

QUARTERLY The MESSAGE



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March 2008

THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM LITERARY TRUST, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

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And wait patiently for the judgement of thy Lord, for surely thou art before Our eyes, and celebrate the praise of thy Lord, when thou risest.

And in the night, give Him glory, too, and at the setting of the stars. (H.Q. 52:48-49)

Chapter 57 *AL-HADID* (IRON)

by Dr. Basharat Ahmad

(Translated by Imam Kalamazad Mohammed, BA, Dip. Ed.)

7. **Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and spend of that whereof He has made you heirs. So those of you who believe and spend — for them is a great reward.**

Mustakhlafina refers to those whom Allah, Most High, has made His vicegerents or those who have become inheritors of other people.

We are told that just as everything in the heavens and the earth declares the glory of its Creator and Master, so, too, man's practical glorification comes through belief in Allah, Most High, and spending in His way. In the verses before this one, in mentioning the sublime attributes of the Almighty, the intention was to highlight the glorious nature of the Supreme Being for Whose pleasure everything we were given by Him should be spent in His way whether it is our wealth or riches, our lives, or talents and knowledge, etc. and it is a fact that the glorious attributes of Allah, Most High, described in the verses above are such that if a servant should return everything to the Possessor of such qualities it would still be negligible. And how should a servant make this return? Whatever a devotee spends for the sake of his Master is all to his benefit, for when every power and action, wealth and energy of a person are employed in the service of Allah, Most High, then that person

will become a perfect individual. On his entire being will be stamped the mark of Allah's glorification. This practical and habitual glorification does not redound to the benefit of the Almighty, but instead, man himself profits from it, for this is the process by which he becomes pure and perfect. Further, if we should look deeply, we will see that even the practical glorification of the rest of creation also works towards the advantage of man, for the purpose of creation of everything in the heavens and the earth is to serve man.

Here, the command to believe in Allah, Most High, is general. That is, it applies to all men. By explaining the exalted attributes of Allah, Most High, the purpose is to inform man that it is that Being Who has sent to the world the Prophet Muhammad (sas) through whom all mankind is invited to the way of the Almighty. Furthermore, this Messenger who has come was sent by that Being of glory and splendour Whose qualities were already described above. Thus, belief in such a God and His apostle is incumbent on man. However, a mere verbal belief will be of no use, for just to believe that water exists in the world does not quench our thirst. We have to drink of it before our longing for water is satisfied.

The spirit of sacrifice and selflessness is generated in a person according to the

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degree of faith that exists in his heart because it is through faith that he gives his life or spends his wealth and everything else in the path of Allah, Most High. He knows that nothing he has given will be lost for it has gone into the hands of One Who is always ready and ever willing to give to man more and more and better and better rewards as we read in the following verse: "*The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is as the parable of a grain growing seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies (further) for whom He pleases. And Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing*" (2:261).

That is, an increase of seven hundred times is guaranteed but Allah's recompense is not restricted to this amount for He can give even more to whomsoever He chooses, and this is because such a servant's intentions and sincerity of heart are always under the eyes of the Knower of all things, and so it is not strange if He should increase His reward to someone of His choice.

Once, Madinah was struck by famine. At that time, Uthman (*ra*) was the *Khalifa*. Out of his own pocket, he had ordered a considerable quantity of grain from Syria. When it arrived in Madinah, a merchant approached him with the intention of transacting business and asked the *Khalifa* to name whatever profit he wanted for the grain. The *Khalifa* replied that there was a merchant who was offering a seven hundred percent profit. However, he continued, if there was any merchant who was willing to pay more, he would sell to him. On hearing this, the stranger was very astonished and wanted to know the identity of that merchant who was paying such a high price. The *Khalifa* read the verse quoted above (2:261) and proceeded to distribute all the grain among the needy. Thus, it is faith that motivates a person to display selflessness and sacrifice, for a believer knows that his efforts will not be wasted, but will come to his benefit in the next life.

Once, the Holy Prophet (*sas*) slaughtered a sheep and asked Lady A'isha (*ra*) to distribute the meat among the poor. This she did but retained a shoulder for home consumption. When the Holy Prophet (*sas*) asked if she had complied with his request, she informed him of what she had done, mentioning also that she had left back a

shoulder of the meat. The Holy Prophet (*sas*) then replied: "Everything that you gave away has become ours but not the shoulder which you retained for our home use."

Thus, the degree of our faith determines the extent of our altruistic and sacrificial acts.

On another occasion, in the face of an imminent battle, the Holy Prophet (*sas*) solicited funds from his companions for this holy war. In response, 'Umar (*ra*) brought half of his wealth and possessions as his contribution to the cause whilst Abu Bakr (*ra*) gave everything that he possessed. The Holy Prophet (*sas*) asked 'Umar (*ra*) what he had left behind to which he responded that he had left behind half of his possessions. However, when the same question was posed to Abu Bakr (*ra*), he replied: "I have left behind (for my family) Allah, Most High, and His Holy Prophet (*sas*)."

This response prompted the Holy Prophet (*sas*) to remark that 'Umar's faith was half that of Abu Bakr's (*ra*). In other words, sacrifice was established as the touchstone by which faith is judged just as temperature is measured by a thermometer and air pressure is gauged by a barometer.

The second meaning of *mustakhlafina* (becoming heirs of other people) is also correct and appropriate, for we become inheritors of others and masters of their property. In other words, just as former people had to ultimately leave their wealth and property and pass into the grave and we became their inheritors, similarly, we, too, will have to depart from this world leaving behind everything which in turn will pass on to the benefit of others. Thus, the wise one is he who uses his wealth profitably and does not just leave it for others to inherit it.

Once, the Holy Prophet (*sas*) remarked that among people there are some who guard their inheritors' property more assiduously than their own. The companions wondered who such a person could be and he explained that it applied to one who refrains from spending his wealth in the way of Allah, Most High. In effect, he continued, this person is guarding what he has to leave to his heirs who will become owners of it after him. On the other hand, he is not safe-

guarding his own wealth which is only what is spent for the sake of his Creator and for which he will be rewarded hundreds of times more in the next life.

Thus, man's wealth is only what is employed in the path of the Almighty and is carried by him. What he leaves behind is not his but really that of his inheritors.

In short, in this verse, the command is firstly general and pertains to all men whilst secondly, it applies specially to believers. In that case, the injunction to believe in Allah, Most High, and His apostle will mean that we should support our belief with action. In other words, the significance of belief here is to back up our claim and profession of faith with solid action and this can be accomplished by selfless sacrifice in the path of the Almighty.

This is why the next portion of the verse states that those from among us who believe and support their actions with selfless sacrifice in the path of Allah, Most High, will receive a mighty reward. It is a well-accepted fact that the higher the rank of a man, the greater is his standard of measurement compared to others in respect to a particular thing. For example, for a pauper, a sum of a hundred dollars is a large treasure, but not so for a millionaire for whom it will be a small amount. With this in mind, if we try to gauge or imagine the status of Allah, the Lord of honour and glory, we will discover that it is a task beyond our intellect to conceive. Therefore, if the Almighty should say that a particular reward will be a mighty one, then it is clear that in proportion to His greatness the reward would be so grand that we would not be able to envisage its size.

8. *And what reason have you that you believe not in Allah? And the Messenger invites you to believe in your Lord, and He has indeed accepted your covenant (mithaq), if you are believers.*

The commentators of the Holy Qur'an take this verse to refer to unbelievers generally and *mithaq* means the original covenant Allah took with the sons of the Children of Adam as we read in this verse: "*And when thy Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants,*

and made them bear witness about themselves. Am I not your Lord (Rabb)? They said: Yes, we bear witness ...” (7:172).

In other words, the nature (*fitrah*) of man bears witness to and acknowledges the fact that there is a Lord (*Rabb*) Who has created him and nourished him. Thus, in this verse, a warning is issued to the unbelievers asking them what is wrong with them that they do not believe in the Almighty Who has sent His messenger for the sake of reminding them of the covenant of their souls with their Lord – a covenant which is embedded in the hearts of all human beings and for this reason what the Holy Prophet (*sas*) has brought is in total conformity with man’s nature.

However, the presence of the words: “*If you are believers*”, tells us that it is the believers who are specially addressed here. The statement: “*You do not believe in Allah,*” contains an admonition reprimanding man for not accepting the call of the Almighty by working deeds of righteousness, that is, by spending in Allah’s cause and for not heeding the Holy Prophet’s summons inviting man to believe in his Lord and Creator. In other words, the Holy Prophet (*sas*) is removing the veil that screened true reality and is informing man that his nurturing and his elevation from the lowest to the highest stage come as a result of the Providence of his Lord. Money and wealth are not our Lord, but instead they are means of sustenance provided for us by Him and the secret of benefiting from true sustenance is to spend our riches in the way of the Almighty. Even if we have nourished our human body to some extent by spending to satisfy our carnal desires, we should remember that this body has to die and turn into dust. On the other hand, the nourishment that the human soul acquires from spending in the way of Allah, Most High, is real and permanent. Thus, in this case, if the word *mithaq* (covenant) here refers to the verbal confession of the believers at the time when they accepted Islam, then it would mean that if they were sincere believers in Allah, Most High, and His apostle, there was no reason why they should not buttress their faith with the requisite action, especially since the Holy Prophet (*sas*) was inviting them to do so.

The noble companions of the Holy Prophet (*sas*) accepted his invitation so sincerely that they gave not only their wealth but even their lives for the sake of Allah, Most High, as the Holy Qur’an testifies in the following verse: “*Of the believers there are men who are true to the covenant they made with Allah; so of them is he who has accomplished his vow, and of them is he who yet waits, and they have not changed in the least*” (33:23).

That is, some had already fulfilled their oaths and covenants by giving their lives as martyrs in the way of Allah, Most High, and others were anxiously awaiting their opportunity to do the same, neither group allowing any difficulty to tarnish their sacred vows.

Thus, in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*) no imperfection in their faith was to be found except in the case of the hypocrites. Today, however, one can find hundreds of Muslims who verbally profess the sincerity of their conviction even to the point of boasting about it, yet when it comes to proving their faith by way of good deeds and sacrifice, they are found totally wanting.

9. *He it is Who sends down clear messages to His servant, that he may bring you forth from darkness (zulumat) into light (nur). And surely Allah is Kind, Merciful to you.*

It is a well-known fact that if a matter is true, a procession of new signs in support of it constantly keeps cropping up and in this way, the darkness of doubts and evil suggestions begins to retreat day by day and the night of ignorance is gradually dispelled by the light of knowledge. For instance, let us consider a specific case – the death of Prophet Jesus (*as*). In our age, belief in this point was a very difficult matter in the beginning. However, as his death was a true occurrence, day after day new light began to be shed on this controversy, and every day proof after proof began to be discovered with the result that now, there is no intelligent person who holds the view that he is alive in heaven.

Here, the word darkness (*zulmat*) is used in the plural form *zulumat* because there are different kinds of darkness like polytheism

and innovation, family traditions and national customs, blind following of religious leaders (*taqlid*), slavery to animal passions and carnal desires, all kinds of evil suspicion and misgivings induced by ignorance and the list can go on and on. All these are instances of darkness, liberation from which can only be procured through the light of Divine revelation, that is, man can be rescued only by means of that knowledge which is revealed by Allah, Most High. Thus, man begins to emerge from these disparate kinds of darkness in proportion to the increase of his faith in Divine revelation.

In this context, the word light (*nur*) signifies the phenomenon of Divine revelation which guides a person in his faith and good deeds on to the straight path which, if followed, will enable him to achieve the goal of his creation and win the pleasure of his Lord. It is called “light” because it is a spark from the Divine refulgence. By this spark, man is saved from following misleading paths and is assisted in walking along the straight path which leads him to the cherished destination (that is, Allah, Most High).

10. *And what reason have you that you spend not in Allah’s way? And Allah’s is the inheritance of the heavens and the earth. Those of you who spent before the Victory and fought are not on a level (with others). They are greater in rank than those who spent and fought afterwards. And Allah has promised good to all. And Allah is Aware of what you do.*

We are informed in this verse that Allah, Most High, has sent down to us two things side by side: firstly, the verities of the Holy Qur’an and secondly, continuous and clear proofs in support of the messengership of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*). In addition, He keeps sending sign after heavenly sign so that our faith may be strengthened, for this faith is the spirit that provides the impetus for our good deeds, selflessness and sacrifice.

Thus, after all these free gifts, we have no excuse left to dissuade us from spending our wealth in the way of the Almighty. In fact, if the truth be told, Allah, Most High, is the real Master of everything in the heavens and the earth and we are given only

temporary possession of them, for we have to die and leave everything behind. What an irony it is! Wealth is given to us by the Almighty and yet we are niggardly in spending in His way. This is nothing but the height of ingratitude.

In the opinion of some, the "victory" (*fath*) refers to the conquest of Makkah, whilst others hold to the view that the allusion is to the Treaty of Hudaibiyya which has been called by Allah, Most High, Himself "a clear victory" (*fathan mubina* – 48:1). It is true that it is only after this Treaty that the predominance of Islam was initiated and if we read the events of that era we will find that this interpretation is quite correct.

However, if we look at the word "victory" in a wider sense, then it can mean the victory of Islam or, in other words, its predominance as the Holy Qur'an says: "*When Allah's help and victory comes, and thou seest men entering the religion of Allah in companies*" (110:1-2).

In other words, all obstacles had been removed from the path of Islam's invitation and propagation and now people's hearts had been won over by the religion. Thus, the meaning of these verses is that Islam was undergoing a period of poverty and straitened circumstances and its defence and propagation called for the expenditure of wealth and lives. As a result, if people should spend their wealth for the dissemination of the religion and should engage the enemy in battle in its defence, and should sacrifice their lives in its cause, then the reward for their wealth and sacrifice of lives in these desperate times would be considerably greater than the recompense people will receive when, by Allah's grace, Islam has become victorious and the hearts of people have been conquered. And it is a fact that help and sacrifice in the hour of dire necessity carry more value and are rewarded much more than when the need does not exist.

This is what the Holy Prophet (*sas*) explained in a sermon delivered in Madinah. He said: "Whoever gives today a handful of barley in the path of Allah, Most High, will receive a reward greater than if he should give later on a heap of gold larger than Mt. Uhud."

The reason was that Islam was experiencing in those days poverty, destitution and terrible hardship. At that time, the promise of the Almighty – a promise that increases the intensity of faith in the hearts of people – was still covered by the veil of the unseen and faith and sacrifice were being put to a stern test. Consider the scene: a handful of Muslims on one side and right around the flames of the fire of enmity and opposition were raging up to the high heavens. A cursory glance could reveal nothing but futility and certain destruction. How wonderful a proof of faith was the giving, at that time, of wealth, lives and sacrifice! In view of this, can sacrifice of lives and wealth, in a later age, ever be on the same level as the sacrifices made in those trying times?

Indeed, in every age when Islam is afflicted by a spell of indigence, hardship, calamity or trial, then whoever makes sacrifice of wealth and lives at that time will be rewarded in proportion to the hardship Islam was undergoing, and he will become more deserving of reward than those who render service to the religion later on when the adversity has passed and Islam is triumphant and easy circumstances prevail.

For example, today, in our age Islam is besieged by hostile religions. All the adherents of false creeds in the world are ranged at the threshold of Islam with one aim: to erase the religion from the face of the globe. Today, Europe with all its forces at its command is bent on exterminating Islam from existence. Thus, those who make any kind of sacrifice of wealth and lives in the way of defence and propagation of Islam will receive a much greater reward than a nation that may do so later at a time when the poisonous stranglehold of the enemy has been broken, and having conquered the hearts of people, the success of Islam stands conspicuously visible to all.

Therefore, Allah, Most High, says: "*And Allah has promised good to all.*"

That is, when a servant makes any sacrifice of wealth or life, he is sure to receive a good reward from his Lord. Of course, there is certain to be a difference of rank. Nevertheless, at any time anyone makes a sincere sacrifice, his recompense is certain and cannot be lost for no deed is hidden from the eyes of the Omniscient, for Allah,

Most High, says: "*And Allah is Aware of what you do.*"

In other words, one should never entertain the secret anxiety as to whether Allah, Most High, knows about his sacrifices or not, as happens sometimes in this world when rulers are unaware of those who make true sacrifices for them and cunning people, capitalising on this lack of knowledge of the rulers, steal an unmerited recompense for themselves. That is, a certain person may do the good work but others end up receiving the recompense for it from the rulers. So, Allah, Most High, says that He is Aware of every good deed His servant does. Thus we are encouraged to continue working deeds of righteousness and to rest assured that rewards will definitely come to us.

The purpose of saying: "*And Allah is Aware of what you do,*" is that this announcement may stimulate the enthusiasm for sacrifice in the heart of the servant, for it is a fact that when a devotee is sure that his Master is constantly Aware of the piety of his heart and genuine sacrifice, then the zeal for altruistic service and sacrifice becomes agreeably pleasing to him.

O you who believe, bow down and prostrate yourselves and serve your Lord, and do good that you may succeed.

And strive hard for Allah with due striving. He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion – the faith of your father Abraham. He named you Muslims before and in this, that the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you, and you may be bearers of witness to the people; so keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and hold fast to Allah. He is your Protector; excellent the Protector and excellent the Helper! (H.Q. 22:77-78)

THE MYSTIC SIGNIFICANCE OF SPLITTING THE MOON

(*Inshiqaq al-Qamar*) AS MENTIONED IN THE QUR'AN

By Dr H.C. Paul

Chapter 54 of the Qur'an, entitled *The Moon*, starts with the verse: "The hour (of Judgment) drew nigh and the moon was cleft asunder." In view of the fact that parts of the Qur'an are a record of the Prophet Muhammad's life, the above verse may be referred to the incident when the moon was cleft asunder in the time of the Prophet, during his Meccan period. It is claimed that a number of the Prophet's companions witnessed this incident and it is considered by some Muslims as a miracle of the Messenger of God.

The second verse, however, tells us about the unbelievers: "And if they see a sign, they turn away and say: This is (but a) transient magic." The sceptics cannot believe in and appreciate such signs; their wisdom is only earthly, their knowledge is perverted, they have no faith in the Unity of Self and they follow their own lusts. Yet, according to the Qur'an, every matter has its appointed time (*Kullo 'amrin mustaqirrun*).

Man, in his gradual development to perfection, has to pass through the various stages which have their appointed time. Verses 18 and 19 of chapter 84 of the Qur'an, entitled *Inshiqaq* (Rending Asunder), explains this theme in these words: "And the moon in her fullness, yet shall surely travel from stage to stage."

Yusuf Ali, in the footnote of these verses in the Holy Qur'an, explains: "The moment the moon is full, she begins to decline, and the moment she is in her 'inter-lunar swoon' she begins her career anew as a growing new moon." So is the case with the mind of man. When man becomes completely aware of the different phases of the object of his ideal, he finds it imperfect. He then starts anew for a greater ideal. This search goes on and on until at last man reaches his Lord – the Higher Self, as is indicated in verse 6 of the same chapter: "O thou man! Verily thou art ever toiling on towards thy Lord – toiling painfully – but thou shalt meet Him."

Spiritual development

The Qur'an in its true sense is no history. It

is the con-ditions of the soul in its gradual development of Self, as is said by the Prophet: "This Qur'an hath been revealed to me by inspiration, that I may warn you and all whom it reaches".

That is, those who have faith in the Reality of Self will be inspired by every verse that is revealed in the Qur'an. And the mystery of the revelation of Self is thus described: "It is He Who doth take your souls by night, and hath knowledge of all that ye have done by day: by day doth He raise you up again, that a term appointed be fulfilled; in the end unto Him will be your return; then will He show you the truth of all that ye did" (6: 19-60).

In a mystic sense, moon is the mind. When that mind is cleft asunder, the hour (of Judgment) is revealed to the soul. The Hour of Judgment, the Last Day, or the Realisation of Self, is attained when the mind is lost in the Self. That state is "in the Assembly of Truth, in the Presence of a Sovereign Omnipotent" (54: 55). When the soul realises his Self, truth prevails everywhere. There reigns the Supreme Omnipotence of Self Who is One with all. And there is nothing besides Him (2: 163). At that pure Moment they are returned to their Self, Who is their Pro-tector and the only Reality (6: 62). The One that is self-sufficient remains and all others perish (in the course of time (28: 88).

This changing time (*dahr*) is the basis of creation and also of Man (*Insan*), who is the best of creation. Man, ordinarily governed by his mind, is the best expression of his Self. His mind is of three types – brutal or sensual, mental or rational, and divine or spiritual. In other words, it is selfish, mutually sympathetic to one another and disinterested of its own ends. These three phases of the mind are, accord-ing to Sufi (Islamic mystic) terminology, the three planes ('*alam*) of *Nasut*, *Malakut* and *Jubrut* cognate with the Vedic *Bhuh*, *Bhuvah* and *Swah*. These three states of a gradually developing soul are intermingled together in man. They are also the great bar (or partition, *Barzakh* to *Pilgrim's Progress* towards the Realisation of Self.

Categorically, the three states may be compared with the mental stages of the unbelievers, companions (devotees) of the Prophet and the different Messengers of God.

The unbelievers are the so-called *Dahriyyah*, an atheist or a materialist, who believes in the eternity of time: "And they say, What is there but our life in this world? We shall die and we live, and nothing but time can destroy us. But of that they have no knowledge; they merely conjecture" (25: 24). They have no change in their mental attitude. As against them, the Companions of the Prophet are believers in a personal God. They are thus addressed in the Qur'an: "What is the matter with you, that ye place not your hope for kindness and long-suffering in God, -seeing that it is He that has created you in diverse stages? See ye not how God has created the seven heavens one above another, and made the moon a light in their midst, and made the sun as a (glorious) lamp? And God has produced you from the earth, growing gradually, and in the end He will return you into the (earth), and raise you forth (again at the Resurrection)? And God has made the earth for you as a carpet (spread out) that ye may go about therein, in spacious roads" (71: 13-20).

As long as man secedes from the All-Merciful God, he would suffer. Else he would find that everything has been created for his ultimate perfection. As in the physical sky, his mental region reflects the moon of rationality (*insaniyat*). The earth, its surroundings, and the elements by which man is created, are no bar to his progress. They help him realise his true Self through mutual harmony of the apparently con-tradictory qualities.

How about the third type of men, who are the devotees of God? It is related in the Qur'an: "As to the righteous, they shall drink of a cup mixed with *kafur* – a fountain from which the devotees of God do drink, making it flow in abundance. ... And they feed, for the love of God, the indigent, the orphan and the captive. ... And because

they are patient and constant. He will reward them with a garden and (garments of) silk. Reclining in the garden on raised thrones, they will see there neither (the sun's) excessive heat nor (the moon's) excessive cold" (76: 5-13). These are the truly religious persons depending always on the bounties of God, the different Messengers of God in the Qur'an and the *Brahmana* (knowing Brahma or the true God) of the Hindu scriptures. They are always ready to sacrifice for the sake of others; and as such, though often poor and indigent in the material sense (or in that sense when the Prophet Muhammad said *al-faqr fakhri*, that is, poverty is my pride), they live in joy and pleasure in the mutual harmony of the knowledge of Self and the love and sympathy for the fellow beings.

The final stage

After these develops a stage which is called in mystic terminology the '*alam-i Lahut* or the Vedic *mahah*, that is, all-Divinity, the Great Expanse with no narrowness or conflicts of the Mind, the Sanskrit *turiya marga* (or the fourth stage), that is beyond the reach of language and thought (*manas*), but to be realised through experience. Accordingly the Persian poet, Rumi says in his *Spiritual Poem* (*Mathnavi*, Vol. I, 2758): "Conception is begotten of qualities and its limit; God is not begotten, He is *lam yulad*" (112: 3). Pringle Pattison, in his *The Idea of God* (p. 364), also quotes:

We that are not all,
As parts can see but parts, now
this, now that,
And live, perforce, from thought
to thought and make
One act a phantom of succession:
thus
Our weakness somehow shapes
the shadow, Time.

He concludes in response to the Biblical challenge, "Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know?" If to comprehend means to grasp, as it were in the hand, to understand thoroughly, to see all round an object, then unquestionably the Infinite must for ever remain incomprehensible by the finite (p. 165). It is the state of "Deification" (or *Istighna*, as called by the Sufi poet 'Attar in his *Muntiq al-Tayr*). The

secret of that state is only to be experienced whose outward forms can only be appreciated, as also said by Rumi (in *Mathnavi*, Vol. 2, 1790): *Mahram-i Nasut-i ma Lahut bad; Afrin bar dast u bar bazut bad*.

It is the preceding state of *Tauhid* (or Unity), the Hour of Judgment, and to reach that Unity the mind is to be cleft asunder or lost of all senses – so beautifully and poetically expressed by the Qur'anic *Insha'iq al-Qamar*! These four stages of Man, a mental being, are also so finely rendered in one of the Islamic mystic songs (or *Baul Gan*) in the Bengali language (as sung by the Faqir Lalan Shah) [(*Lalan-Gitika*, No. 179, Calcutta University)]:

Four Moons are in region of thought:

O, two of them become expressed —

It's (only) known by multitude.

That knows the tale of cleft of Moon (or *Chandra-hed*)

Of strength of him what can I tell?

O, holding Moon he goes for Moon —

The Moon that none by count can gain.

Four moons are in a Moon so mixed,
By time they form divergent mood.

O, go and search the House of Pearl —

He only knows all news.

Who cares to hold the Moon of source?

Let him then search the bitter moon;

Says Siraj Sain, behold *Lalan*!

Ambrosia-poison harmonise.

Comparing spatio-temporal relations with the moon and spiritual knowledge with the sun, how beautifully this subtle theme is again described by the mystic interpreter of the Qur'an! Says Rumi: "In describing it (i.e., love), knowledge is found asleep in mud like an ass; description of love and lovingness can only be described by love itself. The sun came to be the proof of the sun itself. If you require its demon-stration, then don't be away from it. If the shadow can give any hint of it, the sun is every moment spreading spiritual lustre. The shadow lulls you to sleep like the evening enter-tainment, (but) when the sun rises up, the moon is cleft

asunder. ... There is nothing so unique like the sun: (but) the spiritual sun is everlasting. It has no yesterday. Though this physical sun is unique, yet we can conceive of its similitude. The spiritual sun is beyond all space and time. It cannot be perceived in the mind and in anything external" (*Mathnavi*, Vol. I, pp. 115-21).

The discriminating man is given all the faculties of the mind and also spiritual knowledge in this universe which is bound up with the earth with its different horizons to realise his Self; and this holy Qur'an is like a she-camel for his progress in the journey to Self. One who can drink of its delicious messages will only win over the conflicts of good and evil and by bringing harmony between them will at last realise his Self. This really is the essence of the whole Qur'an which is so beautifully described by a symbolic imagery of words in its chapter 91 entitled *Shams* (The Sun): "By the sun and his (glorious) splendour; by the moon (or *Qamar* – symbolic for Mind) as she follows him; by the day as it shows up (the sun's) glory; by the night as it conceals it; by the firmament and its (wonderful) structure; by the earth and its (wide) expanse; by the Soul and the proportion and order given to it; and its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right – truly he succeeds that purifies it, and he fails that corrupts! ... But the Messenger of God said to them, It is a she-camel of God (and bar her not from) having her drink. ... And for Him is no fear of its consequences."

Accordingly, when man reaches the Resurrection (or realises his Self), all his agonies of the body and mind are lost for ever and he then enjoys all pleasures of the mind in his spiritual knowledge of the Self. All crookedness of the mental vision is there dazed and looms large in his spiritual vision, the Self, which is all beauty. This subtle theme has also been so beautifully expressed in chapter 75 of the Qur'an, entitled *Qiyamat* (The Resurrection), through some poetic images: "At length when the sight is dazed, and the moon is buried darkness (*wa-khasafal-Qamaru*), and the sun and moon are joined together before thy Lord (alone), that day will be the place of rest. Some faces that day will beam (in bright-ness and beauty), looking towards their Lord."

Seven stages

As the Persian poet 'Attar has in his *Munziq al-Tayr* referred to seven valleys in the journey to the Realization of Self, such as *talab* (quest), *'ishq* (love), *mar'rifah* (knowledge), *istighna* (independence or deification), *hairah* (wonder), and *fana* (annihilation of the self), which are the same as the *haft-'alam* of the mystic phraseology or the *seven worlds* (or *sapta loka*) of the Vedantists, so are there *sat-chakra* (six centres). Here the first stage of the *Sufi* path should not be taken into account in the Yogic System of the Hindus. Of these the first four (or three) stages are variously named as *chakra*, *padma* (lotus), *kaya* (body or nature) or *chandra* (moon) in the *Tantrik* or Buddhist religion of the Hindus. They are often described allegorically; and comparing the body and mind to the bow and its arrows, how excellently the theme has thus been expressed in the *Mundaka Upanisad* (2/2/4): "Bow is the *Om* (i.e., the vocal expression of His Lordship), the soul is its arrow, and the *Brahma* (or the Highest Self) is said to be its aim. Without being misguided, this should be struck out, and like an arrow one

should be of one soul with his ideal." The writer has discussed in another place (All-India Conference held at Aligarh in October 1966), "The Bow and its Arrow – their Significances or Symbolic Imageries." Here attention is drawn to the Persian word *tir* for arrow, which is cognate with the Sanskrit *tira* meaning a shore or a bank. Really, arrow is the medium through which anything can be surpassed (cf. Sanskrit *ut-tir--na*). From Avesta *Tistrya*, the word *tir* is the name of the fourth solar month of the Persians when the sun is in the Tropic of Cancer. *Tistrya* is probably cognate with the Sanskrit *tri-sr* (three) that forms a medium as a bridge to flow or cross over the material to the spiritual world. Note also that *tisr-dhanva*, "a bow with three (arrows)," is mentioned as a gift to the priest at the sacrifice in the *Taittiriya Samhita* and also in the *Satapatha Brdharma*.

In the *Rig-Veda*, *Tryaruna Trasadasyu* is the half-god man turned into the Indra-type; therefore, he is described by all the usual epithets of Indra – *Asura*, *Satipati* and *Maghavan*. "He is the triple dawn, the son

of the triple bull." The triple bull is Indra, lord of the three luminous realms of *Swar*, the Divine Mind. The triple dawn is the dawn of the three realms of the human mentality. He is the "dispenser of the destroyers"; and in all things he reproduces the characteristics of Indra (cf. Sri Aurobindo's *On the Veda*, pp. 459-60). Spiritually signified, the arrow is mind with its three distinctive characteristics to realise the Self. This dawn may well be compared with the *falak* in the Qur'an. As the moon shines in the night compared to the darkness of the physical plane, so also every night ends with the dawn to give a fresh glimpse of the Day, the *Nauroz* or the Realisation of Self.

And with the imagery of the bow and arrow how beautifully has Rumi illustrated the mystic significance of the *ayat* in the Qur'an, "Thou didst not throw, when thou throwest" (8:17): "If we throw an arrow, it is not from us; we are only the bow (*kaman*) and the shooter of arrows (*tir-andaz*) is God Himself" (*Mathnavi*, Vol. I, p. 616). Really, all body and mind are originated from God, and to Him shall we return at last.

THE WISDOM OF SUPEREROGATORY ACTS OF GOODNESS

By Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

(Translated by Kalamazad Mohammed, BA. Dip. Ed., Editor, *The Message*)

The *Hadith* tells us that those who do extra good in addition to the compulsory duties prescribed in the Law will gain closeness to Allah, Most High.

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

From this we can see that there are two kinds of actions: obligatory (*fard*, pl. *faraa'id*) which pertain to those commands of the Almighty which we are commanded to perform and supererogatory acts (*nafl*, pl. *nawaafil*) meaning what we willingly do beyond the scope of the compulsory duties laid down by the Law (*Shari'ah*). These actions are performed so that if there is any deficiency in our obligatory duties, our voluntary deeds will make up for the shortfall.

Some people restrict the range of the *nawaafil*, that is, extra duties, only to the prayer service. However, this is not correct, for every single action of man has something extra attached to it. For example, we pay *zakah* (compulsory tax) at the stipulated rate of two and a half percent (2 ½ %) but we should sometimes give a little more. Similarly, we observe the compulsory fasts in the month of Ramadhan but outside

of this month there are other fasts which we should perform. Again, we may take a loan from someone but we should return more than the capital for this is an act of great kindness.

Voluntary acts of goodness (*nawaafil*) complete and perfect our obligatory duties for when performing some extra goodness, our hearts are filled with humility and fear which tend to compensate for any deficiency in our compulsory obligations (*faraa'id*). This is the secret which causes voluntary acts of goodness to bring a person closer to the Almighty for this state is engendered when the heart is filled with humility and meekness and has separated itself from everything besides Allah, Most High. This is why fasting on the 13th, 14th and 15th of the lunar month and the six extra fasts in the month of Shawwaal are all grouped under the heading of supererogatory acts in a

devotee's striving to attain proximity to Allah, Most High.

Thus, we should be aware that voluntary acts of righteousness are a means of helping us to win Allah's complete love. The result of this is that Allah, Most High, promises to such a believer who exerts himself to attain a close connection with Him that He will become the eyes by which he sees. That is, his glance will fall wherever he wills it to alight.

A truthful person (*saadiq*) does not know when death will come and so he is never heedless of the Almighty, Who says: "I shall become the ear of such a devotee." This means that we should rise with disgust and anger and leave any assembly where Allah, Most High, or His apostle or His Book is spoken of with contempt or disdain. A true believer cannot bear to listen to such contemptible speech, neither can he pay ear to anything that goes contrary to the command or pleasure of the Almighty. So, too, must we abstain from listening to immoral or impure words or lewd music and avoid places where such music is played and also the desires that it excites, for if we listen to the sweet alluring singing of women who are outside of the prohibited degrees of marriage (*na mahram*), it may arouse evil thoughts in us and this is tantamount to committing adultery of the ear. This is why Islam has instituted the custom of seclusion (*pardah*).

The Messiah, Prophet Jesus' dictum of not looking at a woman with an adulterous eye is not a perfect teaching. In comparison to this, the impeccable tenet which protects a person from the preliminaries of sin is that we should not even look at a strange woman because the heart is not under the control of man. See how complete is this precept.

The *hadith* also says: "I (Allah) shall become the hand by which he holds." In many cases, through his hands, man commits deeds that transgress the limit of what is permissible. Allah, Most High, says that a believer should not improperly exceed the bounds of what is legally allowed and so a believing man refrains from shaking hands with women with whom this is forbidden.

Again, the Almighty says: I become the tongue by which he speaks." An indication of this is given in the following Qur'anic verse which says in relation to the Holy Prophet (*sas*): "*Nor does he speak out of desire*" (53:3). That is why whatever the Holy Prophet (as) spoke was uttered only in accordance with the command of Allah, Most High, and as regards his hand, the Holy Qur'an states: "... *and when thou throwest (a handful of dust) it was not thy act, but Allah threw ...*" (8:17) (at the battle of Badr).

In other words, through voluntary acts of goodness, man attains a lofty spiritual rank and draws ever closer to his Creator until he is included in the company of the saints.

The *hadith* also says: "Whoever becomes an enemy of My friend should get ready to do battle with Me." And it also states that Allah, Most High, will pounce on such an adversary just as a tigress would do in order to protect her young from being taken away.

In short, man should always strive and labour to achieve this station. No one knows when death will suddenly strike. It is the duty of the believer never to become negligent and he should always entertain the fear of the Almighty in his heart.

(*Malfuzat*, Vol. 2, pp. 198-200, old edition.)

Keep up prayer from the declining of the sun till the darkness of the night, and the recital of the Qur'an at dawn. Surely the recital of the Qur'an at dawn is witnessed.

And during a part of the night, keep awake by it, beyond what is incumbent on thee; maybe thy Lord will raise thee to a position of great glory.

And say: My Lord, make me enter a truthful entering, and make me go forth a truthful going forth, and grant me from Thy presence an authority to help (me). (H.Q. 17:78-80)

THE SEED OF GOODNESS

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

I wish to say a few words of advice to those who have taken the oath of allegiance at my hand. The initiation itself is like sowing the seed of goodness. If a gardener does not take care of his newly planted trees and seedlings, neither watering them nor protecting them, his plants would go to waste. Similarly, Satan is always there with human beings so that if a person does not take care to protect the good deeds he has performed, they will go to waste.

All people, including Muslims, perform the duties of their religion but many do not make any progress. The reason for this is that they do not think of developing further their sphere of good acts and hence their deeds enter the fold of custom and tradition. Consequently, if a person is born in a Muslim home he begins to recite the *Kalima* and if he is born into a Hindu home he starts to chant the name of Ram.

You should remember that at the time of initiation there is great blessing in making a statement of repentance. If there is also added to this the promise that one will give greater precedence in matters of faith over worldly concerns then there will be progress. However, the fulfilment of the promise of giving precedence to faith is not one that is entirely in your own control. God's help is greatly needed in its achievement. As Allah states in the Holy Qur'an: "*Those who strive hard for Us, We shall certainly guide them in Our ways*" (29:69). That is, those who strive in our path, ultimately attain guidance. Just as a grain of seed that is kept without water and care is devoid of blessing and thus perishes, so will it be the case with you if you do not remind yourselves daily of your promise to give precedence to your faith, and if you do not call upon God with prayers to help you in this task with His blessing. Change is impossible without the help of God. Thieves, adulterers, and other bad people do not stay in the same state all the time. They, too, at times show concern about their inner state. This is the case with every person who carries out an evil deed. What this shows is that there is necessarily in man the concern

to do good, but for actually turning such a concern into action, he is in great need of God's help. That is why five times daily there is the injunction to recite *Surah Fatiha*, in which are contained the words, "Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help" (1:4). That is, addressing God we say: "It is Thee we worship and it is from Thee that we seek help." This verse points to two things – in carrying out every good deed, one should make full use of one's capacities, one's effort and good planning, as well as prayer. This is hinted at in the word *na'budu* (we worship) because a person who merely utters words of prayer and does not make the accompanying effort cannot succeed, just as the farmer who does not make any effort to take care of the seedlings he has planted cannot, consequently, hope to see the fruit of those plants. Such is the practice of God! If a seed is planted and then only prayers are uttered for its growth, one would be deprived of its fruit. For example, if there are two farmers and one of them works hard on his land and irrigates it well, he will necessarily be more successful. The other farmer who does not work very hard or does very little will see that the development of his plants will be slack, giving such a low yield that he would probably be unable to even pay the government taxes levied on his land and he will always remain poor. Matters of faith are of a similar nature. There are to be found in the sphere of faith people who are hypocrites and people who are useless. There are also to be found within the same realm people who become pious, people who become holy and people who become saints and attain a lofty status in the sight of God.

There are some people who have been offering *salah* for over 40 years and yet it is as if they have progressed no further than the first day and they have not undergone any change whatsoever. Such people do not feel the benefit from 30 days of fasting. There are many who state that they are accomplished righteous people and have been offering *salah* for a long time yet they do not exhibit the signs of the assistance of God. The reason for this is that their worship is customary and traditional. They only follow what others do. They do not think of progressing. They have no inclination towards sin but they do not seek true repentance. Hence they stay at the first step. The state of such people is not far removed

from that of animals. The *salah* of such people brings affliction from God. True *salah* is that which brings with it progress. If a patient is being treated by a physician he will notice if his condition is daily getting worse instead of better. After a few days, the patient will get concerned that the prescription is not curing him and that it should be changed. Similarly, to adopt just a customary form of worship is not the right course.

The performance of *salah* involves prayer and *darood* (that is, calling blessings upon the Holy Prophet (*sas*) which are in Arabic but it is not forbidden that you should also pray in your own language). If this is not done, there will be no progress. It is the commandment of God that *salah* should be a state in which there is presence of heart and mind, humility and supplication. It is the people who try to perform *salah* in this manner, whose sins are washed away. There is a verse of the Holy Qur'an in which it is stated, "Surely good deeds take away evil deeds" (11:114). That is, *hasanat* (good deeds) remove one's shortcomings. Here, by *hasanat* is meant *salah* and the presence of heart and mind during *salah*. Such presence is achieved by imploring and beseeching God in one's own language. During *salah* you should, therefore, from time to time, pray in your own words. However, the best prayer is *Surah Fatiha*, because it is a complete prayer. When the farmer has learnt the skill of farming, he would then be on the right path of farming and he will be successful. Likewise, you should search for the right path that leads to a union with God and you should pray to Him saying, "O God, I am a sinful servant of Yours and am miserable and worthless. Please guide me." You should present all your needs, be they great or small, before God because He alone is the Provider. He who prays the most, is the most good. If a person were to beg every day at the door of the most mean person, one day he too would give something. Why then would a person not find what he asks at the door of God, Who is the most Generous, without comparison. It is the case that he who asks, does eventually receive.

Another name for *salah* is prayer, as is stated by Allah in the Holy Qur'an: "And your Lord says: Pray to Me, I will answer you" (40:60). And again it is stated, "And when My

servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should hear My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way" (2:186). Some people doubt the existence of God's Being but you should call Him and ask of Him. He will call you in return and will answer your call and will remember you. However, if it is said that we call upon Him and He does not answer, then you should consider this example. You are standing at a point which is at a great distance from the person you are calling and you also suffer from deficient hearing. It will then be the case that although the other person hears you and responds to you, yet when he calls you from a distance then, because of your own deficient hearing, you will not be able to hear him. However, as the veils that divide are gradually lifted and other impediments are removed, you will certainly hear that voice.

Ever since the world was created, there has been proof that God speaks to His special servants. If this were not the case then gradually the notion that God even exists would have totally disappeared. Hence, a very powerful means of proof of God's existence is that we are able to hear His voice. There is either seeing or hearing as a proof of someone else's existence. These days hearing takes the place of seeing but as long as there is some veil between God and the one who prays, he will be unable to hear. When the intervening veil is lifted then the distant voice will be heard.

Some people say that for the past 1,300 years the system of God's communication with man has been closed. The reality of such utterances is like that of a blind person who thinks everyone is blind as there is no light in his own eyes. If it was the case that Islam did not possess the distinction of enabling man to reach the level where God speaks to man, then Islam would have been nothing and it would have been dead like other religions. You should not, therefore, think like those belonging to dead religions who are "dead" themselves and consider Islam to be dead. On the contrary, Islam, is a religion the practice of which can make a person progress to such a high station that he can shake hands with the angels. If this was not the case then one could legitimately ask why was prayer taught to us.

"The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours" (1:6). This voice is not only the desire for material endowment but also for spiritual endowment and blessing. So, if you wish to remain blind, why do you utter this prayer? The prayer of *Surah Fatihah* is a complete prayer and an extraordinary prayer such that the like of it has never been taught before by any other Prophet. So, if it is no more than mere words and God has not approved them, then why is it that God has taught us these words? If the high station is not to be attained by us, why are we enjoined to waste our time five times a day on this prayer? There is no stinginess in God's character, nor do the Prophets come for the purpose of being worshipped themselves. They come in order to teach that those who adopt their path 'come under their shade, as is stated in the Holy Qur'an: "If you love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you, and grant you protection from your sins" (3:30). That is, "In following me, you will become the beloved of God." It was because the Holy Prophet (*sas*) was a beloved of God that there were such blessings showered upon him. Can it then be the case that if someone else were to become God's beloved he would get nothing? If Islam was such a religion, one would be repelled by it. Islam, however, is not such a religion. The Holy Prophet (*sas*) has brought a spiritual "food" that can be attained by whoever wishes to acquire it. He did not bring a worldly treasure nor did he come as a banker. He brought the treasure of God and he himself became the distributor of this treasure. So, if that was the nature of the wealth that he distributed, and it was not a material wealth, did he take the treasury back with him? However, it is true that the blind person who has no light cannot make the claim that he possesses light and distributes it. God states: "And whoever is blind in this (world) he will be blind in the Hereafter, and further away from the path" (17:72).

The Prophets themselves possess a very high level of vision. As for those who say that this vision will not be given to anyone else, will they themselves leave this world in a state of blindness? If such people had true faith in the Holy Prophet (*sas*) and they sincerely believed that the Holy Prophet (*sas*) came to distribute heavenly treasure, and that his followers are to be distinguished above all others, then they

would not have denied the possibility, in the present age, of communication with God. They accept that the mother of Moses (*as*) received revelation from God. They should say whether any men among them have received similar revelation. There was a *maulvi* in Lahore with whom I was involved in a discussion over the word *muhaddis*. I said that in the traditions it is stated that a *muhaddis* is one who can communicate with God and this was in relation to Hadhrat Umar (*ra*). The *maulvi* replied that because Islam after the Holy Prophet (*sas*) is not granted the blessing of such communication, that is why Umar (*ra*) did not attain this station. That is to suggest that among the followers of the Holy Prophet (*sas*) there will come only *Dajjals* (that is, anti-Christ)!

The time of the Messiah, in accordance with the prophecies contained in the traditions (of the Holy Prophet), is identified as this very age. In the chapter of the Holy Qur'an entitled *Al-Nur*, and in *Bukhari*, the word *minkum* (from among you) is very clear. All the prophesied signs have appeared. The eclipse of the sun and the moon in the month of Ramadan and the plague – these are very clear and evident signs but people continue to say that such events occur anyway. They do not tire of denying the signs and God does not tire. Ultimately, you know what the result will be: it will be that the Holy God will win.

Despite evident signs, people state that this claimant is one of the 30 *Dajjals*. It is their misfortune that they consider themselves to be fated only to have *Dajjals*. External and internal tribulations have befallen them and still if someone is to come from God, it is a *Dajjal*. According to their defective reasoning, they were dying and what does God do? He treats them in a manner which is akin to killing the dying (by sending a *Dajjal* instead of the Promised Messiah). Does God have some enmity towards the Muslims that He should bring on them hardship upon hardship without end?

Their reasoning is full of human error and you should beware of those errors. God is Most Gracious and Most Merciful. If a person wears a piece of clothing for a week, he begins to be concerned about having it cleaned. What then is the reason that instead of 100 years, 120 years should pass and no plan for the revival of religion should be

suggested and instead a *Dajjal* should be sent, making the situation even worse!

At present, nearly three million Muslims have become Christians. This was a nation in which in the past a single conversion to Christianity would have caused an outcry. Now a Hindu sect has raised its head, and is forcing Muslims to become Hindu Aryas. The Muslims, however, are still of the view that there has been sent among them a *Dajjal*. Consequently, it would appear that God, too, has cheated them by sending a *Dajjal* at the head of the century instead of a Messiah so that any ray of hope that may still be remaining should vanish. Following their reasoning, one may wonder whether there exists within them serious evils and sins for which they are being punished in this way!

God Himself, however, has stated: "Surely We have revealed the Reminder, and surely We are its Guardian" (15:9). That is, God states, "We have sent down the Qur'an and We shall safeguard it. Whenever there occur errors in its meaning and understanding We will appoint a Reformer for its correction and reform."

You should, therefore, not think ill of me. You should instead consider the present time which is at the head of the century. Consider also the external attacks and the inner state of your deeds and judge for yourself whether at such a time there is need for a *Dajjal* or for a Mahdi and a Messiah.

O children of Adam, if messengers come to you from among you relating to you My messages, then whosoever guards against evil and acts aright – they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve.

And those who reject our messages and turn away from them haughtily – these are the companions of the Fire; they shall abide in it. (H.Q. 7:35-37)

TRUE DISCERNMENT

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

For myself and for the community of my followers I prefer that undue significance is not attached to the apparent presentation of speeches and lectures. The magical presentation of a speech or the display of powerful oratory should not become the sole concern of speakers and their audiences. I am not happy with this type of practice. What I prefer, and it is in no way an affected preference, is in my very nature that I prefer the work that is done for the sake of God and the word that is spoken for the sake of God. If the pleasure of God and the fulfilment of His commands were not my aim then God knows this best that I have always preferred anonymity and find such pleasure in solitude that it is impossible to express it in words. It is the sympathy for fellow human beings that brings me out of my solitude and it is the command of God Who has appointed me to spread His message.

The reason why I have stated that one should not be influenced by the apparent form of a speech is that in every good work there is a portion for Satan. Doubtless, the enjoining of good and admonishment against evil is an excellent thing but the person delivering such a sermon should be fearful lest in his speech there is a portion hidden for Satan. Some of this portion may come to the person delivering the sermon and some may go to the listeners.

The reason for the existence of a satanic element is the nature of the speaker's purpose. When he stands to deliver his speech and his purpose and heartfelt desire is only that he should make a speech that pleases his audience, his aim is only that he should speak such words and make such statements that would invite praise from the audience from all directions. The purpose of such speakers, in my view, is no more than that of singers who try to get as much praise from their audiences as possible or that of traders and dealers unashamedly touting for business.

In short, when there is a large gathering of people there will be persons present who are at different levels and have different tastes and, with very few exceptions, it will

be bereft of any consideration for God. If the speaker in such gatherings speaks with the sole purpose of winning praise with clapping and applause then this is the element of Satan which is in the speaker. The element of Satan that is in the audience of such gatherings is that they like the speaker's ability to speak well – to show good mastery over the language – his ability to use poetic verses at appropriate junctures as well as stories and jokes in order that they, the audience, may show their appreciation and thereby display their own taste for culture. Their aim is in itself distanced from God as is the speaker's purpose. He speaks but not for God. They listen but without giving what they hear a place in their hearts and that is because they do not listen for the sake of God. Why is it so? It is so because participation in such gatherings takes place for pleasure. Remember that a human being is a compound of two types of pleasure: one is pleasure of the soul and the other the pleasure of the self.

Pleasure of the soul is such a deep and subtle secret that if someone knew of it and tasted its exhilarating joy only once in his lifetime, he would become totally immersed in its "intoxicating" effect. Worldly pleasures, on the other hand, are fleeting pleasures and the enjoyment they give does not distinguish between the pleasure of watching a dancing girl or the pleasure of listening to the speech of a cleric who delivers it in a popular and pleasing manner as if he was performing a song. A woman of bad character sings and they enjoy that also. This points to the fact that the worldly sense of enjoyment makes no distinction between good and bad. It can find pleasure both in the sermon of a cleric as well as in the songs sung by a woman of low character even though the person enjoying it is fully aware that she is of a bad character whose way of life is abhorrent. He feels no aversion and cannot smell the "stench" arising from it. When a person finds pleasure in listening to the singing of such women and he does not feel an aversion, then know for certain that it is a pleasure of the "self" and not of the soul. The soul can never be pleased with such a contemptible and decadent thing.

The pitiable speaker who seeks only the praise of his audience does not realise that he has no share of piety. Similarly, his listeners do not understand that they are there only for the pursuit of some selfish pleasure and that there is no share in that for God.

Hence, I seek refuge with God against such aspects and pray that He should extricate from both the speakers and the listeners who attend our gatherings any share of impurity and in its place there should be a total dedication to God. Whatever we say should be for the sake of God and for the sake of gaining His pleasure and whatever we hear should be considered as being uttered for the sake of God and heard with the intention of acting upon it. It should not be the case that all we take away from a speech is the sound of the words, "That was a very good speech."

This factor has played a major role in the decline and downfall of the Muslims. A great number of conferences are held, unions and meetings take place where great orators and lecturers give lectures and make speeches and poets of the nation read their laments on the state of the nation, yet none of it appears to have any effect at all. Day by day, instead of progressing, our nation is declining. The reason is that those entering and leaving large gatherings do not do so with sincerity. As I have mentioned above, the purpose of the lecturers and speakers, whether they are clerics or the newly educated scholars or Sufis, is only to hear proclamations of their own appreciation. At the time of the speech their "gods" are the audience whose pleasure and agreement is their desired aim rather than the pleasure of God. The truthful and godly people, on the other hand, have God as their desired aim and purpose as well as the sincere and true sympathy for mankind which is a great means of gaining God's pleasure. They seek to show the world what they have themselves seen and what they desire is the manifestation of the majestic Glory of God. That is why whatever they say they say it without any fear of condemnation by the people. In the eyes of such truthful persons, the audience has as little significance as that of a dead insect. They seek no reward from their audiences nor do they care for their applause. This is the reason why during their speeches people sometimes become restless

and some get up in the middle and leave. Sometimes they even swear and hurl abuse and, not being satisfied with this, they try to hurt them with painful physical abuse.

It is quite evident from this who is desirous of selfish pleasure and what the pleasure of the “self” in fact is. To watch the dance of a “street girl” they are ready to stay awake all night and are willing to “buy a headache in return for gold”, as the saying goes. In comparison, listening to a few words of a truthful speaker, uttered in true sincerity and true sympathy becomes so very difficult for such people. However, the truthful speakers do not shy away or tire from such a reaction. How is this possible? This is because before them is God with His infinite and boundless powers and strength upon strength, and He manifests Himself to them and this brings solace to them and grants them the strength to remain steadfast. When such is the case, why should they be concerned about the reactions of worldly people?

It should be remembered that in the creation that is man there is a part for the soul and a part for the self and the latter is spread wide. Now, this point should easily be understood by everyone that a thing which is more will have a greater influence. The influence of the soul, on the other hand, is similar to that of a person who goes to live in a foreign land, unfamiliar with the other inhabitants. Hence, the soul that exists in a state of obscurity has very little influence.

The sign of the effect of the soul is this that when a righteous and true reformer speaks, he considers the audience as if they were non-existent and as such he becomes a messenger who is passing on a message. Consequently, the soul begins to melt until it becomes like the water of a waterfall that falls from the highest peak of a mountain towards the ground. The soul begins to flow uncontrollably towards God and it feels such pleasure and joy in this that words cannot express it. In short, the righteous speaker sees the face of God in his expression and in his speech. He is totally indifferent to the audience and their reaction as his pleasure and enjoyment come from a different direction. He is inwardly pleased that he is delivering the message of his Master and Sovereign. Any hardship or difficulty he may experience in the delivery of this message also becomes for him a source of sweet pleasure.

It is because such people have deep concern for the welfare of mankind that they are engrossed, day and night, in finding out ways in which people may return to the right path and drink from that fountain. This concern and sympathy for mankind was so deep and intense in our Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*) that it is impossible to imagine anyone exceeding it. His concern for mankind had reached such an extreme point that God has Himself described it by referring to it in the Holy Qur’an in the words, “*Perhaps thou wilt kill thyself with grief because they believe not*” (26:3). If people fail to fully appreciate the true reality of this verse then that is a separate matter but its reality circulates in my heart as blood circulates in the body.

I cannot describe in words,
The pain that is in my heart,
For those who seek the truth.

I understand fully the extent of the concern the true and sincere speakers have for the reform of people.

It should also be understood that the hue and strength of the teacher will also have an effect on the listener in accordance with their own relative capacities provided the ability is also there. There is a greater effect of a truthful speaker upon those who are closer to God and who fear Him and hold Him in great awe. The sign of this is that the soul rushes for purity of the self and moves uncontrollably towards God. If, however, there is a greater inclination towards *nafs-ul-ammarah*, the self that incites to evil, and a person is under its sway, then during the speech of a godly person there develops an uneasiness and disquietude giving rise to a feeling of aversion towards the speech and that person does not wish to stay and listen. When a person finds such restlessness and a lack of interest in listening to the words of righteous speakers, he should be concerned about the state of his soul as it would have come very close to the pit of destruction. What could be more destructive in this world than the lack of enjoyment and interest in the words of and about God? What, we may ask, is the cure for such a state? The cure for such a state is *istighfar*, that is, seeking forgiveness and turning to God, praying for the forgiveness of one’s sins and steadfastness upon such

prayers. If this prescription is utilised then I can say it with certainty that the lack of interest will give way to interest and lack of enjoyment will give way to enjoyment and the same soul that ran away from God and felt aversion at the talk of God will roll towards God like a ball.

The human soul is of three types: *ammarah*, the self that incites to evil, *lawwamah*, the self-accusing spirit, and *mutma’innah*, the soul at rest. One level of *mutma’innah* is called *nafs-uz-zakiyyah*, the pure or innocent soul.

Nafs-uz-zakiyyah is the soul of children and of people who have not been touched by the false desires of the world and, being unaware of the “ups and downs” of worldly desires, they move on a level surface. *Nafs-ul-ammarah*, the soul that incites to evil, on the other hand, is that state of the self when it is influenced by worldly desires. Whereas *nafs-ul-lawwamah*, the self-accusing spirit, is the state of realisation when there develops a concern to avoid stumbling by making an effort with prayer to safeguard oneself against evil. A person at this stage of spiritual development gains an awareness of his shortcomings. *Nafs-ul-mutma’innah*, the spirit at rest, is that state when, by the Grace of God, a person is granted the power and strength to safeguard himself against weaknesses and short-comings and he finds himself protected against all manner of tribulations. Moreover, there is deep satisfaction in his heart and a calmness that leaves no trace of anguish or agitation.

God has placed within a human being three types of controlling factors: the mind, the heart, and the tongue. The mind uses reasoning and intelligence and its job is to be occupied at all times in formulating ideas and forming ever new thoughts, explanations and arguments. The mind has been assigned the duty of assessing the results and conclusions of various formulations. The heart, on the other hand, is the king of the whole being of man. It does not use arguments and proofs because it has a link with the King of Kings – that is why it is sometimes informed with a clear and evident revelation and sometimes with a secret or hidden revelation. Another way of stating this is to say that the mind is a “Minister”. Ministers are statesmen and that is why the mind is occupied in formulating

ideas and schemes as well as the means and consequences. The heart has no business with that. Within the heart God has created the power of instinct just as an ant manages to reach exactly the place where there is something sweet. The ant does not have any proof of the fact that there is something sweet at a certain place. It reaches there because God has provided it with the instinct that guides it. In this sense the heart shares a similarity with the ant because it, too, has an instinctive sense within it that guides it and that does not depend upon proofs, arguments, conclusions and results.

However, it is another matter that the mind is able to and does provide such proofs for the "heart."

One meaning of the heart is apparent and physical. The other meaning of the heart is spiritual. The literal, meaning of the word *qalb* (Arabic for heart) is that which moves around or returns. As the heart is the source of the circulation of blood in the body, that is why it is called *qalb*. In the spiritual sense, its meaning is that the progress that a human being wishes to achieve is also based around the heart. Just as the circulation of blood which is crucial for sustaining human life originates from the heart, so the spiritual progress is dependent upon the spiritual heart.

Some ignorant people, including some of today's philosophers who place the mind at the centre of all the best activity, do not know that the mind is only the seat of the cognitive powers of reasoning and argument. The power of thought and memory is in the mind but there is an aspect of the "heart" that makes it the ultimate sovereign. The activity of the mind has a contrived element about it which is not there in the case of the "heart". That is why the "heart" bears a resemblance to *Rabb-ul-Arsh*, God of the Heavenly Throne. It is able to recognise spiritual truths without proofs and arguments, just with its instinctive powers. That is why it is stated in a *hadith* of the Holy Prophet (sas), *Istafil qalba*, that is, ask your heart for a verdict. It does not say "ask your mind for a verdict."

It is to the "heart" that the "wire" of God is linked and no one should consider this a far-fetched idea. It is, indeed, difficult and abstruse but those who purify themselves

know that the heart does possess such noble qualities. If the heart did not possess such qualities, then the very existence of the human being would have been considered useless. The Sufis and those who carry out spiritual exercises know this well that the heart has been seen as giving out light in the form of pillars of light that reach towards the skies in a straight line. This issue is certain and well-witnessed. I cannot here state specific examples but those who have to undertake such exercises or those who have wished to journey through the different stages of *salook*, mystic initiation, have found this to be true according to their experiences. It is as if there is a fine "wire" connecting *Arsh* and *qalb*, linking the Divine Throne and the spiritual heart. The *qalb* finds pleasure in the commands it receives from God – it is not dependent upon external proofs and evidence. It becomes a *mulhim*, one who is a recipient of divine revelation, and internally converses with God and forms verdicts. However, it is true that for as long as the heart remains only a heart, it becomes a proof of the condition illustrated in the verse of the Holy Qur'an, "*Had we but listened or pondered, we should not have been among the inmates of the burning Fire*" (67:10). That is, there is a time when a human being does not possess the powers of heart and mind. Then there comes a time when the mind develops its powers and faculties and then a time comes when the *qalb* becomes engulfed by light – a light bursts forth and it is illuminated. When the time comes for the "heart" to come to the fore, the human being attains spiritual maturity and the "heart" rules over the mind. At that stage, the powers of the mind do not have supremacy over the "heart".

It should be noted that the different states of the mind are not specific to the believers alone. Hindus and others all use the mind alike. Those who are involved in worldly affairs and in trade and business all use the powers of the mind and their mental faculties are developed to the fullest. Every day new ideas and inventions are made to further their affairs. In Europe and the New World you can see how well they use their mental capacities and how frequently and how many new inventions they make.

However, it is when the work of the *qalb* is carried out that a person becomes God's. It is at that time that all inner powers of rule

and control become non-existent and come under the power and rule of the "heart" which attains a firm control, power and strength. It is at such a stage that a human being becomes a complete human being. This is the time when he becomes a living proof of the verse of the Holy Qur'an where God states, "*So when I have made him complete and breathed into him of My spirit, fall down making obeisance to him*" (15:29).

At that time he becomes a new human being. His soul is filled with pleasure and joy. It should be remembered that this pleasure does not resemble the carnal pleasure of an adulterer, nor does it resemble the enjoyment of an avid listener of beautiful singing. No, it does not resemble any such thing and one should not be deceived by this. The pleasure of the soul is attained when a person's being begins to melt and flow like water at the thought of and at the fear and awe of God. It is at this stage that he becomes the *Kalima*, that is, "the word" and the essence of this verse begins to work within him.

"His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it, Be, and it is" (36:82).

And remember Our servants Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, men of power and insight.

We indeed purified them by a pure quality, the keeping in mind of the (final) abode.

And surely they were with Us, of the elect, the best.

And remember Ishmael and Elisha and Dhul-I-Kifl; and they were of the best.

This is a reminder. And surely there is an excellent resort for the dutiful:

Gardens of perpetuity – the doors are opened for them. (H.Q. 38:45-50)

ISLAAM SAY NA BHAAGO

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Islaam say na bhaago raah-i hudaā yeḥee hai
Aī soonay waalo jaago, <u>shams-uẓ-zuḥāa</u> yeḥee hai.</p> | <p>1. Do not run away from Islam, this is the path of true of guidance,
O you the sleeping ones awake, this is the midday sun.</p> |
| <p>2. Mujh ko qasam <u>Khudaā</u> kee, jisnay mujhay banaaya,
Ab aasmaān kay neechay deen-I hudaā yeḥee hai.</p> | <p>2. I swear by God who made me,
This is the only religion of true guidance under the heaven now.</p> |
| <p>3. Baaṭin siyah haiñ jinkay is deēñ say haiñ who munkir,
Par ai aḥdhayray waalo dilka diyā yeḥee hai.</p> | <p>3. Those whose heart are covered with darkness are the rejectors of
this religion. But this is the only light of the heart O you whonare in
darkness.</p> |
| <p>4. Dunya ki sab dukaanayñ haiñ hamnay daykhee bhaaleēñ,
Aakhir huaa ye <u>ṣaabit</u> daar-<u>ush-shifa</u> yeḥee hai.</p> | <p>4. I have searched all over the world and at last it was found that this is
the only place of cure.</p> |
| <p>5. Sab <u>khushk</u> hoo ga'ay haiñ jitney thay baagh pehlay,
Har samt maiñ nay daykha bustaān haraa yeḥee hai.</p> | <p>5. All gardens of previous times have dried up,
Every side have I looked and this is the only orchard which is green.</p> |
| <p>6. Who payshawa hamaara jis say hai nuur saara,
Naam uska hai Muḥammad, dilbar meḥera yeḥee hai.</p> | <p>6. He is our leader by whom is all this light (of spiritual life),
His name is Muhammad and he is my beloved.</p> |
| <p>7. Us yaar par fidaa huuñ, uska hee maiñ huaa huuñ,
Who hai main cheez kya huuñ, bas faiṣalah yeḥee hai.</p> | <p>7. I die for the friend of mine because I belong to him,
He is everything and I am nothing, that is my final word.</p> |
| <p>8. Sab ham nay us say paaya, <u>shaahid</u> hai tuu <u>Khudaaya</u>,
Who jisnay Ḥaq dikhaaya, who meh laqaa yeḥee hai.</p> | <p>8. I have received everything from him, Thou bear witness about this O
God,
He showed us the truth, he who is beautiful like moon is this person
(i.e. Muhammad).</p> |
| <p>9. Dil may yeḥee hai har dam tayra <u>ṣaḥeefah</u> chuumuñ,
Qur'aan kay gird ghuumuñ, kaba meḥera yeḥee hai.</p> | <p>9. Every moment this is the thought in my heart that I should kiss Thy
Scripture,
And go round and round the Qur'an because this is my ka'ba (pivot
of my life).</p> |

A HADITH OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD (sas)

Al-Faqih said, "I asked Mu'adh ibn Jabal. 'Tell me a hadith which you had heard from the Prophet, and which you have memorized and remembered every day since you heard it.' He started crying until I thought he would never stop, and then he said:

I said to the Prophet (sas) one day while I was sitting close to him, "May my mother and father be a sacrifice for you, O Messenger of God. Tell me something!" He raised his head to the heavens and said, "Praise be to God who decrees for His creation as He likes."

Then he said, "O Mu'adh!" I said, "At your service! O Messenger of mercy and the leader of goodness."

He said:

I will relate to you a hadith which no other prophet has told his nation; if you remember it, it will benefit you; but if you hear it and forget it, you would have no excuses with God on Judgement Day.

He continued:

Before God created the seven heavens and the earth, He created seven angels. For each

heaven there is an angel standing before its gate. The Guardian Angels write the deeds of a certain servant from morning until night. They then raise his deeds, blazing like the sun, to the lowest heaven purifying them and adding to them. There the angel (at its gate) will say, "Stop! Go and throw these deeds back in the face of their owner, and tell him, 'May God never forgive you.' I am in charge of backbiting, and he is someone who backbites the believers. I will not let his deeds ascend past me to the farther heavens."

WORDS OF CONSOLATION

Then he said:

The Guardian Angels will raise the shining deeds of another servant to the second heaven. The angel (at its gate) will say, "Stop! Throw these deeds back in the face of their owner, and tell him, 'May God never forgive you! Because he sought with his deeds the material world. I am in charge of the deeds of the lower world, *dunya*, and I will not let his deeds ascend beyond me,'"

Then he said:

The Guardian Angels will raise the deeds of a servant – deeds with which he was pleased such as charity and much prayer – up to the third heaven. The angel at its gate will say, "Stop! Throw these deeds back in the face of their owner, and tell him, 'May God never forgive you!' I am in charge of arrogance, and he is someone who was arrogant when he was with people. God has ordered me never to let his deeds go past me."

He continued:

The Guardian Angels would raise the deeds of a servant, deeds of excessive prayers and fasting – shining like the stars – up to the fourth heaven where its angel will say, "Stop! Throw these deeds back in the face of their owner, and tell him, 'May God never forgive you!' I am the angel responsible for pride in one's deeds. God ordered me to never allow the deeds in which there is self-gratification go past me." The angels will throw those deeds back in the servant's face and will continue to curse him for three days.

He said:

The Guardian Angels, along with other angels, will raise up the deeds of a servant, his struggle in God's Way and his voluntary prayers observed between the obligatory ones – moving like a bride on the way to meet her groom – until they reach the fifth heaven. There the angel of the fifth heaven will order them, "Stop! Go and throw the deeds of that servant back in his face, and load them upon his back. Tell him, 'May God never forgive you.' He envied those who were studying and working for the sake of God, and wronged them." His Guardian Angels will place them upon that servant's back and will curse him as long as he remains alive.

He then said:

The Guardian Angels will raise the deeds of a servant, who served God devotedly –

maintaining an unbroken state of ritual purity, observing the night vigil and performing excessive worship – until they reach the sixth heaven, where its angel will tell them, "Stop! Go and throw the deeds of their owner back in his face. I am the angel in charge of mercy. Your friend here did not have mercy towards anything. If difficulty or tragedy befell one of God's servants, he was happy. My Lord has ordered me never to let his deeds go beyond me."

He then said:

The Guardian Angels will raise up the deeds of a servant – his veracity, striving and piety – up to the seventh heaven, their light blazing forth like lightning. They would reach the seventh heaven, where its angel will tell them, "Stop! Go and throw the deeds of this servant back in his face, and lock up his heart. I am the angel of veiling; I veil away every deed which is not done for God's sake. He sought high status from his deeds to be remembered in gatherings and with a good name in the cities. God has ordered me never to let his deeds ascend past me."

He then said:

The Guardian Angels will ascend with the deeds of a servant, who observed excellent conduct, held his tongue and made much remembrance of God. The angels of the heavens will fill its space until they reach below the Throne, all bearing witness on behalf of that servant. There God will say to them, "You are the angels observing My servant's deeds, but I am the Observer over what is within his soul. He did not seek My Face with his deeds, he sought another's. My curse is upon him." The angels will respond, "Your curse and ours is upon him." Then the inhabitants of the heavens will say, "Upon him is God's curse, the curse of the seven heavens and earth, and our curse." Mu adh ibn Jabal (relating the hadith), began to cry. I asked, "O Messenger of God what should I do?"

He said:

Follow the example of your prophet, O Mu' adh. Reach to certainty even if there are shortcomings in your deeds, and withhold your tongue from backbiting your brothers. Let your sins be yours; do not make your brother carry them. Do not praise yourself by speaking badly of your brothers. Do not raise yourself by putting down your brothers, and do not do your deeds for anyone to see."

Allah, Most High, is with those who show patience and perseverance. *O you who believe, seek assistance through patience and prayer; surely Allah is with the patient* (2:153).

In the opening chapter of the holy Qur'an (*Al Fatihah*) we pray for guidance, that is, *Guide us on the right path*, and Allah promises us that if we are patient and rely on Him, He will make us of the rightly guided ones (*muhtadun*). *Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord; and those are the followers of the right course* (2:157). Guidance here means union with Allah.

A source of great strength is the knowledge that Allah does not place more burdens on us that we can bear. *Allah imposes not on any soul a duty beyond its scope. For it, is that which it earns (of good), and against it that which it works (of evil). Our Lord, punish us not if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord, do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us. Our Lord, impose not on us (afflictions) which we have not the strength to bear. And pardon us! And grant us protection! And have mercy on us! Thou art our Patron, so grant us victory over the disbelieving people* (2:286) He also gives us the kinds of difficulties that He knows we can handle, and for which He has prepared us.

We can rest assured that Allah knows our condition. *He knows indeed your condition* (24:64); *And He is with you wherever you are* (57:4).

Allah invites us to call upon Him: *Pray to Me, I will answer you* (40:60); *I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls on Me* (2:186), for He is nearer to us than our life vein: *We are nearer to him than his life vein* (50:15).

LIST OF BOOKS AND TRANSLATIONS PUBLISHED

By the grace of Allah the Trust has stepped into the sixth year of its existence. During the past five years, in spite of its limited resources, it has been able to publish more than 23 books and booklets. We would like to thank our Trust members, friends and relatives who have generously contributed towards the publications and the quarterly, *The Message*. A list of the books published by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Literary Trust, Trinidad and Tobago as at January 2007 is as follows:.

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Death of Jesus in the Light of Thirty verses of the Holy Qur'an

By Dr. Basharat Ahmad

Anwaar-ul-Quran [English translation and commentary of Parts 27 and 30 of the Holy Qur'an rendered by Imam Kalamazad Mohammed]:

Chapter 51: *Adh-Dhariyat* (The Scatterers)

Chapter 52: *At-Tur* (The Mountain)

Chapter 53: *An-Najm* (The Star)

Chapter 54: *Al-Qamar* (The Moon)

Chapter 55: *Ar-Rahman*
(The Beneficent)

Chapter 56: *Al-Waqiah* (The Event)

Chapters 78 to 85 of the Holy Qur'an

Chapters 86 to 101 of the Holy Qur'an

Chapters 102 to 114 of the Holy Qur'an

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Speeches, Articles and Sermons (Vol. I)

Speeches, Articles and Sermons (Vol. II)

True Meaning of *Jihad*

Published by:

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Literary Trust

93 Calcutta Road No. 4

Freeport, Trinidad

Phone: 868-673-3171

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