatisfied with the official policies of the government. This is exactly what Islam has called as the root cause of mischief in politics. The injunction of the Prophet is: "[When the ruler begins to search for the causes of dissatisfaction amongst his people, he spoils them](#)" (Abu Dawud). The Amir Mu'awiyah has said that he himself heard the Prophet saying: "If you try to find out the secrets of the people, then you will definitely spoil them or at least you will bring them to the verge of ruin." The meaning of the phrase 'spoil them' is that when spies (C.I.D. or F.B.I. agents) are spread all around the country to find out the affairs of men, then the people begin to look at one another with suspicion, so much so that people are afraid of talking freely in their houses lest some word should escape from the lips of their wives and children which may put them in embarrassing situations. In this manner it becomes difficult for a common citizen to speak freely, even in his own house and society begins to suffer from a state of general distrust and suspicion.

4. The Security of Personal Freedom

Islam has also laid down the principle that no citizen can be imprisoned unless his guilt has been proved in an open court. To arrest a man only on the basis of suspicion and to throw him into a prison without proper court proceedings and without providing him a reasonable opportunity to produce his defence is not permissible in Islam. It is related in the hadith that once the Prophet was delivering a lecture in the mosque, when a man rose during the lecture and said: "O Prophet of God, for what crime have my neighbours been arrested?" The Prophet heard the question and continued his speech. The man rose once again and repeated the same question. The Prophet again did not answer and continued his speech. The man rose for a third time and repeated the same question. Then the Prophet ordered that the man's neighbours be released. The reason why the Prophet had kept quiet when the question was repeated twice earlier was that the police officer was present in the mosque and if there were proper reasons for the arrest of the neighbours of this man, he would have got up to explain his position. Since the police officer gave no reasons for these arrests the Prophet ordered that the arrested persons should be released. The police officer was aware of the Islamic law and therefore he did not get up to say: "the administration is aware of the charges against the arrested men, but they cannot be disclosed in public. If the Prophet would inquire about their guilt in

camera I would enlighten him." If the police officer had made such a statement, he would have been dismissed then and there. The fact that the police officer did not give any reasons for the arrests in the open court was sufficient reason for the Prophet to give immediate orders for the release of the arrested men. The injunction of the Holy Quran is very clear on this point. **"When- ever you judge between people, you should judge with (a sense of) justice"** (4:58). And the Prophet has also been asked by God: "I have been ordered to dispense justice between you." This was the reason why the Caliph 'Umar said: "In Islam no one can be imprisoned except in pursuance of justice." The words used here clearly indicate that justice means due process of law. What has been prohibited and condemned is that a man be arrested and imprisoned without proof of his guilt in an open court and without providing him an opportunity to defend himself against those charges. If the Government suspects that a particular individual has committed a crime or he is likely to commit an offence in the near future then they should give reasons for their suspicion before a court of law and the culprit or the suspect should be allowed to produce his defence in an open court, so that the court may decide whether the suspicion against him is based on sound grounds or not and if there is good reason for suspicion, then he should be informed of how long he will be in preventive detention. This decision should be taken under all circumstances in an open court, so that the public may hear the charges brought by the government, as well as the defence made by the accused and see that the due process of law is being applied to him and he is not being victimized.

The correct method of dealing with such cases in Islam is exemplified in the famous decision of the Prophet which took place before the conquest of Makkah. The Prophet was making preparations for the attack on Makkah, when one of his Companions, Hatib ibn Abi Balta'ah sent a letter through a woman to the authorities in Makkah informing them about the impending attack. The Prophet came to know of this through a Divine inspiration. He ordered 'Ali and Zubayr: "Go quickly on the route to Makkah, at such and such a place, you will find a woman carrying a letter. Recover the letter from her and bring it to me." So they went and found the woman exactly where the Prophet had said. They recovered the letter from her and brought it to the Prophet. This was indeed a clear case of treachery. To inform the enemy about a secret of an army and that too at the time of a war is a very serious offence tantamount to treachery. In fact one cannot think of a more serious crime during war than giving out a military secret to one's enemy. What could have been a more suitable case for a secret hearing; a military secret had been betrayed and common sense demanded that he should be tried in camera. But the Prophet summoned Hatib to the open court of the Mosque of the Prophet and in the presence of hundreds of people asked him to explain his position with regard to his letter addressed to the leaders of Quraysh which had been intercepted on its way. The accused said: "O God's Messenger (may God's blessings be on you) I have not revolted against Islam, nor have I done this with the intention of betraying a military secret. The truth of the matter is that my wife and children are living in Makkah and I do not have my tribe to protect them there. I had written this letter so that the leaders of Quraysh may be indebted to me and may protect my wife and children out of gratitude." 'Umar rose and respectfully submitted: "O Prophet, please permit me to put this traitor to the sword." The Prophet replied: "He is one of those people who had participated in the Battle of Badr, and the explanation he has advanced in his defence would seem to be correct."

Let us look at this decision of the Prophet in perspective. It was a clear case of treachery and betrayal of military secrets. But the Prophet acquitted Hatib on two

counts. Firstly, that his past records were very clean and showed that he could not have betrayed the cause of Islam, since on the occasion of the Battle of Badr when there were heavy odds against the Muslims, he had risked his life for them. Secondly, his family was in fact in danger at Makkah. Therefore, if he had shown some human weakness for his children and written this letter, then this punishment was quite sufficient for him that his secret offence was divulged in public and he had been disgraced and humiliated in the eyes of the believers. God has referred to this offence of Hatib in the Holy Quran but did not propose any punishment for him except rebuke and admonition.

The attitude and activities of the Kharijis in the days of the Caliph 'Ali are well-known to the students of Muslim history. They used to abuse the Caliph openly, and threaten him with murder. But whenever they were arrested for these offences, 'Ali would set them free and tell his officers "As long as they do not actually perpetrate offences against the State, the mere use of abusive language or the threat of use of force are not such offences for which they can be imprisoned." The imam Abu Hanifah has recorded the following saying of the Caliph 'Ali (A): "As long as they do not set out on armed rebellion, the Caliph of the Faithful will not interfere with them." On another occasion 'Ali was delivering a lecture in the mosque when the Kharijis raised their special slogan there. 'Ali said: "We will not deny you the right to come to the mosques to worship God, nor will we stop to give your share from the wealth of the State, as long as you are with us (and support us in our wars with the unbelievers) and we shall never take military action against you as long as you do not fight with us." One can visualize the opposition which 'Ali was facing; more violent and vituperative opposition cannot even be imagined in a present-day democratic State; but the freedom that he had allowed to the opposition was such that no government has ever been able to give to its opposition. He did not arrest even those who threatened him with murder nor did he imprison them.

5. The Right to Protest Against Tyranny

Amongst the rights that Islam has conferred on human beings is the right to protest against government's tyranny. Referring to it the Quran says: "**God does not love evil talk in public unless it is by some- one who has been injured thereby**" (4: 148). This means that God strongly disapproves of abusive language or strong words of condemnation, but the person who has been the victim of injustice or tyranny, God gives him the right to openly protest against the injury that has been done to him. This right is not limited only to individuals. The words of the verse are general. Therefore if an individual or a group of people or a party usurps power, and after assuming the reins of authority begins to tyrannize individuals or groups of men or the entire population of the country, then to raise the voice of protest against it openly is the God-given right of man and no one has the authority to usurp or deny this right. If anyone tries to usurp this right of citizens then he rebels against God. The talisman of Section 1444 may protect such a tyrant in this world, but it cannot save him from the hell-fire in the Hereafter.

6. Freedom of Expression

Islam gives the right of freedom of thought and expression to all citizens of the

Islamic State on the condition that it should be used for the propagation of virtue and truth and not for spreading evil and wickedness. This Islamic concept of freedom of expression is much superior to the concept prevalent in the West. Under no circumstances would Islam allow evil and wickedness to be propagated. It also does not give anybody the right to use abusive or offensive language in the name of criticism. The right to freedom of expression for the sake of propagating virtue and righteousness is not only a right in Islam but an obligation. One who tries to deny this right to his people is openly at war with God, the All-Powerful. And the same thing applies to the attempt to stop people from evil. Whether this evil is perpetrated by an individual or by a group of people or the government of one's own country, or the government of some other country; it is the right of a Muslim and it is also his obligation that he should warn and reprimand the evil-doer and try to stop him from doing it. Over and above, he should openly and publicly condemn it and show the course of righteousness which that individual, nation or government should adopt.

The Holy Quran has described this quality of the Faithful in the following words: "**They enjoin what is proper and forbid what is improper**" (9:71). In contrast, describing the qualities of a hypocrite, the Quran mentions: "**They bid what is improper and forbid what is proper**" (9:67). The main purpose of an Islamic Government has been defined by God in the Quran as follows: "**If we give authority to these men on earth they will keep up prayers, and offer poor-due, bid what is proper and forbid what is improper**" (22:41). The Prophet has said: "If any one of you comes across an evil, he should try to stop it with his hand (using force), if he is not in a position to stop it with his hand then he should try to stop it by means of his tongue (meaning he should speak against it). If he is not even able to use his tongue then he should at least condemn it in his heart. This is the weakest degree of faith" (Muslim). This obligation of inviting people to righteousness and forbidding them to adopt the paths of evil is incumbent on all true Muslims. If any government deprives its citizens of this right, and prevents them from performing this duty, then it is in direct conflict with the injunction of God. The government is not in conflict with its people, but is in conflict with God. In this way it is at war with God and is trying to usurp that right of its people which God has conferred not only as a right but as an obligation. As far as the government which itself propagates evil, wickedness and obscenity and interferes with those who are inviting people to virtue and righteousness is concerned, according to the Holy Quran it is the government of the hypocrites.

7. Freedom of Association

Islam has also given people the right to freedom of association and formation of parties or organizations. This right is also subject to certain general rules. It should be exercised for propagating virtue and righteousness and should never be used for spreading evil and mischief. We have not only been given this right for spreading righteousness and virtue, but have been ordered to exercise this right. Addressing the Muslims, the Holy Quran declares:

You are the best community which has been brought forth for mankind. You command what is proper and forbid what is improper and you believe in God ... (3:110)

This means that it is the obligation and duty of the entire Muslim community that it

should invite and enjoin people to righteousness and virtue and forbid them from doing evil. If the entire Muslim community is not able to perform this duty then **"let there be a community among you who will invite (people) to (do) good, command what is proper and forbid what is improper, those will be prosperous"** (3:104). This clearly indicates that if the entire Muslim nation collectively begins to neglect its obligation to invite people to goodness and forbid them from doing evil then it is absolutely essential that it should contain at least a group of people which may perform this obligation. As has been said before this is not only a right but an obligation and on the fulfilment of which depends success and prosperity here as well as in the Hereafter. It is an irony with the religion of God that in a Muslim country the assembly and association that is formed for the purposes of spreading evil and mischief should have the right to rule over the country and the association and party which has been formed for propagating righteousness and virtue should live in perpetual fear of harassment and of being declared illegal. Conditions here are just the reverse of what has been prescribed by God. The claim is that we are Muslims and this is an Islamic State⁵ but the work that is being done is directed to spreading evil, to corrupt and morally degrade and debase the people while there is an active and effective check on the work being carried out for reforming society and inviting people to righteousness. Moreover the life of those who are engaged in spreading righteousness and checking the spread of evil and wickedness is made intolerable and hard to bear.

8. Freedom of Conscience and Conviction

Islam also gives the right to freedom of conscience and conviction to its citizens in an Islamic State. The Holy Quran has laid down the injunction: **"There should be no coercion in the matter of faith"** (2:256). Though there is no truth and virtue greater than the religion of Truth-Islam, and Muslims are enjoined to invite people to embrace Islam and advance arguments in favour of it, they are not asked to enforce this faith on them. No force will be applied in order to compel them to accept Islam. Whoever accepts it he does so by his own choice. Muslims will welcome such a convert to Islam with open arms and admit him to their community with equal rights and privileges. But if somebody does not accept Islam, Muslims will have to recognize and respect his decision, and no moral, social or political pressure will be put on him to change his mind.

9. Protection of Religious Sentiments

Along with the freedom of conviction and freedom of conscience, Islam has given the right to the individual that his religious sentiments will be given due respect and nothing will be said or done which may encroach upon this right. It has been ordained by God in the Holy Quran: **"Do not abuse those they appeal to instead of God"** (6:108). These instructions are not only limited to idols and deities, but they also apply to the leaders or national heroes of the people. If a group of people holds a conviction which according to you is wrong, and holds certain persons in high esteem which according to you is not deserved by them, then it will not be justified in Islam that you use abusive language for them and thus injure their feelings. Islam does not prohibit people from holding debate and discussion on religious matters,

but it wants that these discussions should be conducted in decency. **"Do not argue with the people of the Book unless it is in the politest manner"** (29:46)-says the Quran. This order is not merely limited to the people of the Scriptures, but applies with equal force to those following other faiths.

10. Protection from Arbitrary Imprisonment

Islam also recognizes the right of the individual that he will not be arrested or imprisoned for the offences of others. The Holy Quran has laid down this principle clearly: **"No bearer of burdens shall be made to bear the burden of another"** (6:164). Islam believes in personal responsibility. We ourselves are responsible for our acts, and the consequence of our actions cannot be transferred to someone else. In other words this means that every man is responsible for his actions. If another man has not shared this action then he cannot be held responsible for it, nor can he be arrested. It is a matter of great regret and shame that we are seeing this just and equitable principle which has not been framed by any human being, but by the Creator and Nourisher of the entire universe, being flouted and violated before our eyes. So much so that a man is guilty of a crime or he is a suspect, but his wife being arrested for his crime. Things have gone so far that innocent people are being punished for the crimes of others. To give a recent example, in Karachi (Pakistan), a man was suspected of being involved in a bomb throwing incident. In the course of police investigation he was subjected to horrible torture in order to extract a confession from him. When he insisted on his innocence, then the police arrested his mother, his wife, daughter and sister and brought them to the police station. They were all stripped naked in his presence and he was stripped naked of all his clothes before their eyes so that a confession of the crime could be extracted from him. It appears as if for the sake of investigation of crime it has become proper and legal in our country to strip the innocent women folk of the household in order to bring pressure on the suspect. This is indeed very outrageous and shameful. This is the height of meanness and depravity. This is not a mere hearsay which I am repeating here, but I have full information about this case and can prove my allegations in any court of law. I would here like to ask what right such tyrants who perpetrate these crimes against mankind have to tell us that they are Muslims or that they are conducting the affairs of the state according to the teachings of Islam and their state is an Islamic State. They are breaching and flouting a clear law of the Holy Quran. They are stripping men and women naked which is strictly forbidden in Islam. They disgrace and humiliate humanity and then they claim that they are Muslims.

11. The Right to Basic Necessities of Life

Islam has recognized the right of the needy people that help and assistance will be provided for them. **"And in their wealth there is acknowledged right for the needy and the destitute"** (51:19). In this verse, the Quran has not only conferred a right on every man who asks for assistance in the wealth of the Muslims, but has also laid down that if a Muslim comes to know that a certain man is without the basic necessities of life, then irrespective of the fact whether he asks for assistance or not, it is his duty to reach him and give all the help that he can extend. For this purpose Islam has not depended only on the help and charity that is given voluntarily, but

has made compulsory charity, zakat as the third pillar of Islam, next only to profession of faith and worship of God through holding regular prayers. The Prophet has clearly instructed in this respect that: "It will be taken from their rich and given to those in the community in need" (al-Bukhari and Muslim). In addition to this, it has also been declared that the Islamic State should support those who have nobody to support them. The Prophet has said: "The Head of state is the guardian of him, who has nobody to support him" (Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi). The word wali which has been used by the Prophet is a very comprehensive word and has a wide range of meanings. If there is an orphan or an aged man, if there is a crippled or unemployed person, if one is invalid or poor and has no one else to support him or help him, then it is the duty and the responsibility of the state to support and assist him. If a dead man has no guardian or heir, then it is the duty of the state to arrange for his proper burial. In short the state has been entrusted with the duty and responsibility of looking after all those who need help and assistance. A truly Islamic State is therefore a truly welfare state which will be the guardian and protector of all those in need.

12. Equality Before Law

Islam gives its citizens the right to absolute and complete equality in the eyes of the law. As far as the Muslims are concerned, there are clear instructions in the Holy Quran and hadith that in their rights and obligations they are all equal: "**The believers are brothers (to each other)**" (49:10). "**If they (disbelievers) repent and keep up prayer and pay the lpoor-due, they are your brothers in faith**" (9:11). The Prophet has said that: "The life and blood of Muslims are equally precious" (Abu Dawud; Ibn Majjah). In another hadith he has said: "The protection given by all Muslims is equal. Even an ordinary man of them can grant protection to any man" (al-Bukhari; Muslim; Abu Dawud). In another more detailed Tradition of the Prophet, it has been said that those who accept the Oneness of God, believe in the Prophet- hood of His Messenger, give up primitive prejudices and join the Muslim community and brotherhood, "then they have the same rights and obligations as other Muslims have" (al-Bukhari; al-Nisa'i). Thus there is absolute equality between the new converts to Islam and the old followers of the Faith.

This religious brotherhood and the uniformity of their rights and obligations is the foundation of equality in Islamic society, in which the rights and obligations of any person are neither greater nor lesser in any way than the rights and obligations of other people. As far as the non- Muslim citizens of the Islamic State are concerned, the rule of Islamic Shari'ah (law) about them has been very well expressed by the Caliph 'Ali in these words: "They have accepted our protection only because their lives may be like our lives and their properties like our properties" (Abu Dawud). In other words, their (of the dhimmis) lives and properties are as sacred as the lives and properties of the Muslims. Discrimination of people into different classes was one of the greatest crimes that, according to the Quran, Pharaoh used to indulge in: "**He had divided his people into different classes,**" ... "**And he suppressed one group of them (at the cost of others)**" (28:4).

13. Rulers Not Above the Law

Islam clearly insists and demands that all officials of the Islamic State, whether he be the head or an ordinary employee, are equal in the eyes of the law. None of them is above the law or can claim immunity. Even an ordinary citizen in Islam has the right to put forward a claim or file a legal complaint against the highest executive of the country. The Caliph 'Umar said, "I have myself seen the Prophet, may God's blessings be on him, taking revenge against himself (penalizing himself for some shortcoming or failing)." On the occasion of the Battle of Badr, when the Prophet was straightening the rows of the Muslim army he hit the belly of a soldier in an attempt to push him back in line. The soldier complained "O Prophet, you have hurt me with your stick." The Prophet immediately bared his belly and said: "I am very sorry, you can revenge by doing the same to me." The soldier came forward and kissed the abdomen of the Prophet and said that this was all that he wanted.

A woman belonging to a high and noble family was arrested in connection with a theft. The case was brought to the Prophet, and it was recommended that she may be spared the punishment of theft. The Prophet replied: "The nations that lived before you were destroyed by God because they punished the common men for their offences and let their dignitaries go unpunished for their crimes; I swear by Him (God) who holds my life in His hand that even if Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad, has committed this crime then I would have amputated her hand." During the caliphate of 'Umar, Muhammad the son of 'Amr ibn al-'As the Governor of Egypt, whipped an Egyptian. The Egyptian went to Medina and lodged his complaint with the Righteous Caliph, who immediately summoned the Governor and his son to Medina. When they appeared before him in Medina, the Caliph handed a whip to the Egyptian complainant and asked him to whip the son of the Governor in his presence. After taking his revenge when the Egyptian was about to hand over the whip to 'Umar, he said to the Egyptian: "Give one stroke of the whip to the Honourable Governor as well. His son would certainly have not beaten you were it not for the false pride that he had in his father's high office." The plaintiff submitted: "The person who had beaten me, I have already avenged myself on him." 'Umar said: "By God, if you had beaten him (the Governor) I would not have checked you from doing so. You have spared him of your own free will." Then he ('Umar) angrily turned to 'Amr ibn al-'As and said: "O 'Amr, when did you start to enslave the people, though they were born free of their mothers?" When the Islamic State was flourishing in its pristine glory and splendour, the common people could equally lodge complaints against the caliph of the time in the court and the caliph had to appear before the qadi to answer the charges. And if the caliph had any complaint against any citizen, he could not use his administrative powers and authority to set the matter right, but had to refer the case to the court of law for proper adjudication.

14. The Right to Avoid Sin

Islam also confers this right on every citizen that he will not be ordered to commit a sin, a crime or an offence; and if any govern- ment, or the administrator, or the head of department orders an individual to do a wrong, then he has the right to refuse to comply with the order. His refusal to carry out such crime or unjust instructions would not be regarded as an offence in the eyes of the Islamic law. On the contrary giving orders to one's subordinates to commit a sin or do a wrong is itself an offence and such a serious offence that the officer who gives this sinful order whatever his rank and position may be, is liable to be summarily dismissed. These

clear instructions of the Prophet are summarized in the following hadith: "It is not permissible to disobey God in obedience to the orders of any human being" (Musnad of Ibn Hanbal). In other words, no one has the right to order his subordinates to do anything against the laws of God. If such an order is given, the subordinate has the right to ignore it or openly refuse to carry out such instructions. According to this rule no offender will be able to prove his innocence or escape punishment by saying that this offence was committed on the orders of the government or superior officers. If such a situation arises then the person who commits the offence and the person who orders that such an offence be committed, will both be liable to face criminal proceedings against them. And if an officer takes any improper and unjust measures against a subordinate who refuses to carry out illegal orders, then the subordinate has the right to go to the court of law for the protection of his rights, and he can demand that the officer be punished for his wrong or unjust orders.

15. The Right to Participate in the Affairs of State

According to Islam, governments in this world are actually representatives (khulafa') of the Creator of the universe, and this responsibility is not entrusted to any individual or family or a particular class or group of people but to the entire Muslim nation. The Holy Quran says: "**God has promised to appoint those of you who believe and do good deeds as (His) representatives on earth**" (24:55). This clearly indicates that khilafah is a collective gift of God in which the right of every individual Muslim is neither more nor less than the right of any other person. The correct method recommended by the Holy Quran for running the affairs of the state is as follows: "**And their business is (conducted) through consultation among themselves**" (42:38). According to this principle it is the right of every Muslim that either he should have a direct say in the affairs of the state or a representative chosen by him and other Muslims should participate in the consultation of the state. Islam, under no circumstance, permits or tolerates that an individual or a group or party of individuals may deprive the common Muslims of their rights, and usurp powers of the state. Similarly, Islam does not regard it right and proper that an individual may put up a false show of setting up a legislative assembly and by means of underhand tactics such as fraud, persecution, bribery, etc., gets himself and men of his choice elected in the assembly. This is not only a treachery against the people whose rights are usurped by illegal and unfair means, but against the Creator Who has entrusted the Muslims to rule on this earth on His behalf, and has prescribed the procedure of an assembly for exercising these powers. The shura or the legislative assembly has no other meaning except that:

1. The executive head of the government and the members of the assembly should be elected by free and independent choice of the people.
2. The people and their representatives should have the right to criticize and freely express their opinions.
3. The real conditions of the country should be brought before the people without suppressing any fact so that they may be able to form their opinion about whether the government is working properly or not.

4. There should be adequate guarantee that only those people who have the support of the masses should rule over the country and those who fail to win this support should be removed from their position of authority.

CHAPTER FOUR: RIGHTS OF ENEMIES AT WAR

After dealing with the rights of the citizens of an Islamic State, I would like to briefly discuss the rights which Islam has conferred on its enemies. In the days when Islam came into focus the world was completely unaware of the concept of humane and decent rules of war. The West became conscious of this concept for the first time through the works of the seventeenth century thinker, Grotius. But the actual codification of the 'international law' in war began in the middle of the nineteenth century. Prior to this no concept of civilized behaviour in war was found in the West. All forms of barbarity and savagery were perpetrated in war, and the rights of those at war were not even recognized, let alone respected. The laws which were framed in this field during the nineteenth century or over the following period up to the present day, cannot be called 'laws' in the real sense of the word. They are only in the nature of conventions and agreements and calling them 'international law' is actually a kind of misnomer, because no nation regards them binding when they are at war, unless, of course, when the adversaries also agree to abide by them. In other words, these civilized laws imply that if our enemies respect them then we shall also abide by them, and if they ignore these human conventions and take recourse to barbaric and cruel ways of waging war, then we shall also adopt the same or similar techniques. It is obvious that such a course which depends on mutual acceptance and agreement cannot be called 'law'. And this is the reason why the provisions of this so-called 'inter-national law' have been flouted and ignored in every way, and every time they have been revised, additions or deletions have been made in them. Law of War and Peace in Islam:

The rules which have been framed by Islam to make war civilized and humane, are in the nature of law, because they are the injunctions of God and His Prophet which are followed by Muslims in all circumstances, irrespective of the behaviour of the enemy. It is now for the scholars to find out how far the West has availed of the laws of war given by Islam thirteen hundred years ago; and even after the adaptation of some of the laws of Islam how far the West attained those heights of civilized and humane methods of warfare which Muslims reached through the blessings of Islam. Western writers have often asserted that the Prophet had borrowed everything in his teachings from the Jews and the Christians. Instead of saying anything in its refutation I will only recommend the reader to refer to the Bible⁶ so that he can see which methods of war are recommended by the sacred Book of these Western claimants to civilization and culture.

We have examined in some detail the basic human rights that Islam has conferred on man. Let us now find out what rights and obligations Islam recognizes for an enemy.

The Rights of the Non-Combatants:

Islam has first drawn a clear line of distinction between the combatants and the non-

combatants of the enemy country. As far as the non-combatant population is concerned such as women, children, the old and the infirm, etc., the instructions of the Prophet are as follows: "Do not kill any old person, any child or any woman" (Abu Dawud). "Do not kill the monks in monasteries" or "Do not kill the people who are sitting in places of worship" (Musnad of Ibn Hanbal).

During a war, the Prophet saw the corpse of a woman lying on the ground and observed: "She was not fighting. How then she came to be killed?" From this statement of the Prophet the exegetists and jurists have drawn the principle that those who are non-combatants should not be killed during or after the war.

The Rights of the Combatants:

Now let us see what rights Islam has conferred on the combatants.

1. Torture with Fire

In the hadith there is a saying of the Prophet that: "Punishment by fire does not behove anyone except the Master of the Fire" (Abu Dawud). The injunction deduced from this saying is that the adversary should not be burnt alive.

2. Protection of the Wounded

"Do not attack a wounded person"-thus said the Prophet. This means that the wounded soldiers who are not fit to fight, nor actually fighting, should not be attacked.

3. The Prisoner of War Should not be Slain

"No prisoner should be put to the sword"-a very clear and unequivocal instruction given by the Prophet (S).

4. No one Should be Tied to be Killed

"The Prophet has prohibited the killing of anyone who is tied or is in captivity."

5. No Looting and Destruction in the Enemy's Country

Muslims have also been instructed by the Prophet that if they should enter the enemy's territory, they should not indulge in pillage or plunder nor destroy the

residential areas, nor touch the property of anyone except those who are fighting with them. It has been narrated in the hadith: "[The Prophet has prohibited the believers from loot and plunder](#)" (al-Bukhari; Abu Dawud). His injunction is: "[The loot is no more lawful than the carrion](#)" (Abu Dawud). Abu Bakr al-Siddiq used to instruct the soldiers while sending them to war, "Do not destroy the villages and towns, do not spoil the cultivated fields and gardens, and do not slaughter the cattle." The booty of war which is acquired from the battleground is altogether different from this. It consists of the wealth, provisions and equipment captured only from the camps and military headquarters of the combatant armies.

6. Sanctity of Property

The Muslims have also been prohibited from taking anything from the general public of a conquered country without paying for it. If in a war the Muslim army occupies an area of the enemy country, and is encamped there, it does not have the right to use the things belonging to the people without their consent. If they need anything, they should purchase it from the local population or should obtain permission from the owners. Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, while instructing the Muslim armies being despatched to the battlefield would go to the extent of saying that Muslim soldiers should not even use the milk of the milch cattle without the permission of their owners.

7. Sanctity of a Dead Body

Islam has categorically prohibited its followers from disgracing or mutilating the corpses of their enemies as was practised in Arabia before the advent of Islam. It has been said in the hadith: "[The Prophet has prohibited us from mutilating the corpses of the enemies](#)" (al-Bukhari; Abu Dawud). The occasion on which this order was given is highly instructive. In the Battle of Uhud the disbelievers mutilated the bodies of the Muslims, who had fallen on the battlefield and sacrificed their lives for the sake of Islam, by cutting off their ears and noses, and threading them together to put round their necks as trophies of war. The abdomen of Hamzah, the uncle of the Prophet, was ripped open by Quraysh, his liver was taken out and chewed by Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan, the leader of the Meccan army. The Muslims were naturally enraged by this horrible sight. But the Prophet asked his followers not to mete out similar treatment to the dead bodies of the enemies. This great example of forbearance and restraint is sufficient to convince any reasonable man who is not blinded by prejudice or bias, that Islam is really the religion sent down by the Creator of the universe, and that if human emotions had any admission in Islam, then this horrible sight on the battlefield of Uhud would have provoked the Prophet to order his followers to mutilate the bodies of their enemy in the same manner.

8. Return of Corpses of the Enemy

In the Battle of Ahzab a very renowned and redoubtable warrior of the enemy was killed and his body fell down in the trench which the Muslims had dug for the defence of Medina. The unbelievers presented ten thousand dinars to the Prophet and

requested that the dead body of their fallen warrior may be handed over to them. The Prophet replied "I do not sell dead bodies. You can take away the corpse of your fallen comrade."

9. Prohibition of Breach of Treaties

Islam has strictly prohibited treachery. One of the instructions that the Prophet used to give to the Muslim warriors while sending them to the battlefield was: "Do not be guilty of breach of faith." This order has been repeated in the Holy Quran and the hadith again and again, that if the enemy acts treacherously let him do so, you should never go back on your promise. There is a famous incident in the peace treaty of Hudaibiyyah, when after the settlement of the terms of the treaty, Abu Jandal, the son of the emissary of the unbelievers who had negotiated this treaty with the Muslims, came, fettered and blood-stained, rushing to the Muslim camp and crying for help. The Prophet told him "Since the terms of the treaty have been settled, we are not in a position to help you out. You should go back with your father. God will provide you with some other opportunity to escape this persecution." The entire Muslim army was deeply touched and grieved at the sad plight of Abu Jandal and many of them were moved to tears. But when the Prophet declared that "We cannot break the agreement", not even a single person came forward to help the unfortunate prisoner, so the unbelievers forcibly dragged him back to Makkah. This is an unparalleled example of the observance of the terms of agreement by the Muslims, and Islamic history can show many examples of a similar nature.

10. Rules About Declaration of War

It has been laid down in the Holy Quran: "**If you apprehend breach of treaty from a people, then openly throw the treaty at their faces**" (8:58). In this verse, Muslims have been prohibited from opening hostilities against their enemies without properly declaring war against them, unless of course, the adversary has already started aggression against them. Otherwise the Quran has clearly given the injunction to Muslims that they should intimate to their enemies that no treaty exists between them, and they are at war with them. The present day 'international law' has also laid down that hostilities should not be started without declaration of war, but since it is a man-made rule, they are free to violate it whenever it is convenient. On the other hand, the laws for Muslims have been framed by God, hence they cannot be violated.

Conclusion:

This is a brief sketch of those rights which fourteen hundred years ago Islam gave to man, to those who were at war with each other and to the citizens of its state, which every believer regards as sacred as law. On the one hand, it refreshes and strengthens our faith in Islam when we realize that even in this modern age which makes such loud claims of progress and enlightenment, the world has not been able to produce juster and more equitable laws than those given 1400 years ago. On the other hand it hurts one's feelings that Muslims are in possession of such a splendid

and comprehensive system of law and yet they look forward for guidance to those leaders of the West who could not have dreamed of attaining those heights of truth and justice which was achieved a long time ago. Even more painful than this is the realization that throughout the world the rulers who claim to be Muslims have made disobedience to their God and the Prophet as the basis and foundation of their government. May God have mercy on them and give them the true guidance.

Witness Unto Mankind

by Sayyid Abul Al'a Maududi

*Translated and edited by Khurram Murad Witness to the Truth
The Islamic Foundation*

Praise and Salutations

Our Message

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Our Real Problem

Praise and Salutations

All praise be to God who alone is the Creator, Master and Sovereign of the universe. It is He who rules over it with perfect wisdom, absolute power and infinite mercy. He who has created man, endowed him with knowledge and reason, made him His vicegerent on earth, and has sent His Books and Messengers to guide him.

May God bless all those righteous and noble servants of His who were appointed to teach man how to live as true human beings and who made man aware of the real purpose of his life, and showed him the right way to live in this world. Whatever measure of true guidance, morality, piety, and selflessness that the world possesses today, it owes to the teachings of these servants of God, peace be upon them. This is a debt that can never be sufficiently repaid.

Our Message

Brothers and friends, we usually divide our meetings into two parts. In one part, we review, among ourselves, our activities and discuss plans for their advancement. The other part we devote to conveying our message to the people of the area where we hold our meeting. We have, thus, asked you to join us in this meeting so that we

may explain our message to you.

On the one hand our message is addressed to Muslims, and on the other hand to all those human beings who are outside the fold of Islam. It is unfortunate, however, that I do not see here today people belonging to the second category. Our past mistakes and present errors are responsible for alienating a great many people from us. Therefore, we hardly ever find the opportunity either to draw them near to us or draw near to them, so that we may communicate to them the message sent by God, in whom we all believe, through His Messengers for the guidance of us all. Since we do not have any non-Muslims present amongst us, I shall only concentrate upon that part of our message which is meant for Muslims.

The Purpose and Duty of the Muslim Ummah

Responsibilities and Duties

To the Muslims we have only one very simple thing to say: Understand and fulfil the responsibilities and duties that fall upon you by virtue of your being Muslims. You cannot get away with merely affirming that you are Muslims and that you have accepted God as your only God and Islam as your religion. Rather, as soon as you acknowledge Allah as your only Lord and His guidance as your way of life, you take upon yourselves certain obligations and duties. These obligations you must always remain conscious of, these duties you must always endeavour to discharge. If you evade them, you shall not escape the evil consequences of your conduct in this world or in the Hereafter.

What are these duties? They are not merely confined to the affirmation of faith in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Day of Judgement. Nor are they confined to performing the Prayers, observing the Fasts, going on the Pilgrimage, and paying the Alms. Nor are these duties exhausted by observing the injunctions of Islam relating to marriage, divorce and inheritance. Over and above all these duties, there is one which is the most important: that your lives bear witness to the Truth that you have been given by God before all mankind, the Truth which you believe to be true.

The Only Purpose of Existence

The Qur'an clearly states that witnessing to the Truth in a manner that would leave mankind with no justifiable ground to deny it is the only purpose behind constituting you as a distinct Ummah (community), named Muslims.

And thus We have made you a community of the middle way, so that you may be witnesses [to the Truth] before all mankind, and the Messenger may be witness [to it] before you (al-Baqarah 2: 143).

This mission is the sole objective for which your Ummah has been brought into being, it is the *raison d'être* of its existence as a society of human beings. Unless you fulfil it you are squandering your life. For this is no ordinary duty; it is a duty enjoined on you by God. It is a Divine command and a Divine call:

O believers, be ever steadfast in standing up, for the sake of God, bearing witness to justice (al-Ma'idah 5: 8) .

It is not a mere trifle but an emphatic and grave mandate, for Allah also says:

And who is a greater wrong-doer than he who suppresses a witness entrusted to him by God (al-Baqarah 2: 140).

You have been warned of the consequences of evading this duty. Look at the history of the people of Israel. They too were appointed to stand in the witness-box; but sometimes they suppressed the Truth, and sometimes they witnessed against it. By their conduct, they, in fact, became witnesses to falsehood rather than witnesses to the Truth. The consequence was that God forsook them and a curse fell upon them.

And so, humiliation and powerlessness afflicted them, and they earned God's anger (al-Baqarah 2: 61).

Witness to the Truth

What does this duty of witness imply? Consider it carefully: You have been given Divine guidance, you have been shown the Truth. You must, therefore, establish by your testimony and witness its authenticity and truthfulness before all mankind. This is a testimony that will make the authenticity and truthfulness of Divine guidance self-evident, for all to see, and a witness that will make it clear and indisputable for all people.

For this very purpose all the Messengers were sent to the world; this was their primary duty. After them, their followers were entrusted with the same duty. And now the Muslim Ummah, as the successor to the Last Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, is charged with this very mission, just as he was charged with it during his lifetime.

Nature and Importance

What is the importance of this witness? You will know its importance only when you understand that man has been made accountable for his conduct and will be rewarded and punished in the Hereafter under the Divine Law which rests entirely on this witness. God is All-wise, All-merciful, and All just. His mercy, justice and wisdom are not such that He should punish people for living against His will while they had no knowledge of it, that He should take people to task for deviating from the right path of which they were ignorant, that He should hold people accountable for things of which they were unaware. [1] It was as a provision against this that the first man He created was a Messenger, and that after him many more were sent from time to time. [2] They were all to be witnesses to mankind, to make it understand and remember the will of God. They were all to teach human beings the proper way of conducting their lives, the code of behaviour that they should adopt to win God's favour, the acts that they should perform, the acts that they should avoid, and the things for which they will be brought to account. [3]

This witness was given by Allah's Messengers so that the people may not be in a position to say to God: How can we be punished for things of which we were not warned? The Qur'an says:

[We sent] all Messengers as heralds of glad tidings and as warners, so that men may not have any argument against God, after [the coming of] these Messengers; God is indeed All-mighty, All-wise (al-Nisa' 4: 165).

In this manner God made His Messengers bear the crucial responsibility for guiding man on His behalf. They were thus charged with a very delicate and grave responsibility: if they bore witness to the Truth properly, the people would be accountable for their own actions, but if they failed in their duty, they themselves would be called to account for their people going astray. In other words, unless the Messengers made people responsible for their conduct by giving them conclusive and indisputable testimony to the Truth, the people would hold the Messengers responsible for their own misdeeds, saying: 'The knowledge that God gave you, that you did not communicate to us; the way of life that He showed you, that you did not show US.' [4] That is why all the Messengers always remained acutely conscious of the burden of this responsibility, and that is why they endeavoured so hard to bear witness before the people to the Truth entrusted to them. [5]

Responsibility of the Ummah

All those who were led by the Messengers to the knowledge of the Truth and Divine guidance were formed into a community, an Ummah. Every Ummah was charged with the same mission as the Messengers of witnessing to the Truth. As successors to the Messengers, every Ummah has the same crucial role and responsibility as they had. Thus, if an Ummah properly fulfils its duty of witnessing to the Truth and yet the people do not pay heed, it will be rewarded and the people will be brought to account. However, if the Ummah neglects its duty, or if it gives false witness, it will deserve to be punished more severely than the people. The Ummah shall be accountable not only for its own misdeeds, but also for the misdeeds of those who went astray or turned to error and wickedness because the testimony given to them by the Ummah was misleading or false.

This, brothers, is the nature and logic of that grave and crucial duty which lies upon me, you and all those who consider themselves part of the Muslim Ummah, or those who have become sufficiently aware of God's Book and the guidance brought by His Messengers.

Notes by **Khurram Murad**

1. Law of God for Judgement:

The Qur'an has explained in considerable detail the law under which man's accountability on the Day of Judgement depends upon the witness to the Truth rendered by its bearers before him. It is important to understand what the Qur'an says in this regard.

Firstly, why has man been placed on earth? So that he may use his full and enormous potential to conduct himself in that right manner which will fulfil the meaning in his life.

And He it is who has created the heavens and the earth in six days, and His throne was upon the waters, so that He might test you which of you is best in conduct (Hud 11: 7).

He who has created death and life, so that He might test you, which of you is best in conduct (al-Mulk 67: 2).

We have made all that is on earth an adornment for it, and so that we might test which of them is best in conduct (al-Kahf 18: 7).

Secondly, what is the meaning and purpose of man's life? That he lives as his Creator desires him to live: in surrender and worship to Him alone. Not because God in any way needs his worship, but because man needs to worship only his Creator and none else so that his own nature is not perverted and corrupted, and so that he does not live in opposition to its intrinsic character. Also, only by so living, will his earthly life be set on the right path and will prosper, bringing him peace and happiness (all of which the Qur'an calls *falah*).

And I have not created Jinn and mankind except to serve and worship Me. I

desire of them no provision, neither do I desire that they should feed Me (al-Dhariyat 51: 5S7).

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What, did you think that We created you in mere idle play, and that you would not be returned to Us? But, high exalted is God, the King, the True! There is no god but He, the Lord of the Noble Throne (al-Mu'minun 23: 115-16).

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God chose Adam, and Noah, and the House of Abraham and the House of Imran above all mankind, offspring of one another (Al 'Imran 3: 33).

He was given knowledge and guidance (2: 31-5); when he erred and his weaknesses became known to him, God turned towards him in mercy, exalted him, guided him and promised him and his progeny continuing guidance (20: 115-27, 2: 359).

Adam disobeyed his Lord, and so he erred. Thereafter his Lord chose him, and so He turned towards him, and He guided him. He said: Get you down, both of you, from here, each of you an enemy to each. Nonetheless, there shall most certainly come unto you guidance from Me; and he who follows My guidance shall not go astray, neither shall he be unprosperous. But whosoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall be a life of narrow scope; and on the Resurrection Day, We shall raise him blind. He shall say: O my Lord, why has Thou raised me blind, whereas I was given sight? God shall say: Thus it is. Our revelations came unto you and you did forget them; and so today you are forgotten (Ta Ha 20: 121-6).

3. Messengers and their mission:

It was in fulfilment of this promise to mankind that, firstly, God sent His Messengers with His guidance, with the Truth, to every people some of them the Qur'an has named, some it has not.

We have sent you [O Prophet] with the Truth, as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner; not a community there is, but there has passed away in it a warner (al-Fatir 35: 24).

We have revealed to you [O Prophet] as We revealed to Noah and the Prophets after him, as We revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and their descendants, including Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and as We gave to David Psalms; and Messengers We have mentioned to you before, and Messengers We have not mentioned to you; and as God spoke His word unto Moses. Messengers [We sent] as heralds of glad tidings and as warners, so that mankind might have no excuse before God after [the coming of] the Messengers; and God is All-mighty, All-wise (al-Nisa' 4: 163-5).

Secondly, He charged all of them with this mission and duty: to communicate the Truth, to invite people to worship the One God alone and surrender to Him as their only Lord by word and example. In other words, to witness to the Truth before men and women to whom they were sent, so that they could have no plea to make before God, so that they could be questioned as to how they lived their lives, so that those who lived by the Truth could be rewarded, and those who did not could be punished.

And We never sent, before you, any Messenger except that We revealed to him: There is no god but I; so serve and worship only Me (al-Anbiya' 21: 25).

And this was Our argument, which We gave to Abraham as against his people. We raise up in degrees whom We will; surely your Lord is All-wise, All-knowing. And We gave Isaac and Jacob, and both of them We guided and Noah We guided before and [We guided] of his descendants: David, and Solomon, and Job, and Joseph, and Moses, and Aaron and these do We reward the doers of good Zachariah and John, and Jesus, and Elijah, each was of the righteous; and Ishmael, and Elisha, and Jonah, and Lut. And every one of them did We favour above other people. And [likewise We guided] some of their forefathers and their descendants and their brethren. And We elected them, and guided them onto the straight path. That is God's guidance; He guides by it whomsoever He wills of His servants. And had they ascribed partners [to God], in vain would have been all that they ever did. Those are they to whom We gave the Book, and the Judgement, and the Prophethood. So if these deny this [Our guidance], We have entrusted it to people who do not disbelieve in it. Those [Messengers] are they whom God has guided; follow, then, their guidance. Say: I ask of you no reward for it; it is but a reminder unto all mankind (al-An'am 6: 83-90).

Indeed We sent forth Our Messengers with clear revelations and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that mankind may establish justice (al-Hadid 57: 25).

The Prophet Muhammad was the last of them. He did not bring any new Truth,

message or guidance; he came with the same Truth, and was entrusted with the same mission and duty as were all the Messengers preceding him. This duty and mission has been expressed in a number of ways: warning (indhar), bringing glad tidings (tabshir), inviting and calling (da'wah), communicating (tabligh), reminding (dhikr), teaching (ta'lim), conveying and propagating (tilawah), enjoining and promoting what is good and right and forbidding and eradicating what is wrong and bad (amr bi 'l-ma'ruf wa nahl 'ani 'l-munkar), establishing Din (iqamah), establishing justice (qist), making the Divine guidance and Din prevail (izhar), or witnessing (shahadah). All these expressions pertain to the same mission, though from different perspectives and with different emphases.

O Prophet, We have sent you as a witness [to the Truth], and as a herald of glad tidings and a warner, and as one who calls to God, by His leave, and as a light-giving lamp (al-Ahzab 33: 45-6).

O Messenger, deliver that which has been sent down to you from your Lord; for if you do not, you will not have delivered His message (al-Ma'idah 5: 67).

Even so We have sent among you, of yourselves, a Messenger, to convey unto you Our revelations, and to purify you, and to teach you the Book and wisdom, and to teach you that which you knew not (al-Baqarah 2: 151).

It is He who has sent forth His Messenger with the guidance and the way of the Truth, so that he makes it prevail over all other ways of life; and God suffices as a witness (al-Fath 48: 28; also 9: 33, 61: 9).

. . . and those [among the followers of Moses] who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel, who will enjoin upon them the right and forbid them the wrong, and make lawful to them the good things and make unlawful for them the bad things, and lift from them their burdens and the shackles that were upon them. Those who believe in him and succour him and help him, and follow the light that has been sent down with him it is they who are the prosperous (al-A'raf 7: 157).

4. Man's accountability and the witness:

The witness given by the Messengers, and by all those who are charged with the same duty, is the basis for man's accountability in the Akhirah, and his consequent reward and punishment. The Truth is witnessed before them so that they are left with no argument against God; they will be charged because they received it: this position has been stated in the Qur'an in many places and from many different perspectives, as we have seen before.

Whoever follows the right path, follows it for his own good, and whoever goes astray, goes astray to his own loss; and no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another. We never chastise, until we have sent forth a Messenger (al-Isra' 17:15)

So, [on Judgement Day,] We shall most certainly call to account all those unto whom [Our] message was sent, and We shall most certainly call to account the Message-bearers and thereupon We shall most certainly relate unto them [their account] with knowledge, for We were never absent (al-A'raf 7: 6-7). And when We took a pledge from all the Prophets from you [O Prophet], and from Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus, the son of Mary We took from them a solemn pledge, so that He might question the truthful concerning their truthfulness, and He has prepared for those who deny the truth a painful punishment (al-Ahzab 33: 7-8).

The day when God shall assemble all the Messengers, and say: What answer were you given? They shall say: We have no knowledge; Thou art the Knower of the things unseen (al-Ma'idah 5: 109).

[And God will say:] O community of jinn and men, did not Messengers come unto you from among you, who conveyed unto you My revelations and warned you of the meeting of this your day? They shall say: We bear witness against ourselves. They were deluded by the life of this world, and they bear witness against themselves that they had been disbelievers (al-An'am 6: 130).

Then the disbelievers shall be driven in companies into Jahannam till, when they reach it, its gates will be opened, and its keepers will say to them: Did not Messengers come to you, from among yourselves, who conveyed unto you your Lord's revelations, and warn you against the meeting of this your Day? They shall say: Yes, indeed! But the word of punishment will have fallen due upon the disbelievers; and it shall be said to them: Enter the gates of Jahannam, to dwell therein forever. How evil is the abode of those who are arrogant! (al-Zumar 39: 71-2).

Surely We shall help Our Messengers and those who have believed, in this world's life and on the Day when all the witnesses shall stand up the day when their excuses shall not profit the evil-doers, and theirs shall be the curse, and theirs the evil abode (Ghafir 40: S1-2).

5. Sense of responsibility:

The Qur'an gives a very moving account of how God's Messengers devoted themselves in all earnestness to their mission, how they laboured hard to fulfil their duty, how they suffered heavily in their cause. Their history is ample testimony of this. But here two examples should suffice: firstly, that of the Prophet Noah and secondly, that of the Prophet Muhammad, blessings and peace be on them.

Indeed, We sent Noah unto his people, and he dwelt among them a thousand years, all but fifty . . . (al-'Ankabut 29: 14) .

He [Noah] said: My Lord, I have been calling my people night and day, but my call has only caused them to flee farther away. And whenever I called them, that Thou mightest forgive them, they put their fingers in their ears, and wrapped themselves in their garments, and persisted, and became arrogant in their pride. Then indeed I called them openly, then indeed I spoke publicly unto them, and I spoke unto them in private (Nuh. 71: 5-9).

Would you [O Prophet], perhaps, torment yourself to death because they refuse to believe? (al-Shu'ara' 26: 3).

The Purpose and Duty of the Muslim Ummah

Responsibilities and Duties

To the Muslims we have only one very simple thing to say: Understand and fulfil the responsibilities and duties that fall upon you by virtue of your being Muslims. You cannot get away with merely affirming that you are Muslims and that you have accepted God as your only God and Islam as your religion. Rather, as soon as you acknowledge Allah as your only Lord and His guidance as your way of life, you take upon yourselves certain obligations and duties. These obligations you must always remain conscious of, these duties you must always endeavour to discharge. If you evade them, you shall not escape the evil consequences of your conduct in this world or in the Hereafter.

What are these duties? They are not merely confined to the affirmation of faith in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Day of Judgement. Nor are they confined to performing the Prayers, observing the Fasts, going on the Pilgrimage, and paying the Alms. Nor are these duties exhausted by observing the injunctions of Islam relating to marriage, divorce and inheritance. Over and above all these duties, there is one which is the most important: that your lives bear witness to the Truth that you have been given by God before all mankind, the Truth which you believe to be true.

The Only Purpose of Existence

The Qur'an clearly states that witnessing to the Truth in a manner that would leave mankind with no justifiable ground to deny it is the only purpose behind constituting you as a distinct Ummah (community), named Muslims.

And thus We have made you a community of the middle way, so that you may be witnesses [to the Truth] before all mankind, and the Messenger may be witness [to it] before you (al-Baqarah 2: 143).

This mission is the sole objective for which your Ummah has been brought into being, it is the *raison d'être* of its existence as a society of human beings. Unless you fulfil it you are squandering your life. For this is no ordinary duty; it is a duty enjoined on you by God. It is a Divine command and a Divine call:

O believers, be ever steadfast in standing up, for the sake of God, bearing witness to justice (al-Ma'idah 5: 8) .

It is not a mere trifle but an emphatic and grave mandate, for Allah also says:

And who is a greater wrong-doer than he who suppresses a witness entrusted to him by God (al-Baqarah 2: 140).

You have been warned of the consequences of evading this duty. Look at the history of the people of Israel. They too were appointed to stand in the witness-box; but sometimes they suppressed the Truth, and sometimes they witnessed against it. By their conduct, they, in fact, became witnesses to falsehood rather than witnesses to the Truth. The consequence was that God forsook them and a curse fell upon them.

And so, humiliation and powerlessness afflicted them, and they earned God's anger (al-Baqarah 2: 61).

Witness to the Truth

What does this duty of witness imply? Consider it carefully: You have been given Divine guidance, you have been shown the Truth. You must, therefore, establish by your testimony and witness its authenticity and truthfulness before all mankind. This is a testimony that will make the authenticity and truthfulness of Divine guidance self-evident, for all to see, and a witness that will make it clear and indisputable for all people.

For this very purpose all the Messengers were sent to the world; this was their primary duty. After them, their followers were entrusted with the same duty. And now the Muslim Ummah, as the successor to the Last Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, is charged with this very mission, just as he was charged with it during his lifetime.

Nature and Importance

What is the importance of this witness? You will know its importance only when you understand that man has been made accountable for his conduct and will be rewarded and punished in the Hereafter under the Divine Law which rests entirely on this witness. God is All-wise, All-merciful, and All just. His mercy, justice and wisdom are not such that He should punish people for living against His will while they had no knowledge of it, that He should take people to task for deviating from the right path of which they were ignorant, that He should hold people accountable for things of which they were unaware. [1] It was as a provision against this that the first man He created was a Messenger, and that after him many more were sent from time to time. [2] They were all to be witnesses to mankind, to make it understand and remember the will of God. They were all to teach human beings the proper way of conducting their lives, the code of behaviour that they should adopt to win God's favour, the acts that they should perform, the acts that they should avoid, and the things for which they will be brought to account. [3]

This witness was given by Allah's Messengers so that the people may not be in a position to say to God: How can we be punished for things of which we were not warned? The Qur'an says:

[We sent] all Messengers as heralds of glad tidings and as warners, so that men may not have any argument against God, after [the coming of] these Messengers; God is indeed All-mighty, All-wise (al-Nisa' 4: 165).

In this manner God made His Messengers bear the crucial responsibility for guiding man on His behalf. They were thus charged with a very delicate and grave responsibility: if they bore witness to the Truth properly, the people would be accountable for their own actions, but if they failed in their duty, they themselves would be called to account for their people going astray. In other words, unless the Messengers made people responsible for their conduct by giving them conclusive and indisputable testimony to the Truth, the people would hold the Messengers responsible for their own misdeeds, saying: 'The knowledge that God gave you, that you did not communicate to us; the way of life that He showed you, that you did not show US.' [4] That is why all the Messengers always remained acutely conscious of the burden of this responsibility, and that is why they endeavoured so hard to bear witness before the people to the Truth entrusted to them. [5]

Responsibility of the Ummah

All those who were led by the Messengers to the knowledge of the Truth and Divine guidance were formed into a community, an Ummah. Every Ummah was charged with the same mission as the Messengers of witnessing to the Truth. As successors to the Messengers, every Ummah has the same crucial role and responsibility as they had. Thus, if an Ummah properly fulfils its duty of witnessing to the Truth and yet the people do not pay heed, it will be rewarded and the people will be brought to account. However, if the Ummah neglects its duty, or if it gives false witness, it will deserve to be punished more severely than the people. The Ummah shall be accountable not only for its own misdeeds, but also for the misdeeds of those who went astray or turned to error and wickedness because the testimony given to them by the Ummah was misleading or false.

This, brothers, is the nature and logic of that grave and crucial duty which lies upon me, you and all those who consider themselves part of the Muslim Ummah, or those who have become sufficiently aware of God's Book and the guidance brought by His Messengers.

Notes by **Khurram Murad**

1. Law of God for Judgement:

The Qur'an has explained in considerable detail the law under which man's accountability on the Day of Judgement depends upon the witness to the Truth rendered by its bearers before him. It is important to understand what the Qur'an says in this regard.

Firstly, why has man been placed on earth? So that he may use his full and enormous potential to conduct himself in that right manner which will fulfil the meaning in his life.

And He it is who has created the heavens and the earth in six days, and His throne was upon the waters, so that He might test you which of you is best in conduct (Hud 11: 7).

He who has created death and life, so that He might test you, which of you is best in conduct (al-Mulk 67: 2).

We have made all that is on earth an adornment for it, and so that we might test which of them is best in conduct (al-Kahf 18: 7).

Secondly, what is the meaning and purpose of man's life? That he lives as his Creator desires him to live: in surrender and worship to Him alone. Not because God in any way needs his worship, but because man needs to worship only his Creator and none else so that his own nature is not perverted and corrupted, and so that he does not live in opposition to its intrinsic character. Also, only by so living, will his earthly life be set on the right path and will prosper, bringing him peace and happiness (all of which the Qur'an calls *falah*).

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God chose Adam, and Noah, and the House of Abraham and the House of Imran above all mankind, offspring of one another (Al 'Imran 3: 33).

He was given knowledge and guidance (2: 31-5); when he erred and his weaknesses became known to him, God turned towards him in mercy, exalted him, guided him and promised him and his progeny continuing guidance (20: 115-27, 2: 359).

Adam disobeyed his Lord, and so he erred. Thereafter his Lord chose him, and so He turned towards him, and He guided him. He said: Get you down, both of you, from here, each of you an enemy to each. Nonetheless, there shall most certainly come unto you guidance from Me; and he who follows My guidance shall not go astray, neither shall he be unprosperous. But whosoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall be a life of narrow scope; and on the Resurrection Day, We shall raise him blind. He shall say: O my Lord, why has Thou raised me blind, whereas I was given sight? God shall say: Thus it is. Our revelations came unto you and you did forget them; and so today you are forgotten (Ta Ha 20: 121-6).

3. Messengers and their mission:

It was in fulfilment of this promise to mankind that, firstly, God sent His Messengers with His guidance, with the Truth, to every people some of them the Qur'an has named, some it has not.

We have sent you [O Prophet] with the Truth, as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner; not a community there is, but there has passed away in it a warner (al-Fatir 35: 24).

We have revealed to you [O Prophet] as We revealed to Noah and the Prophets after him, as We revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and their descendants, including Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and as We gave to David Psalms; and Messengers We have mentioned to you before, and Messengers We have not mentioned to you; and as God spoke His word unto Moses. Messengers [We sent] as heralds of glad tidings and as warners, so that mankind might have no excuse before God after [the coming of] the Messengers; and God is All-mighty, All-wise (al-Nisa' 4: 163-5).

Secondly, He charged all of them with this mission and duty: to communicate the Truth, to invite people to worship the One God alone and surrender to Him as their only Lord by word and example. In other words, to witness to the Truth before men and women to whom they were sent, so that they could have no plea to make before God, so that they could be questioned as to how they lived their lives, so that those who lived by the Truth could be rewarded, and those who did not could be punished.

And We never sent, before you, any Messenger except that We revealed to him: There is no god but I; so serve and worship only Me (al-Anbiya' 21: 25).

And this was Our argument, which We gave to Abraham as against his people. We raise up in degrees whom We will; surely your Lord is All-wise, All-knowing. And We gave Isaac and Jacob, and both of them We guided and Noah We guided before and [We guided] of his descendants: David, and Solomon, and Job, and Joseph, and Moses, and Aaron and these do We reward the doers of good Zachariah and John, and Jesus, and Elijah, each was of the righteous; and Ishmael, and Elisha, and Jonah, and Lut. And every one of them did We favour above other people. And [likewise We guided] some of their forefathers and their descendants and their brethren. And We elected them, and guided them onto the straight path. That is God's guidance; He guides by it whomsoever He wills of His servants. And had they ascribed partners [to God], in vain would have been all that they ever did. Those are they to whom We gave the Book, and the Judgement, and the Prophethood. So if these deny this [Our guidance], We have entrusted it to people who do not disbelieve in it. Those [Messengers] are they whom God has guided; follow, then, their guidance. Say: I ask of you no reward for it; it is but a reminder unto all mankind (al-An'am 6: 83-90).

Indeed We sent forth Our Messengers with clear revelations and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that mankind may establish justice (al-Hadid 57: 25).

The Prophet Muhammad was the last of them. He did not bring any new Truth,

message or guidance; he came with the same Truth, and was entrusted with the same mission and duty as were all the Messengers preceding him. This duty and mission has been expressed in a number of ways: warning (indhar), bringing glad tidings (tabshir), inviting and calling (da'wah), communicating (tabligh), reminding (dhikr), teaching (ta'lim), conveying and propagating (tilawah), enjoining and promoting what is good and right and forbidding and eradicating what is wrong and bad (amr bi 'l-ma'ruf wa nahl 'ani 'l-munkar), establishing Din (iqamah), establishing justice (qist), making the Divine guidance and Din prevail (izhar), or witnessing (shahadah). All these expressions pertain to the same mission, though from different perspectives and with different emphases.

O Prophet, We have sent you as a witness [to the Truth], and as a herald of glad tidings and a warner, and as one who calls to God, by His leave, and as a light-giving lamp (al-Ahzab 33: 45-6).

O Messenger, deliver that which has been sent down to you from your Lord; for if you do not, you will not have delivered His message (al-Ma'idah 5: 67).

Even so We have sent among you, of yourselves, a Messenger, to convey unto you Our revelations, and to purify you, and to teach you the Book and wisdom, and to teach you that which you knew not (al-Baqarah 2: 151).

It is He who has sent forth His Messenger with the guidance and the way of the Truth, so that he makes it prevail over all other ways of life; and God suffices as a witness (al-Fath 48: 28; also 9: 33, 61: 9).

. . . and those [among the followers of Moses] who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel, who will enjoin upon them the right and forbid them the wrong, and make lawful to them the good things and make unlawful for them the bad things, and lift from them their burdens and the shackles that were upon them. Those who believe in him and succour him and help him, and follow the light that has been sent down with him it is they who are the prosperous (al-A'raf 7: 157).

4. Man's accountability and the witness:

The witness given by the Messengers, and by all those who are charged with the same duty, is the basis for man's accountability in the Akhirah, and his consequent reward and punishment. The Truth is witnessed before them so that they are left with no argument against God; they will be charged because they received it: this position has been stated in the Qur'an in many places and from many different perspectives, as we have seen before.

Whoever follows the right path, follows it for his own good, and whoever goes astray, goes astray to his own loss; and no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another. We never chastise, until we have sent forth a Messenger (al-Isra' 17:15)

So, [on Judgement Day,] We shall most certainly call to account all those unto whom [Our] message was sent, and We shall most certainly call to account the Message-bearers and thereupon We shall most certainly relate unto them [their account] with knowledge, for We were never absent (al-A'raf 7: 6-7). And when We took a pledge from all the Prophets from you [O Prophet], and from Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus, the son of Mary We took from them a solemn pledge, so that He might question the truthful concerning their truthfulness, and He has prepared for those who deny the truth a painful punishment (al-Ahzab 33: 7-8).

The day when God shall assemble all the Messengers, and say: What answer were you given? They shall say: We have no knowledge; Thou art the Knower of the things unseen (al-Ma'idah 5: 109).

[And God will say:] O community of jinn and men, did not Messengers come unto you from among you, who conveyed unto you My revelations and warned you of the meeting of this your day? They shall say: We bear witness against ourselves. They were deluded by the life of this world, and they bear witness against themselves that they had been disbelievers (al-An'am 6: 130).

Then the disbelievers shall be driven in companies into Jahannam till, when they reach it, its gates will be opened, and its keepers will say to them: Did not Messengers come to you, from among yourselves, who conveyed unto you your Lord's revelations, and warn you against the meeting of this your Day? They shall say: Yes, indeed! But the word of punishment will have fallen due upon the disbelievers; and it shall be said to them: Enter the gates of Jahannam, to dwell therein forever. How evil is the abode of those who are arrogant! (al-Zumar 39: 71-2).

Surely We shall help Our Messengers and those who have believed, in this world's life and on the Day when all the witnesses shall stand up the day when their excuses shall not profit the evil-doers, and theirs shall be the curse, and theirs the evil abode (Ghafir 40: S1-2).

5. Sense of responsibility:

The Qur'an gives a very moving account of how God's Messengers devoted themselves in all earnestness to their mission, how they laboured hard to fulfil their duty, how they suffered heavily in their cause. Their history is ample testimony of this. But here two examples should suffice: firstly, that of the Prophet Noah and secondly, that of the Prophet Muhammad, blessings and peace be on them.

Indeed, We sent Noah unto his people, and he dwelt among them a thousand years, all but fifty . . . (al-'Ankabut 29: 14) .

He [Noah] said: My Lord, I have been calling my people night and day, but my call has only caused them to flee farther away. And whenever I called them, that Thou mightest forgive them, they put their fingers in their ears, and wrapped themselves in their garments, and persisted, and became arrogant in their pride. Then indeed I called them openly, then indeed I spoke publicly unto them, and I spoke unto them in private (Nuh. 71: 5-9).

Would you [O Prophet], perhaps, torment yourself to death because they refuse to believe? (al-Shu'ara' 26: 3).

How Should We Witness to the Truth?

Let us now see in what manner we should discharge our duty of witnessing to the Truth. Witnessing is of two types: one, witness by words, or the word-witness; the other, witness by acts and deeds, or the act-witness. [\[6\]](#)

Word-witness

In what way should our words witness to the Truth? Through our speech and writing, we should proclaim and explain to the world the guidance that has come to us through God's Messengers. This, in sum, is the word-witness. Employing all possible methods of education, using all possible means of communication and propagation, mastering all knowledge provided by the contemporary arts and sciences, we should inform mankind of the way of life that God has laid down for man. The guidance that Islam gives to humanity in thought and belief, in morality and behaviour, in culture and civilization, in economics and business, in jurisprudence and judiciary, in politics and civil administration that is, in all aspects of inter-human relations we should clearly and fully expound before mankind. By rational discourse and convincing evidence, we should establish its truth and soundness. By soundly reasoned critique, we should rebut all that is contrary to the guidance given by God.

The task is enormous. Full justice cannot be done to it unless the thought of guiding man to the right path seizes the whole Ummah as completely as it did each Messenger personally. It is essential, too, that this task should become the central objective of all our collective endeavours, that we should commit all our hearts and minds, all of our resources, to this cause. Uppermost in all our actions should be this objective. Under no circumstances should we allow any voice within ourselves to bear witness against the Truth and Divine guidance that we have.

Act-witness

In what way should our acts and deeds witness to the Truth? For this purpose, the guidance that we hold to be true we must put into practice. Our actions should demonstrate the principles we profess to believe in.

Put simply: let our lives speak the truth, and let the world hear it not merely from our lips but also from our deeds; let mankind witness all the blessings that the Divine guidance brings to human life. Let the world taste in our conduct, individual and collective, that sweetness and flavour which only the faith in One God can impart to character and morality. Let the world see what fine examples of humanity are fashioned by Islam, what a just society is established, what a sound social order emerges, what a clean and noble civilization arises, how science, literature, and art flourish and develop on sound lines, what a just economy compassionate and free from conflict is brought about. Indeed, how every aspect of life is set right, developed and enriched.

We shall not be doing our duty to this task unless our lives, individual and collective, become a living embodiment of Islam: unless our personal characters are a living proof of its truth, our homes are fragrant with its teachings, our businesses and factories are illuminated by its rules and laws, our schools and institutions are shaped by its ideas and norms, and our literature and media reflect its principles. Indeed until our entire national policy and public life make its truth manifest and self-evident.

In short, wherever and whenever any individual or people come in contact with us it is our duty to convince them, by our example, that the principles and teachings which Islam proclaims to be true are indeed true, and that they do improve the quality of human life and raise it to better and higher levels.

The Islamic State

Finally, I should state one more important thing. This witness of ours would not be complete unless we establish a state based on the principles and teachings of Islam. By translating its ideals and practices, its norms and values, its rules and laws, into public policies and programmes, such a state would demonstrate how the Divine guidance leads to equity and justice, reform and upliftment, caring and efficient administration, social welfare, peace and order, high standards of morality in public servants, virtue and righteousness in internal policies, honesty in foreign policies, civilized conduct in war, integrity and loyalty in peace. Such public conduct would be a living testimony for all mankind that Islam is indeed the true guarantor of human well-being, that only following its tenets can ensure the good of mankind.

Only when the Truth is witnessed in this manner, by both words and actions, will the crucial responsibility laid upon the Muslim Ummah be fully discharged. Only then will no ground remain for mankind to deny or turn away from the Divine guidance. Only then, in the Hereafter, will the Muslim Ummah be in a position to take the witness-stand after the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, and declare that: Whatever truth and guidance we were given by this Prophet, that we conveyed to mankind; those who did not follow it are themselves to blame for going astray, not us.

This is the real meaning and scope of the witness that we as Muslims ought to have been giving to the world, both by our words and our deeds. But now let us turn to the actual state of affairs and examine the witness that we in fact are giving in favour of the Divine guidance.

Notes by Khurram Murad

6. Types of witness:

The witness by word may be taken to be broadly subsumed under the Quranic terminology of warning (indhar), bringing glad tidings (tabshir), inviting and calling (da'wah), communicating (tabligh), teaching and instructing (ta'lim), conveying and propagating (tilawah). The terminology for the witness by actions includes establishing Islam (iqamatu 'd-din), making God's guidance and way of life prevail over all others (izhar), establishing justice (qist), enjoining right and forbidding wrong, and Jihad.

Where Do we Stand?

Our Word - Witness

First, look at the testimony that is being given by our word-witness. There are few people amongst us who are using their tongues and pens to witness to the truth of Islam. Still fewer in number are those who are doing so in an appropriate and adequate manner. Otherwise, in almost every respect Muslims, on the whole, are giving their witness against Islam and not in its favour as they should.

What is the witness of our landlords? That the Islamic law of inheritance is wrong and that the customs which came down from the pre-Islamic days are correct. What is the witness of our lawyers and judges? That all the laws of Islam are bad laws, and that their very basis the sovereignty of God is unacceptable. They tell us that only the man-made laws, which have come to us through the British, are good laws.

What is the witness of our teachers and educational institutions? That in philosophy and science, history and sociology, economics and politics, law and ethics, the only true and valid knowledge and thought is that derived from the Western secular world-view. That in all these disciplines the Islamic approach is not even worthy of consideration. What is the witness of our writers? That their literature has the same message to impart as that of the godless writers of the secular West. They demonstrate that as Muslims they have no distinctive literary approach of their own. What is the witness of our press and media? That the only issues and debates that they consider important and which preoccupy them, and the only methods and standards of communication that they consider fit to employ, are those which bear the hallmark of the non-Muslim media.

What is the witness of our businessmen and industrialists? That the rules laid down by Islam for economic transactions are impracticable, that business can be conducted only by the methods devised by Kafirs.* What is the witness of our leaders and rulers? That they have the same slogans of nationalism and motherland to mobilize people, the same goals to pursue on national levels, the same methods of solving national problems, the same principles of politics and constitution-making as are practised by Kafirs. They declare that Islam has no guidance to offer in this respect.

And what is the witness of our masses? They testify that they have nothing to speak about except worldly matters, that they have no such Din which desires to be propagated or which demands that they spend part of their time for this purpose. This, then, is the state of witness being given by our whole Ummah by means of its words. This is the case not only in this country but throughout the whole world.

Our Act - Witness

Now let us turn to our act-witness and look at the witness being given by our actions and deeds. Here our conduct is even more scandalous than that in respect of our witness by words. No doubt there are a few good Muslims whose lives are a true example of Islam. But consider how the overwhelming majority of the Ummah, the society at large, is conducting itself.

What is the witness being given by the life of a typical, ordinary Muslim? That the persons shaped and moulded by Islam are in no way better than, or different from, those prepared by Kufr. If anything, the former are worse than the latter: for instance, it is more likely that a Muslim would speak a lie, that he would betray and breach a trust placed in him, that he would oppress people and do wrong to them, that he would abandon his promise, that he would steal and rob, that he would engage himself in disorderly and violent conduct, that he would indulge in all sorts of indecent acts. Indeed, in respect of all these immoral actions the level of Muslim 'performance' is no less than that of any Kafir people.

What is the witness of our social life? Look at our life-styles, our customs and ceremonies, our festivities, our fairs and religious gatherings, our meetings and processions: in no aspect do we truly represent Islam. Indeed, on the contrary, our social life is a pathetic testimony that the followers of Islam consider the un-Islamic ways to be better and preferable than the Islamic.

Similar is the testimony of our other social institutions and collective pursuits. When we set up educational institutions, we import everything from Kafirs our knowledge, our educational system, our philosophy, our spirit and objective. When we form parties and associations, we model everything on the patterns set by Kafirs our ideals and goals, our structures and constitutions, our policies and methods. When we, as a people, launch a struggle, our cause, our slogans and demands, our issues and debates, our programmes and procedures, our resolutions, statements, and speeches, are all true replicas of the practices of Kafir communities and nations.

Things have come to such a pass that even our independent states, where they exist, have borrowed their constitutions, their codes of law, and their guiding policies and principles from Kafirs. In some states, the Islamic law has been reduced to a mere personal law; in some others even this personal law has been altered. An English writer tauntingly remarks:

In view of the many charges levelled by Indians at the British administration, it is important to realize that the British were extraordinarily slow to introduce any innovations in the law . . . [Indeed] as far as Islam is concerned the result of the British connexion with India has been to establish on a firmer basis the Muslim personal and religious law . . . while all the rest of the shari'a has been abolished . . .

On the other hand Albania and Turkey have both become secular states [adopting European penal and civil codes, even altering Muslim penal law] . . . [Thus, it can be said, as Lindsay says, that] 'The Muslim doctrine that legislation is not within the competence of an earthly sovereign was never, indeed, anything more than a pious fiction . . .'

This, then, is the witness being given by the actions of almost all Muslims. This witness, too, goes against Islam. It is not in its favour. Whatever lip-service we

might pay to Islam, our public conduct proves that there is no aspect of Islam that we approve of, that we do not consider its laws to be good and conducive to our well-being.

And With What Consequences!

Our Punishment

In view of our conduct, we are guilty of giving false witness, of perjury and concealing the Truth. As a consequence, we are facing precisely the same punishment that has been prescribed in the Law of God for such grave and heinous crimes.

What is this law? When a people reject and turn away from God's guidance, when they are guilty of perjury and disloyalty to their Creator, and when they turn traitors to Him, then God punishes them severely in this world as well as in the world-to-come. [\[7\]](#) This law was applied to the Children of Israel. [\[8\]](#) Now it is we, the Muslim Ummah, who stand in the dock. God had no personal vendetta against the Jews that He should have punished only them. Nor does He have any kinship or special relationship with Muslims that He should set us free even though we are now committing the same crime as they did then. [\[9\]](#)

In This World

The punishment meted out to Muslims for their crimes in this world is there for all to see. Indeed, the extent and pace of our decline has been in true proportion to the extent and pace of our negligence and failure to do our duty to witness to the Truth and our 'progress' in witnessing to falsehood. During the last one hundred years, from Morocco to Indonesia, country after country has been lost by us to alien subjugation; one Muslim people after another have fallen under the yoke of colonial rule and domination. No longer does the word 'Muslim' stand for dignity, no longer does it command respect; rather it has become a mark of degradation, humiliation, gross backwardness, and utter powerlessness.

How powerless have we become? We have lost all honour and respect in the eyes of the world. In some places, our blood has flowed like water and we have been subjected to large-scale massacres; in other places, we have been driven out of our homes; in others, we have been tortured and persecuted; in still others, we have been reduced to living as serfs. If in some places Muslim states have survived, they have suffered defeat after defeat until they have been reduced to positions of fear and impotency in the face of foreign powers. If only they had witnessed to Islam by their words and deeds, the secular powers would have stood in awe of them.

Why go so far afield? Just look at your situation in India. + Because you evaded your duty of bearing witness to the truth of Islam, indeed because you went further and gave false witness against it both by your words and deeds, the entire country was wrested from your control. First, you were vanquished by the Marathas and Sikhs, and later, servitude to the British rule became your fate. And now still greater calamities stare you in the face.

Today your minority status has become your greatest anxiety; you live in fear of the Hindu majority lest it subjugates you and you meet the same fate as did the untouchables. But, for God's sake, tell me: Could a majority have threatened you if you had only been true witnesses of Islam? Will not this problem of majority and minority vanish within a few years if today your words and actions bear true witnesses to Islam?

In Arabia, an extremely hostile and oppressive majority set out to exterminate an insignificant minority of about one in one hundred thousand. With what result? Within ten years, this minority, by its truthful and trustworthy witness in favour of Islam, turned into a one hundred per cent majority. Later, when these witnesses of Islam emerged from Arabia, within twenty-five years, from Turkistan to Morocco, people after people trusted the probity of their witness and joined them in their faith. Where no one but Zoroastrians, Christians and pagans once lived, now only Muslims live. No intransigence, no chauvinism, no religious bigotry, proved strong enough to resist the living, true witness of the Divine guidance that Muslims gave.

If you are being trampled upon today, if you fear greater catastrophes tomorrow, is this not but the punishment for your false witness and concealment of the Truth?

Punishment in the World-to-Come

This is the punishment you are receiving in this world; but a more severe

punishment is likely to be meted out to you in the world-to-come. How can you be absolved of the blame for every evil and every wrong to which man has been subjected only because you failed to do your duty as witnesses of the Truth? Unless you do your duty, whatever oppression and corruption is perpetrated in the world and whatever immorality and wickedness prevails, there is no reason why you should not be held accountable for it. You may not be responsible for originating them yourselves, but you are certainly responsible, because of your false witness, for maintaining and perpetuating them, for their origination by others, and for allowing them to spread.

Notes by Khurram Murad

7. Consequences of failure and neglect:

The mission to witness the Truth and invite mankind to surrender to its Creator has the status of a covenant with God. Those who give up this mission, or fail to fulfil it or neglect it, are guilty of breaching their covenant. Hence they are cursed by God, and deprived of His blessings. They are cursed by angels, too, because the light brought by them has been extinguished by such people while mankind gropes in darkness; and by mankind as well, for its sufferings and miseries are due mainly to the conduct of those who were entrusted with that light.

Those who conceal the clear messages and the guidance that We have sent down, after We have made them clear, for mankind, in the Book they shall be cursed by God and the cursers; but such as repent and put themselves right, and make [the Book] known towards them I shall turn, I am the Acceptor of repentance, the Mercy-giving. But those who remain [in the state of] denial and die denying upon them shall be the curse of God, and the angels, and of all mankind . . . (al-Baqarah 2: 159-61).

And, humiliation and powerlessness afflicted them, and they earned God's anger; all this, because they persisted in denying God's messages and in slaying the Prophets against all right; all this, because they rebelled [against God], and persisted in transgressing [the bounds of God] (al-Baqarah 2: 61).

The duty, obviously, is neglected or given up for the sake of worldly gains. These gains the Qur'an describes as a trifle, which earn God's anger for the defaulters. The punishment for this crime which the Qur'an mentions, is indeed the only one of its kind, for such punishment is not mentioned for any other crime.

Indeed, those who conceal what God has sent down in the Book, and barter it away for a trifle price they eat nothing but fire in their bellies. And God shall not speak unto them on the Day of Resurrection, nor purify them; and for them is painful punishment. It is they who have bought error at the price of guidance, and punishment at the price of forgiveness. How patiently have they accepted the Fire! All that, because God has sent down the Book with the Truth, those who differ in the matter of the Book are most deeply in the wrong (al-Baqarah 2: 174-6; also 3: 77-8).

8. The Jewish example:

The history of the people of Israel is narrated by the Qursan in considerable detail. It provides the most instructive example of a people who were guided by some of the greatest Messengers of God. They made a covenant with God that they will be only His servants and obey only Him and be His witnesses. They rose to great heights and contributed much to the good of mankind by fulfilling their covenant. But, finally, they broke their covenant, suffered grievously, and thus became an object lesson in how people chosen by God to be witnesses to His guidance may go astray and how they may earn God's anger.

The purpose of narrating their history is neither to create hatred against any particular religion and people nor to take pleasure and comfort in their suffering and humiliation. This becomes evident from the fact that, despite very severe strictures against the people of Israel by the Qur'an, the most peaceful and glorious days of Jewish history, in the last two thousand years, have been lived under Islamic rule. In fact their history is meant to act like a mirror which the Qur'an holds to the Muslims so that they may recognize themselves when they go astray and may remain aware of the painful consequences of such conduct. Another purpose, of course, was to awaken the Jews at the time of the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, and to invite them to believe in the Last Prophet and support him, as their own mission demanded. The Quranic account is similar to the Biblical account; if anything, much milder in tone and language.

Firstly, the Qur'an shows that great blessings were conferred by God on the people of Israel, the greatest of them being the Book and guidance from Him, and that they were chosen to be His special servants.

Children of Israel, remember My blessing with which I blessed you, and how I favoured you above all other people (al-Baqarah 2: 47).

And when Moses said unto his people: O my people, remember God's blessing upon you, when He appointed among you Prophets, and made you kings, and gave you such as He had not given to any beings (al-Ma'idah 5: 20).

And when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: You shall serve and worship none but God; and to be good to parents, and the near kinsman, and to the orphan, and to the needy; and speak good to man, and perform the prayer, and give the alms (al-Baqarah 2: 83).

And when We made covenant with you [O Children of Israel], and raised above you the Mount: hold fast with [all your] strength unto what We have given you, and remember what is in it, so that you might remain conscious of God. Then you turned away after that . . . (al-Baqarah 2: 63-4). **Surely We sent down the Torah, wherein was guidance and light; thereby the Prophets, who had surrendered themselves [to God], gave judgement for those who were Jews; and so did the men of God and the rabbis, following such portion of God's Book as they were given to keep; and they bore witness to its truth** (al-Ma'idah 5: 44).

The Bible gives a similar account:

Do this because you belong to the Lord your God. From all the peoples on earth, He chose you to be His own special people. The Lord did not love you and choose you because you outnumbered other peoples; you were the smallest nation on earth (Deut. 7: 6-7).

At Mount Sinai the Lord our God made a covenant, not only with our fathers, but with all of us who are living today. There on the mountain the Lord spoke to you face-to-face from the Fire . . . The Lord said, 'I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from Egypt, where you were slaves. Worship no god but Me' (Deut. 5: 2-7).

Israel, remember this! The Lord and the Lord alone is our God. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. Never forget these commands that I am giving you today. Teach them to your children. Repeat them when you are at home and when you are away, when you are resting and when you are working. Tie them on your arms and wear them on your foreheads as a reminder. Write them on the door-posts of your houses and on your gates (Deut. 6: 4-9). [This is a very good exegesis of the Quranic words 'and remember'.]

Never forget the Lord your God or turn to other gods to worship and serve them. If you do, then I warn you today that you will certainly be destroyed (Deut. 8: 19).

People of Israel, you are My witnesses; I chose you to be My servant, so that you would know Me and believe in Me and understand that I am the only God. Beside Me there is no other god; there never was and never will be (Isa. 43: 10) .

Secondly, the Qur'an exhorts and invites the people of Israel, as does the Bible, to fulfil their covenant with God, to believe in His last message, and to bear witness to its truth, reminding them of the promise and threat that were made to them. Children of Israel, remember My blessing with which I blessed you, and fulfil My covenant [with you], and I shall fulfil your covenant [with Me]; and of Me alone stand in awe! (al-Baqarah 2: 40).

Remember that the Lord your God is the only God and that He is faithful. He will keep His covenant and show His constant love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and obey His commands, but He will not hesitate to punish those who hate Him (Deut. 7: 9-10).

If you obey the Lord your God and do everything He commands, He will make you His own people, as He has promised . . . The Lord your God will make you the leader among the nations and not a follower; you will always prosper and never fail . . . But if you disobey the Lord your God and do not faithfully keep all His commandments and laws that I am giving you today, all these evil things will happen to you . . . the Lord will curse everything you do . . . (Deut. 28: 9-19).

I will be your God, and you will be My people (Lev. 26: 12) .

Thirdly, the Qur'an indicts the people of Israel for breaking their covenant and neglecting their duty to worship and obey only God and to be His witnesses. Not only did they themselves turn away from the message of their Lord, they also prevented others from accepting and following it.

People of the Book, why do you disbelieve God's revelations while you

yourselves witness [their truth]? People of the Book, why do you cloak the truth with falsehood and conceal the truth, and that knowingly (Al 'Imran 3: 70-1).

Say: People of the book, why do you bar from the path of God those who believe, trying to make it appear crooked, you yourselves being witnesses to its truth? (Al 'Imran 3: 99) .

Indeed, God made covenant with the Children of Israel, when We raised from among them twelve of their leaders, and God said: I am with you. Surely, if you perform the prayer, and pay the alms, and believe in My Messengers, and succour them and lend to God a good loan, I will surely efface your evil deeds and I will admit you to gardens through which running waters flow. But whosoever of you thereafter disbelieves, surely he has gone astray from the right way. Then, for their breaking their covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hard . . . (al-Ma'idah 5: 12-13).

Indeed, We made covenant with the Children of Israel, and We sent Messengers to them; whenever there came to them a Messenger with what they did not like [they rebelled], to some they gave the lie, while others they slayed (al-Ma'idah 5: 70).

The People of the Book will ask you to bring down upon them a Book from heaven; and they asked Moses for greater than that, for they said: Make us see God face to face whereupon the thunderbolt overtook them for their evil doing. Then, they took to [worshipping] the calf and this after the clear Truth had come to them; yet We pardoned them that, and We bestowed upon Moses a clear authority [for the Truth]. And We raised above them the Mount making covenant with them; and We said to them: Enter the gate, prostrating; and We said to them: Transgress not the Sabbath; and We made a solemn covenant with them. So [We cursed them] for their breaking the covenant, and their denying the revelations of God, and their slaying the Prophets without right, and for their saying, 'Our hearts are closed [to false guidance]' nay, but God sealed them for their disbelief so they believe not, except a few and for their disbelief and their uttering against Mary an awesome calumny, and for their saying, 'We killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of God' (al-Nisa' 4: 153-7).

Cursed were the disbelievers among the Children of Israel by the tongue of David, and Jesus, the son of Mary; this, because they rebelled [against God] and persisted in transgression. They did not prevent one another from the wrongs they committed. Surely evil were the things they did (al-Ma'idah 5: 78-9).

The Bible speaks in the same vein. Its indictment is no different from that which the Qur'an says, although it is said more harshly and with severer strictures.

In addition, the leaders of Judah, the priests, and the people followed the sinful example of the nations round them in worshipping idols, and so they defiled the Temple, which the Lord Himself had made holy. The Lord, the God of their ancestors, had continued to send prophets to warn His people, because He wanted to spare them and the Temple. But they ridiculed God's Messengers, ignoring His words and laughing at His prophets, until at last the Lord's anger against His people was so great that there was no escape (2 Chr. 36: 14-16).

God told me to write down in a Book what the people are like, so that there would be a permanent record of how evil they are. They are always rebelling against God, always lying, always refusing to listen to the Lord's teachings. They tell the prophets to keep quiet. They say: 'Don't talk to us about what's right. Tell us what we want to hear. Let us keep our illusions. Get out of our way and stop blocking our path. We don't want to hear about your holy God of Israel' (Isa. 30: 8-11).

But Your people rebelled and disobeyed You; they turned their backs on Your law. They killed the prophets who warned them, who told them to turn back to You. They insulted You time after time, so You let their enemies conquer and rule them (Neh. 9: 26-7).

The Children I brought up have rebelled against Me. Cattle know who owns them, and donkeys know where their master feeds them. But that is more than my people Israel know. They don't understand at all . . . The city that once was faithful is behaving like a whore! At one time it was filled with righteous men, but now only murderers remain. Jerusalem, you were once like silver, but now you are worthless; . . . Your leaders are rebels and friends of thieves; they are always accepting gifts and bribes. They never defend orphans in court or listen when widows present their case (Isa. 1: 2-23).

And this is how Jesus censures the people of Israel.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and stone the Messengers God has sent you! . . . And so your temple will be abandoned and empty (Mt. 23: 37-8).

They tie on to people's backs loads that are heavy and are hard to carry, yet they aren't willing even to lift a finger to help them carry those loads. They do everything so that people will see them. Look at the straps with Scripture verses on them which they wear on their foreheads and arms, and notice how large they are! Notice also how long are the tassels on their cloaks! They love the best places at feasts and the reserved seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted with respect in the market places and to be called 'Teacher' . . . You hypocrites! You lock the door to the Kingdom of heaven in people's faces, and you yourselves don't go in, nor do you allow in those who are trying to enter! . . . You clean the outside of your cup and plate, while the inside is full of what you have obtained by violence and selfishness . . . You are like whitewashed tombs, which look fine on the outside but are full of bones and decaying corpses on the inside . . . So you actually admit that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets! Go on, then, and finish what your ancestors started! You snakes and sons of snakes! How do you expect to escape from being condemned to hell? And so I tell you that I will send you prophets and wise men and teachers; you will kill some of them, crucify others, and whip others in the synagogues and chase them from town to town (Mt. 23: 4-34).

Perhaps the most moving account of the fate of Israel is in the lamentations of the Prophet Isaiah, peace be upon him. Describing Israel as a vineyard planted by God, he first describes how He blessed it with every bounty, then goes on to describe how it produced sour fruits, and how God punished it something very similar to what Sayyid Mawdudi has said about the Muslims.

My friend had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug the soil and cleared it of stones; he planted the finest vines. He built a tower to guard them, dug a pit for

treading the grapes. He waited for the grapes to ripen, but every grape was sour.

So now my friend says: 'You people who live in Jerusalem and Judah, judge, between my vineyard and me. Is there anything I failed to do for it? Then why did it produce sour grapes and not the good grapes I expected?

This is what I am going to do to my vineyard; I will take away the hedge round it, break down the wall that protects it, and let wild animals eat it and trample it down. I will let it be overgrown with weeds. I will not prune the vines or hoe the ground; instead I will let briars and thorns cover it. I will even forbid the clouds to let rain fall upon it (Isa. 5: 14).

Finally, the Qur'an also makes it clear that, after Israel, it is the Muslims who have been appointed to fulfil the same mission as was granted to Israel.

Indeed, We gave the Children of Israel the Book, the Judgement, and the Prophethood; and We provided them with good things, and We favoured them above all other people. And We gave them clear revelations pertaining to the affair [of their Din]; so they did not take to different ways after the knowledge had come to them except for the sake of mutual transgression . . . then We set you [O Muhammad] on the Way [Shari'ah] pertaining to the affair [of your Din]; therefore follow it, and follow not the likes and dislikes of those who do not know (al-Jathiyah 45: 1S18) .

9. Illusions and excuses:

When a faith as total, pervasive, deep and dynamic as Islam living in surrender to the One God which is a calling and a commitment, becomes transformed into a religion, hereditary and sectarian, its followers invent certain popular beliefs to calm and quieten their conscience. On the basis of such illusions and excuses, they are able to live peacefully while failing in their total commitment to God. They neglect the mission that He has entrusted to them, as well as refuse to accept any summons to renew their faith and take up their duty. The Qur'an mentions some such popular notions which had become part of the Jewish faith, and categorically rejects them. Again, the objective is neither to condemn a certain faith and people for all times to come nor to nurture hatred against them, but to induce them to correct their wrong beliefs, and more importantly, to warn the Muslims to beware of such notions. It is ironic that one would find all such popular beliefs to be part of the Muslims' faith as well today; for example, that our Ummah is the beloved of God, that Muslims, whatever the state of their belief and conduct, have a monopoly over Paradise, that God's mercies and rewards are reserved exclusively for them, that, even if they are punished, their punishment will last only a few days

And the Jews and Christians say: We are God's children, and His beloved ones. Say: Why then does He punish you for your sins? Nay, you are but human beings of His creating. He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He wills (al-Ma'idah 5: 18).

And that they say: None shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian. Such are their wishful beliefs! Say: Produce your proof, if what you say is true! Nay, whosoever surrenders his whole being unto God, attaining to excellence, his reward shall be with his Lord, and no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow (al-Baqarah 2: 111-12).

And they say: The Fire shall not touch us save a number of days. Say: Have you made with God a covenant then God will not fail in His covenant or you attribute to God some thing of which you know nothing? Not so; whoso earns evil, and is engulfed by his transgressions those are the inhabitants of the Fire . . . (al-Baqarah 2: 81).

And when they are told: Believe in what God has sent down, they say: We believe in what was sent down on us; and they disbelieve what is beyond that, yet it is the truth confirming what is with them. Say: Why then did you kill God's Prophets in former times, if you were believers? (al-Baqarah 2: 91).

Say: If the abode in the life-to-come is to be for you alone, to the exclusion of all other people, then long for that if what you say is true! But never will they long for it, because of what their hands have sent ahead; God knows the evil-doers; . . . (al-Baqarah 2: 95).

What is Our Real Problem?

Pseudo Problems

By now, brothers, you must have understood how we, as Muslims, ought to have been living and behaving, and how we in fact are living and behaving. You must also have realized what grave consequences we are suffering because of our conduct. You should, therefore, have no difficulty in seeing that the problems which Muslims consider crucial for their societies and which they are doing their utmost to solve by various devices some of them invented by them, but mostly copied from others are not their real problem. The time, energy and resources that they spend on solving these problems are simply being wasted.

For example, we look upon ourselves as a minority engulfed by an overwhelming alien majority, or as a majority deprived of its sovereignty within its own territory, or as a nation subjugated and exploited by a foreign power, or as a people suffering from backwardness and poverty. Then we devote all our efforts to achieving objectives which emanate from these conceptions and images of ourselves. For instance, to objectives such as safeguarding and securing our status in a country as a minority, or to achieving sovereignty within our territorial boundaries, or to winning freedom from foreign domination, or to achieving the same levels of economic progress and development as those of the advanced nations.

These and other similar issues may be the foremost concerns of those who are not Muslims, who do not accept God as their Lord and Guide, and may form the central objects of their endeavours. But for us Muslims they are not the primary problems; we face them only because we have been, and still are, neglecting to do our duty. Had we been true witnesses of Islam, we would not have found ourselves lost in such a dense jungle of complex and inextricable problems. If we now direct all our attention and endeavours to doing our duty instead of dissipating our energies on clearing the woods, they will clear in no time, and not only for ourselves but for all

mankind. For, keeping the world clean and improving it is our responsibility; as we have forsaken our appointed duty, the world has become infested with thorny woods. And no wonder that the most thorny part has fallen to our lot.

Unfortunately, our religious and political leaders do not try to understand this simple but crucial reality. Everywhere they continue to convince the Muslims that their problems are the problems of a minority as against a majority, of material progress, of national security, of winning freedom and independence as a nation state. Furthermore, even the solutions that they recommend have been borrowed from non-Muslims. But just as I believe in God, so I believe that you are being misled, and that by following such paths you will never achieve your well-being and destiny.

Our Real Problem

What, then, is our real problem? If I do not tell you that clearly, without any reservation, I shall be doing you a great disservice. To my mind, your destiny, now and ever, depends on one issue only: How do you conduct yourselves in respect of God's guidance that has come to you through His Messenger, blessings and peace be on him?

Because of this guidance you are Muslims. Because of this guidance, whether you like it or not, you have agreed to become ambassadors of Islam to the entire world. Therefore, only if you follow Islam totally and devotedly, if your words and actions bear true witness to its teachings, if your social and public conduct faithfully represents every aspect of Islam, will you rise from glory to glory in this world, and receive highest honours in the world-to-come. Then, in no time, the dark clouds of fear and anxiety, of disgrace and humiliation, of subjugation and slavery will disperse. Then, the truth of your message and the virtue of your character will capture mind after mind and heart after heart. Then, your prestige and reputation, your influence and authority, will hold sway over the world. Hopes of securing justice will be pinned on you, trust will be placed in your integrity and honesty, prospects of virtue will be confided in you, and authority will be accorded to your world.

In contrast, the leaders of secularism will lose all credibility and authority. Their philosophy and world-view, their economic and political ideologies, will prove fake and spurious when confronted by your truth and right conduct. The forces that today belong to the secular camp will, one by one, break away and join the camp of Islam. A time will, then, come when communism will live in fear of its very survival in Moscow itself, when capitalist democracy will shudder at the thought of defending itself even in Washington and New York, when materialist secularism will be unable to find a place even in the universities of London and Paris, when racialism and nationalism will not win even one devotee even among the Brahmans and Germans.

The present era of abject humiliation will, then, become consigned to the pages of history. It will only serve to remind us of the days when the followers of a faith as universal and powerful as Islam were reduced to such stupidity that they trembled in the face of sticks and ropes while they held the staff of Moses under their arm.

This future is yours! But only if you follow Islam sincerely and exclusively and serve as its faithful witnesses. Your present conduct, however, is entirely contrary. You have been blessed with the Divine guidance, but, like a snake guarding treasure, you neither benefit from it yourselves nor allow others to benefit from it. By calling yourselves Muslims, you have assumed for yourselves the position of Islam's representatives, but the combined witness of your words and deeds is being given mostly in favour of Ignorance (Jahillyah), idolatry, materialism, and immorality. You have the Book of God with you, but you have put it on the shelf and, to seek guidance, you turn to all sorts of persons who lead to Kufr, and to sources which lead you astray. You claim to be the servants of the One God, but in fact you are serving every false god, every Satan, and every power in rebellion against God. You have friends and enemies, but it is always your personal, selfish interests that determine your friendship and enmity. In both cases you use Islam as a party to your cause.

Thus, your conduct has, on the one hand, deprived your lives of the blessings that Islam has to offer you, and, on the other, you are alienating mankind rather than attracting it to Islam. If you continue to behave in this manner, you can attain no

good, either in this world or in the world-to-come. Its outcome, according to the Law of God, is that miserable situation in which you find yourselves. What the future holds for you may be much worse.

To be truthful, perhaps, if you remove the label of Islam from yourselves and follow Kufr openly and sincerely, then you might at least make as much worldly progress as America, Russia and Britain have made. But, claiming to be Muslims and yet behaving as non-Muslims, closing the door of Divine guidance to mankind by representing Islam falsely before it, is such a heinous crime that it will never allow you to prosper in this world. There is no way you can avert the punishment prescribed by the Qur'an for this crime. Jewish history provides a living proof of this reality. You may turn to secular nationalism as a lesser evil, you may get yourself accepted as a separate nation and achieve whatever Muslim nationalism seeks to achieve. But none of this will help you.

There is only one way to ward off the punishment of God. Turn back from your sin, and repent.