

Three Stages of Righteousness

In short, my point was that it is necessary to consider the sequence that is present in the Holy Quran, and that the verse which I recited earlier has also kept sequence and order in view. The verse is as follows:

يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ¹

They believe in the unseen and observe Prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them.

Bear in mind that righteousness is of three categories. The first category of righteousness is doctrinal in nature and is applicable when a person possesses belief. The second category is practical in nature as stated in: *يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ* (*He establishes the Prayer*). Those Prayers of a person that are plagued by suspicions and evil suggestions do not stand erect, as it were. Allah the Exalted does not say *yaqra'una* (to recite or read), he uses the word *yugimuna* (which means to erect or establish) and this implies that the Prayer must be observed in the manner that does it justice.

Hear me when I say that all things have an ultimate purpose. If this remains unfulfilled, the thing itself becomes useless. For example, an ox that is bought to plough the land will be deemed to fulfil its purpose when it does its task. However, if the aim and objective of the ox is limited to eating and drinking, it does not fulfil its ultimate purpose and ought to be slaughtered.

The Establishment of Prayer

In the same vein, the ultimate end or pinnacle alluded to in *يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ* (*They establish the Prayer*) are the essential aspects or outcomes of Prayer. This refers to the state when a person begins to develop a relationship with Allah the Exalted and experiences visions and true dreams; they become detached from people and begin to develop a bond with God, to the extent that they ultimately meet God as a result of their complete devotion to Him alone.

The Arabic word *sala* means 'to burn'. Just as mincemeat is roasted on a fire, in the same way, a burning sensation must be felt in the Prayer. Until the heart burns, there can be no pleasure and delight in Prayer. As a matter of fact, this state is precisely what characterises Prayer in the true sense. One of the fundamental

¹ *al-Baqarah, 2:4*

aspects of Prayer is for it to be offered with all its conditions. Until Prayer is observed in this manner, it is no Prayer at all, and neither can that state be achieved which inclines a person to Prayer, as alluded to in the word *salat* (Prayer).

Remember that it is necessary in the Prayer for both physical state and verbal expression to unite. On certain occasions, expression is visual. At times, an illustration is shown which enables an observer to understand the message that is intended. Similarly, the Prayer depicts an illustration of God's will. In Prayer, just as the tongue recites certain words, so too the physical movements of one's body and limbs display a certain image.

When a person stands to praise and glorify God, this posture is known as *qiyam* or 'the standing position.' Now, everyone knows that the standing position is the physical state best suited for praise and glorification. After all, when eulogies are recited before kings, they are done so whilst standing. And so, in the Prayer, the apparent posture prescribed is the standing position, while the tongue is instructed to praise and glorify God in this state. The purpose in this is so that man stands before Allah the Exalted in the spiritual sense as well. Praise is expressed by standing firm on one point. A person who truthfully and sincerely praises someone, stands firm on one view. Therefore, an individual who says: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ (All praise belongs to Allah) can only sincerely proclaim these words when they develop a firm belief in the fact that Allah Almighty is the Possessor of all forms of praise in totality. When a person accepts this fact with complete open-heartedness, this is known as *qiyam* or 'standing' in the spiritual sense, because the heart begins to 'stand' firm in this belief, as though it were upright, so to speak. Therefore, in the Prayer, a person stands demonstrating an apparent state, so that they may be blessed with the ability to 'stand' in the spiritual sense.

After this, a person says: سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ (Holy is my Lord the most Great) in the bowing position. It is a matter of principle that when someone accepts the greatness of another, they bow in their presence. A person must bow in the face of greatness. Hence, with the tongue a person states: سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ (Holy is my Lord the most Great) and through their outwardly state, they demonstrate this by bowing. This statement is expressed visually through the bowing position.

The third statement is: سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى (Holy is my Lord the most High). The word *a'la* (the most high) is in the grammatical form that expresses the superlative degree. This naturally calls for prostration. Therefore, along with these words, the image that one shows in practice is that of prostration. Hence, a person im-

mediately assumes this form along with this verbal declaration.

These three verbal expressions correspond with three physical states or positions. This is an illustration or image that one displays before God Almighty. An individual performs all of these physical postures; the tongue which is a part of the body also makes expressions and participates in these movements.

There is a third thing as well, which if absent from the Prayer, leaves it incomplete. What is it? It is the heart. For the Prayer, it is necessary that the heart 'stands' as it were. Allah the Exalted must see that one's heart not only praises Him in the true sense and remains in a standing position, but that the soul also stands and praises God; not only the body alone, but that the soul also stands before God. When the heart proclaims: سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ (Holy is my Lord the most Great) God must see that it not only proclaims His greatness, but also bows before Him, and He must also see that the soul has bowed with the heart as well. Then, in the third place, God must see that the heart has fallen in prostration and that the soul has also fallen at the divine threshold in view of the lofty grandeur of God. In short, until one is able to develop such a condition, one must not rest, for this is the true meaning of: يَفْقَهُونَ الصَّلَاةَ (They establish the Prayer).

If the question arises as to how such a condition may be fostered, the simple answer is that one must remain persistent in observing the Prayer, and must not fret in the face of evil inspirations and doubts. In the beginning, a war ensues against doubts and suspicions, but the cure is that one must keep at it with an untiring perseverance and patience, and continue to offer supplications before God Almighty. Ultimately, the condition that I have just referred to is developed. This is a part of the practical aspect of righteousness.

The Spending of Provision

Another part of the practical aspect of righteousness is as follows:

مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ¹

That is to say, they spend out of what they have been given. Generally, people understand provision (*rizq*) to refer to food. This is incorrect. All that is given to one's faculties is also provision—whether it is knowledge, skill, insight and verities, etc. or apparent things like affluence and wealth.

Provision refers to authority as well, and sublime morals are also encompassed

¹ *al-Baqarah*, 2:4

become engrossed in this and lose themselves to it completely, be it the praise of Satan or the praise of God, both become one and the same." At this, the walk came to its conclusion. The Promised Messiah^{as} returned later on when it was time for food, and after he had finished eating, he delivered the address that follows. I now present what I have remembered thereof.

The Greatest Form of Worship in This Era

Alluding to the trial and disorder that was prevalent in the present age, the Promised Messiah^{as} said: "It is necessary for a Muslim, in this day and age, when Islam is overwhelmed by affliction, to play a part in dispelling this disorder. The greatest form of worship in these times is for each and every Muslim to partake in dispelling this disorder. At this time, everyone ought to strive sincerely through their speech, knowledge and every faculty with which they have been endowed, to remove from the world with sincere effort, all the evil and insolence that is currently prevalent."¹¹

What good is the comfort and pleasure that one receives in this world? If it is in this world that a person receives their reward then what has been attained? Prefer the reward of the hereafter, which has no limit.¹² Each and every one of you ought to possess a passion for the Unity and Oneness of God, just as God Himself is passionate for His own Unity.¹³ Just reflect, where in the world will you find a person who has been wronged more so than our Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him? There is no filth, abuse or invective that has not been hurled at him. Is this a time when the Muslims should sit silently? At this time, if no one stands up to bear witness to the truth and to silence the ones who speak falsehood, and if one deems it acceptable for disbelievers to go on shamelessly casting aspersions against our Prophet and continue misguiding the people, then remember that such a Muslim shall undoubtedly be called to account severely. You ought to employ whatever knowledge and experience you have to serve in this cause and save the people from this misfortune. It is established in the Hadith that even if you do not strike the Antichrist, it will die anyway. There is a famous adage:

ہر کمالے نازلے

Every pinnacle sees a decline.

These afflictions began to arise in the thirteenth century, and now the time of

their end is near. It is the responsibility of each and everyone of you to strive insofar as possible and show people the light.

A Yearning for the Manifestation of God's Greatness and Glory

In the sight of Allah the Exalted, a saint and a man of blessings is one who develops such passion. God desires for His glory to be manifested. In the Prayer, one repeats: سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ (Holy is my Lord the most Great) and سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى (Holy is my Lord the most High). This is also an expression of the desire that God's glory should shine forth and that His greatness be manifested in a manner that has no parallel. In the Prayer, when a person glorifies Allah and extols His Holiness, the same sentiment is expressed; and through these words, God encourages man to realise that he ought to demonstrate through his works and efforts—with a natural fervour—that nothing which goes against the greatness of God can dominate him. This is an exalted form of worship. Those people whose passion is aligned with the will of God are the ones who are known as divinely supported and it is they who receive blessings. Those who do not possess a fervour for the greatness, glory and holiness of God, the Prayers that they offer are disingenuous and their prostrations are futile. Until a person possesses a fervour for the sake of God, these prostrations are nothing more than futile incantations, by which they desire to attain paradise.

Bear in mind that anything physical in nature that is empty of spirit cannot prove beneficial. For example, just as the meat of sacrifices does not reach God, your bows and prostrations do not reach Him either, until they are performed with a true spirit. God desires the essence. God loves those who possess ardour for His honour and greatness. People of this nature tread a fine path on which others do not have the strength to follow them. Until the essence is present, a human being cannot progress. It is as though God has sworn to not grant a person any pleasure until they possess a zeal for His sake.

Every human being possesses desire, but a person cannot become a believer until they give precedence to the greatness of God over all of their desires. The Arabic word *wali* means a near one or a friend. Therefore, a person is referred to as a *wali* (or a saint) when they desire what their Friend, i.e. God, desires. Allah the Exalted states:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ¹

And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me.

An individual ought to possess a zeal for the sake of God and if they do, they shall outstrip their fellow man and become among those who enjoy the nearness of God. One must not be like a dead corpse—when something is put in from one side of the mouth, it comes out of the other. In the same manner, when someone is in a wretched state, nothing good can go inside. Remember that no worship or charity is accepted until one possesses a sincere fervour for the sake of Allah Almighty—a fervour that is free from traces of selfishness or personal motive. It ought to be such that even a person himself is unable to explain why they possess this fervour. There is a dire need for such people, but nothing is possible without the will of God.

The Present State of Affairs and the Need for a Reformer

Those who have been engaged in such service to religion ought to remember that they have done no favour upon God. There comes a time when every crop must be cut for harvesting. In the same manner, now the time has come for corruption to be dispelled. The worship of the Trinity has reached its highest limit and the Truthful One has been slandered and insulted to the greatest possible extent. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has not been valued even to the extent of a bee or a wasp. People fear wasps and are even apprehensive of ants, but no one has hesitated in speaking ill of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Such people fall true to the following statement of God Almighty:

كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا²

They rejected our signs.

They have lashed out against the Holy Prophet^{sa} as much as they could and have openly spewed out vulgarities and invectives against him. Now the time has truly come for God to recompense them. In such an era, Allah the Exalted always raises a man. As God Almighty states:

¹ *adh-Dhariyat*, 51:57

² *Aal-e-Imran*, 3:12

tached ourselves to a Prophet who manifests God to us. A poet has put it beautifully:

*Muhammad of Arabia, King of both the worlds;
Whose threshold is safeguarded by the Holy Spirit.
I cannot call him God, but I do say;
To recognize him is to recognize God.*

How shall we express our gratitude to God who bestowed upon us the good fortune to follow the Prophet who is a sun for the souls of the righteous as there is a sun for the bodies. He appeared in a time of darkness and illumined the world with his light. He was neither tired nor fatigued till he purified all parts of Arabia from associating partners with God. He is the proof of his own truth for his light is present in every age and true obedience to him purifies a person as the clear and transparent water of a river cleanses dirty linen. Who has come to us with a sincere heart and has not witnessed that light, and who has knocked honestly on that door for whom it has not been opened? But the pity is that most people prefer the lower life and do not desire that higher light should enter into them.

[Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, Vol. 23, pp. 301-303]

Knowledge of Allāh's Attributes granted to the Holy Prophet

قُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا 118

This means: O my Lord! Grant me perfect knowledge of Your greatness, Your ways and Your attributes.

At another place it is said:

وَبِذَلِكَ أُصِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ 119

¹¹⁸ Ṭā Hā, 20:115 [Publisher]

Reading these two verses together, we find that the Holy Prophet [peace and blessings of Allāh be on him] became the *foremost of the Muslims* because he was the most learned in the knowledge of Divine understanding. For this reason, his Islām is the highest of all and he is the foremost of the Muslims. Another verse also indicates the vastness of his knowledge as is said:

وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُنْ تَعْلَمُ، وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا¹²⁰

(Part Number: 5)

This means that: God Almighty has taught you what you could not have learnt by yourself, and by His grace you are blessed more than anyone else.

That is to say, the Holy Prophet surpassed everyone in his knowledge and understanding of the divine and God Almighty perfumed him with the fragrance of divine understanding more than anyone else. Thus, God has appointed knowledge and understanding as the principal means of obtaining a true concept of Islām.

Though there are other means for obtaining such knowledge, like fasting, Prayer, supplication and carrying out all the Divine commandments, the number of which exceeds six hundred, yet the knowledge of the Greatness of God and of His Unity and of His attributes of Glory and Beauty is basic for everything. He who has a heedless heart and has no understanding of the Divine, cannot obtain the strength to observe the fast, perform Prayer, make supplication, or occupy himself with doing good. All righteous action is incited by understanding of the

¹¹⁹ 'So am I commanded, and I am the first of those who submit.'—
al-An'ām, 6:164 [Publisher]

¹²⁰ al-Nisā', 4:114 [Publisher]

Divine and all the other means proceed from it and are its issue.

The beginning of this understanding is the reflection of God's *Rahmāniyyat* and is not the result of any action or any prayer, but is a gift of pure grace. He guides whom He wills and He lets go astray whom He wills.

This understanding is then fostered by righteous action and good faith, till it assumes the form of revelation and descending in the word of God, illumines the whole expanse of the bosom with the light which is called Islām.

Excellence of Obeying the Holy Prophet^{sa}

At the stage of perfect understanding, Islām does not remain a mere phrase, but all its reality that we have described is achieved and the human soul prostrates itself humbly before Divine Unity. Thereupon, from both sides it is announced: Whatever is mine is thine. That is to say, the human soul cries out and confesses: Lord whatever is mine is Thine; and God also speaks and conveys the good news: O My servant, the heaven and earth etc. that are with Me are with thee also. This stage is indicated in the verse:

قُلْ يُجِبَادِي الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا¹²¹

(Part Number: 24)

Say: O my servants who have committed excesses against your own selves despair not of the mercy of Allāh, surely Allāh will forgive all sins.

In this verse instead of: *O servants of Allāh*; the Holy Prophet [peace and blessings of Allāh be on him] was

¹²¹ al-Zumar, 39:54 [Publisher]

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for he will destroy himself. Ever since God has created the heaven and earth, it has never happened that He should have ruined or destroyed or obliterated the righteous. On the contrary, he has always shown wonders in their favour and will also show them now. God is most Faithful and He manifests wondrous works for those who are loyal to him. The world desires to devour them and every enemy grinds their teeth at them, but He who is their friend, delivers them from every place of danger and bestows victory upon them in every field. How fortunate is the person who **never lets go the mantle** of God. We have believed in Him and we have recognised Him. **The God** of the whole world is He who has sent down His revelation to me, who has shown **mighty signs** in my support and who has sent me as the **Promised Messiah** in this age. There is no God beside Him, neither in heaven nor on earth. He who does not believe in Him is bereft of all good fortune and is ensnared in disgrace. The revelation I have received from God is as bright as the sun. I have seen that He alone is the Lord of the world and that there is none other than Him. Truly Omnipotent and All-Sustaining is the God whom we have found. How great are His powers of Him whom we have witnessed. The truth is that nothing is beyond Him except that which is contrary to His Book and His promise. So when you pray, do not be like ignorant naturalists who have in their own fancy devised a natural law which does not bear the seal of God's Book. They are the rejected and their prayers will not be

accepted. They are blind, not of those who see. They are dead, not of those who are alive. They present to God their self-devised law and presume to limit His infinite powers and deem Him weak. So they shall be dealt with according to their condition.

When you stand up in prayer, it is necessary for you to have firm faith that your God has power over all things. Only then will your prayer be accepted and you will behold the wonders of God's power that we have beheld. Our testimony is based on observation and not on hearsay. How should the supplication of a person be accepted and how should he have the courage to pray at times of great difficulty, when according to him he is opposed by the law of nature, unless he believes that God has power over everything? O fortunate ones, follow not these practices. Your God is One who holds aloft innumerable stars without the use of columns and who has created heaven and earth from nothing. Then would you think so ill of Him as to imagine that your objective is beyond His power?¹ Such ill-thinking will frustrate

¹ God is incapable of nothing. Nonetheless, with regards to prayer, the Book of God sets out the principle that He deals with pious people most mercifully like a friend; at times, He overlooks His own will in order to accept their prayer, as He says Himself: *أُدْعُونِي أَجِبْ لَكُمْ*. However, at times, God desires that His own will be done, as He says: ** وَكَتَبْنَا لَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ مِنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ **. Thus, on occasion, God deals with a person according to the supplicant's prayer because He wishes to enhance their certainty and enlightenment. And on other occasions, He carries out His own will so that he may confer upon man the

worldly enticements, but the result has been quite the opposite. Before his 'suicide,' the followers of Yasū' sought godliness to some extent, but the more the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice and atonement was emphasized, the more the Christians became steeped in worldliness, worldly enticements, desire of the world, alcoholism, gambling, licentiousness, and illicit relations. The negative effects of this doctrine have been like the sudden collapse of the dam that had been built on a violent and stormy river with resultant destruction of all surrounding land and habitats.

Remember too that abstinence from sin alone is not an accomplishment of any kind for man as thousands of worms, insects, animals and birds refrain from committing any sin, yet they are not considered to have attained communion with God. The question, therefore, is: 'How did the Messiah's expiation serve to enhance human spirituality?' Man is in need of two things in order to reach God: First, abstinence from evil; and second, the attainment of good deeds. Merely eschewing evil is no great feat. Thus, the crux of the matter is that these two forces have remained present in human beings ever since their creation: On the one hand carnal passions lure them towards sin, while on the other hand the fire of the love of God that is hidden in their nature incinerates the straws of sin much like physical fire incinerates the physical straws and dried leaves. But ignition of this spiritual fire that incinerates sins depends entirely on the cognition of God, because love and adornment for anything depends on acquiring its complete recognition. You cannot love something whose beauty and excellence you are unaware of. The knowledge of the beauty and excellence of the God of Honour and Glory ignites the fire of love for Him, which, in turn, consumes sin. It has always been the practice of Allah to grant such knowledge to mankind through His Prophets. Others get light from their light and acquire all the bounties that are bestowed on the Prophets by following them

Sadly, Christianity has the door of cognizance of God closed to its followers for it considers communion with God forever sealed and

At this point I would also like to point out what appears before all else to be the result of sincere and complete obedience to the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Bear in mind that it is the 'rightly-inclined heart'; that is, the love of the world leaves the heart and it becomes desirous of the eternal and everlasting bliss. Subsequent to this, pure and perfect love of God is achieved as a result of this rightly-inclined heart. And all these bounties are bestowed as a consequence of following the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, by way of his heritage, as Allah says:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ¹

Meaning, tell them that if you love God, obey me, so that God may also love you. Indeed, the profession of one-sided love is a blatant lie and pretence and idle talk. When a person truly loves God, then God loves him too; then the breeze of acceptance swirls in the world for him, his love is put in the hearts of thousands and he is granted a power of attraction, and he is given a light that always accompanies him. When a person loves God with sincerity and adopts Him above all else, when everything besides God ceases to have any esteem or respect for him, indeed when he considers everything else to be worse than even a dead worm, then God, who sees his heart, descends upon him with His mighty glory. Just as a polished mirror reflects the sun perfectly that it can be said figuratively and metaphorically that the same sun which is in the sky also resides in the mirror, in the same way God descends on such a heart and makes his heart the seat of His Throne. This alone is the purpose for which man has been created.

Those who were perfectly righteous have been called sons of God in the previous Scriptures. That, too, does not mean that they were actually the sons of God; such a thing would be blasphemous, as God is above and beyond sons and daughters. Such expressions mean that God

1. *Sūrah Āl-e-ʿImrān*, 3:32 [Publisher]

Exalted has laid down a condition that for Him to love anyone, such a one has to follow the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.^{1*} Accordingly, it is my personal experience that to obey the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, with a sincere heart and to love him, ultimately makes a person the beloved of God. God creates in his heart a burning for love for Him. Then such a person renounces everything else and inclines towards God; and his affection and aspiration remain only for God Almighty. Thereupon a special manifestation of the love of God falls upon him and, bestowing upon him the full essence of love, pulls him towards itself with strong passion. He, then, overcomes his corporeal passions, and extraordinary works of God Almighty appear as Signs in his support and assistance in every aspect.

I have presented an example of how to achieve [the love of God] by effort and application. But there are some individuals where effort, application, and hard work has nothing to do with their spiritual ranks. Even in the womb of their mothers, they have such a constitution that, without any effort or striving or hard work, they love God instinctively. And they come to have such a spiritual connection with His Messenger i.e. **Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad Muṣṭafā**, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, that anything closer cannot be imagined. As time passes, their inner fire of love and affection for God continues to grow stronger and, with it grows the fire of love for the Messenger of Allah. In all these matters God becomes their Guardian and Guarantor. When that fire of love and affection reaches its climax, they fervently and passionately desire that the glory of God be manifested upon the earth, and this becomes their greatest delight and ultimate purpose. Thereupon, Signs

1. ☆ Here the question might arise that: If the objective is righteous deeds, what is the need to follow [the Holy Prophet^{sa}] to attain salvation and acceptance? The answer is that one can enact good deeds only through the grace of God. And since God has, in His grand wisdom, appointed one individual as the Leader and Messenger and commanded people to follow him, whosoever fails in this is not given the good fortune to perform righteous deeds. (Author)

of God Almighty appear on earth for them. God Almighty does not manifest His grand Signs for anyone, nor does He give grand news of the future to anyone except to those who are lost in His love, and are as desirous of the manifestation of His Oneness and Glory as He Himself is. It is unique to them that special divine mysteries are revealed to them and the unseen is disclosed to them with the utmost clarity. This special honour is not given to others.

An ignorant person might think that some ordinary people occasionally see true dreams too. For example, some people dream that a baby girl or a baby boy is born in a particular household and the same happens, or they dream of someone's death and the person does in fact die, or see other small events in their dreams and they come true. I have already addressed this scepticism that these phenomena are of little significance nor do they depend on any piety. Even many wicked and immoral people see such dreams regarding themselves or others. But true secrets of the unseen are only revealed to God's special servants. Their dreams and revelations differ from those of ordinary people in four ways: **First**, the majority of that which is revealed to them is extremely clear and very rarely ambiguous; the case with others is quite the opposite. **Second**, they experience true dreams and revelations so copiously that to compare them with other people would be akin to comparing the wealth of an emperor and a beggar. **Third**, the Signs shown at their hands are so magnificent that no one can match them. **Fourth**, their Signs attest to their acceptance by the Divine and the love and succour of the True Beloved. It is quite evident that, through these Signs, He wishes to reveal to the world how honoured and close to Him those chosen ones are, and to inspire people's hearts with their dignified status.

However, those who do not have a perfect connection with God lack such things. On the contrary, the truth of some of their dreams or revelations is a trial for them, for it creates arrogance in their hearts and they are ruined by arrogance. They begin to oppose the root that nourishes the branch: O ye the branch! Granted that you are green and

believe in the Holy Quran and the earlier Scriptures too, then what does it mean when He says هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ¹ [‘guidance for the righteous’] meaning that, this Book will give guidance to them; for, such people, by implementing all these commandments, are already rightly guided? To help attain what has already been attained appears to be a useless exercise.

The answer to this is that such people, despite their faith and virtuous deeds, stand in need of perfect steadfastness and perfect progress to which God alone can guide; human effort has nothing to do with it. Steadfastness means that the heart is suffused with such faith as makes it impossible to stumble in the face of any trial, and virtuous deeds are performed in such a manner and in such a fashion that pleasure arises in them and labour and hardship is not felt. It becomes impossible to survive without them, as if those deeds become the nourishment for their souls—the bread for it and sweet water for it—such that they could not stay alive without them. That is to say, such circumstances come into existence with regard to steadfastness that cannot be created by a person merely through his own effort; rather, just as the soul is a gift of God, so is such extraordinary steadfastness created by God.

Progress means that, in addition to the maximum extent to which human effort regarding worship and faith can reach, other circumstances are created which can come into existence only by the hand of God. It is obvious that, in the matter of belief in God Almighty, human effort and reason can help no further than to believe in the Unseen God, whose face has not been seen. This is why the Shariah [Islamic Law]—which does not require of man beyond what lies in his power—does not compel man to believe, through his own effort, beyond the belief in the Unseen. Of course in this very verse² هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ² [‘guidance for the righteous’] the righteous are promised that, after

1. *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:3 [Publisher]

2. *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:3 [Publisher]

they become firmly grounded in the belief of the Unseen and do on their own what they possibly can, then God shall move them forward from the condition of belief to that of enlightenment, and shall cause their faith to acquire a new colour. It is a Sign of the truth of the Holy Quran that it does not want those who approach it to remain at the level of belief and practice which they attain through their own effort. Were it so, how would one know that God actually exists? Rather, He ordains a reward on human efforts from Himself—a reward that contains divine splendour and divine power. For instance, as I stated, what more can man do about his belief in God than to believe in the Unseen God, whose existence is attested by each particle of this universe? But man does not have the power on his own—through his own effort and his own exertion—to succeed in attaining knowledge of the radiant light of God, graduating from a state of belief to the state of enlightenment, and generating within himself the state of witnessing and beholding [God].

#

In the same way, regarding Prayer, what can human effort and exertion possibly do except be clean and pure as best as possible and then stand in Prayer after repelling the perils [to concentration] and trying not to allow the Prayer to stay in a derelict condition, and, with genuine fervour, offering all its components—namely, praise and glorification of God Almighty, repentance, seeking forgiveness, supplication, and invoking blessings upon the Holy Prophet? But it is simply not within human power that an extraordinary personal love, personal reverence, fervour, and eagerness imbued with total effacement and attentiveness, that is free from any distraction, should develop in his prescribed Prayer as if he is beholding God. And it is evident that unless and until this state develops in the prescribed Prayer, it is not free from deficiency. For this very reason, God Almighty said that the righteous are those who make their prescribed Prayer upright, for only that is made upright which has a propensity to fall. Hence, the verse

Editor's Note: I would like to say, however, that on another occasion, the Promised Messiah^{as} has also said that a person who burdens themselves and fasts while they are on a journey, as if, seeks to please God by force and not through obedience to His command. This is wrong. True faith lies in doing what God commands and refraining from whatever He so commands.¹

27 January 1899

After the morning prayer, we were given orders to depart. When the Promised Messiah^{as} passed by the factory in Dhariwal, he said: "It would be good to see this factory sometime. It is beneficial to see new things."

One person said: "Your Holiness, I saw this factory once and I was filled with an inexplicable fervour on witnessing the power of God Almighty. I remained restless until I was able to offer four *rak'ats* of Prayer." The Promised Messiah^{as} said: "The fact of the matter is that all things show a manifestation of Allah Almighty. Just observe how many strengths an insect possesses. And then Allah the Exalted is He in Whose hand is every power and strength."

Since the tent of the Promised Messiah^{as} had been erected near a stream, the Promised Messiah^{as} looked at the stream and at the surrounding trees and said: "This is a very good spot."²

26 February 1899

Praise for a Lecture of Hazrat Maulvi Abdul-Karim Sahib^{ra}

The Promised Messiah^{as} read a lecture of Hazrat Maulana Abdul-Karim Sahib^{ra} of Sialkot entitled, 'What Reform and Revival was Brought About by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian?' and on 26 February 1899, he addressed the congregation in Mubarak Mosque saying: "It is my desire that all of my friends should read this, because it contains many subtle points of wisdom. This also shows the powerful oratory skills with which a certain man from among us is blessed. It is precisely on this pattern that members of our community ought to strive to become speakers."³

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 3, no. 4, dated 31 January 1899, pp. 6-7

² *Al-Hakam*, vol. 3, no. 4, dated 31 January 1899, p. 8

³ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 10, no. 35, dated 10 October 1906, p. 7

10 March 1899

Courage and High Resolve

On his morning walk, the Promised Messiah^{as} said: "A person must not lose hope. Determination is also a high moral quality and a believer is characterised by high resolve. One ought to always be ready to serve and support the Faith, and should never show cowardice. For cowardice is the mark of a hypocrite. A believer is gallant and courageous, but courage does not imply that they lack good judgement. Any action done without appropriate consideration of the prevailing circumstances is recklessness. A believer is free from haste. In fact, a believer remains prepared to serve the Faith with immense sagacity and forbearance, and is never cowardly.

Sometimes a person will act in a manner that displeases God Almighty and thereby arouses His indignation. For example, if a person shoves away a beggar, this is harsh behaviour, which results in the displeasure of God Almighty. In turn, such a one becomes deprived of the opportunity to give something to the beggar. However, if a person acts in a gentle and noble manner, and even if he gives the beggar a cup of water, this results in a removal of the spiritual contraction of the heart (*qabz*).

Seeking Forgiveness from Allah—The Cure for Spiritual Contraction

Man undergoes a state of both spiritual contraction (*qabz*) and spiritual expansion (*bast*). In the state of spiritual expansion, one's pleasure and delight in worship heightens, the heart is opened, one's inclination towards God increases, and warmth and comfort is derived from the Prayer. However, on certain occasions, man experiences a state in which this passion and eagerness is lost and the heart becomes constricted. When this state of affairs arises, one should seek forgiveness from Allah profusely, invoke salutations upon the Holy Prophet^{sa} abundantly, and offer Prayer again and again. This is the only way to do away with one's state of spiritual contraction of the heart.

True Knowledge

Logic or philosophy is no knowledge; in fact, true knowledge is that which God Almighty bestows by His mere grace. Such knowledge is a means of developing

a deeper understanding of Allah the Exalted and develops a fear of God in the heart. In this regard, Allah Almighty states in the Holy Quran:

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ¹

Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah.

If knowledge does not increase a person in fear of God, then remember that such knowledge is not such as can further him in cognisance of the Divine.”²

20 April 1899 in the Late Afternoon

Trust in God

The Promised Messiah^{as} states: “Trust in God is the hallmark of Islam. A Muslim is one who believes in giving charity and offering prayer. The Christians do not believe in this. Why is this the case? Christians have crafted their own physical god. One of the greatest and most enduring joys of man, which supports him in times of peril, is trust in God. Only Islam teaches, in the true sense, that one must trust in God.”³

21 April 1899 on the Day of Eid-ul-Adha

Serving One’s Mother

The Promised Messiah^{as} states: “The first state that speaks for a person’s good nature is whether or not they honour their mother. In relation to Awais Qarni^{ra}, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would often turn his face towards Yemen and say: ‘I can smell the fragrance of God coming forth from Yemen.’ The Holy Prophet^{sa} would also say: ‘He is heavily engaged in serving his mother and this is why he cannot come to visit me.’ Apparently it seems strange that the Prophet of God, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is present in his time but Awais^{ra} is unable to see him in person only due to his constant preoccupation in service and obedience to his mother. However, I find that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has instructed his people to convey his greetings of peace particularly to two people alone—Awais^{ra} and the Promised Messiah^{as}. This is a remarkable distinction which others have

¹ *Fatir*, 35:29

² *Al-Hakam*, vol. 7, no. 21, dated 10 June 1903, p. 2

³ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 3, no. 15, dated 26 April 1899, p. 6

able action of one worthy of praise: it also means lauding one who has done a favour of his own volition and according to his own choice. The true reality of *hamd* is the due only of the Being Who is the source of all grace and light and exercises beneficence deliberately and not in ignorance or under compulsion. All this is found only in Allah, the All-Knowing, the All-Seeing. Indeed He is the true Benefactor and from Him proceed all benefits from beginning to end, and for Him is all glorification, in this world and in the hereafter and all praise that is bestowed on others reverts to Him.

The word *hamd*, used in this verse by the Lord of Glory, is the stem and is used both in the active and the passive sense, that is, it is used both for the subject and the object and it signifies that Allah receives perfect praise and also bestows it. This interpretation derives support from the fact that Allah has followed up the word *hamd* with the mention of attributes that entail this meaning in the view of the discerning. In the word *hamd*, Allah, the Holy, has signified the qualities that subsist in His Eternal Light. In defining *hamd*, He has treated it as a veiled reality that uncovers its face on the recitation of the attributes Rahman and Rahim; for Rahman signifies that *hamd* is used in the active sense and Rahim signifies that it is used in the passive sense, as is not hidden from those who possess knowledge.

Hamd is verbal praise offered for acts of Benevolence

Hamd is verbal praise which is offered to honour a mighty and noble being for His acts of beneficence. Perfect praise is the exclusive prerogative of the Lord of Majesty. The ultimate goal of every kind of glorification, be it in a small or a large measure, is our Lord Who guides the misguided and exalts the lowly and is the object of praise of all who are praiseworthy.

According to many scholars *shukr* (gratitude) differs from *hamd* in the sense that its application is restricted to beneficent qualities and *madh* differs from *hamd* in the sense that it

applies to involuntary beneficence also. This is fully appreciated by rhetoricians and men of letters.

Allah commenced His Book with *hamd* (glorification) and not with *shukr* (gratitude) or *madh* (praise) for *hamd* comprises the sense of the other two and is their substitute par excellence, in that it also comprehends correction, adornment and beautification. Since the idolators used to praise their idols without any justification, preferring the use of the word *hamd* for them, believing them to be sources of favours and bounties, and their mourning females vied with one another in boastful enumeration of the valorous deeds of their dead in battlefields and at banquets and praised them in the manner in which Allah, the Bestower, the Guardian, the Guarantor should be praised, the Fatiha is their rebuttal, and, of all who associate partners with Allah, and furnishes an admonition for those who use their judgment. In these words Allah reproaches the idol-worshippers, the Jews, the Christians and all those who associate partners with Allah, as if He was saying: Why do you glorify your associate-gods and why do you magnify your ancestors? Are they your lords who sustain you and your children? Or are they the compassionate ones who treat you mercifully, ward off calamities and avert evil and affliction, safeguard the good that has been your lot, or wash off the dirt of your sufferings and cure you of your diseases? Or are they the lords of the Day of Judgment? Nay, Allah alone sustains and shows mercy by granting happiness in full measure and by the grant of means of guidance and by answering prayers and by deliverance from enemies and He shall certainly reward those who work righteousness.

Cognition of Allah through Attributes

There is yet another direction in the word *hamd*, and that is that Allah, the Exalted and Lord of blessings, says: O My servants, know Me through My attributes and recognise Me through My excellences. I certainly do not suffer from any defect or shortcoming. Nay, My Praiseworthiness far exceeds



the highest limits of praise rendered by those who praise Me. You will not find in the heavens or in the earth any praiseworthy feature that is not to be found in My countenance. If you tried to count My excellences you would not be able to number them, even if you exerted yourselves hard and took pains like the dedicated. Search well then if you can light upon a praiseworthy merit that you do not find in Me or can discover an excellence that is beyond Me and My Presence. If you feel that way then you have no knowledge of Me and are bereft of vision. I am known through My glories and excellences and the heavy clouds saturated with My blessings indicate the plenitude of My bounties. Those who believe in Me as comprehending all perfect attributes and all excellences and attribute to Me whatever perfection they observe anywhere and whatever glory they can conceive of in the highest flights of their imagination and ascribe to Me every grandeur that their minds and vision may observe and every power that is reflected in the mirror of their thoughts, are indeed the people who are treading the paths that lead to true recognition of Me. They have grasped the Truth and they will be successful. Be up then (may Allah keep watch over you) and seek earnestly for the attributes of Allah, the Glorious, and reflect over them like deep thinkers.

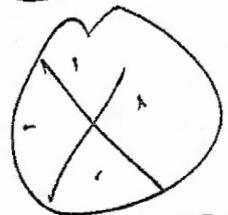
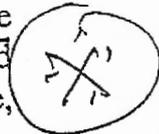
Seek diligently and ponder every aspect of perfection searching for it in every overt and covert manifestation of this universe as a greedy person occupies himself incessantly with the pursuit of the object of his desires. When you arrive at the comprehension of the fullness of His perfection and begin to perceive His fragrance, it is then that you have found Him. This is a mystery that is unveiled only to those who are earnest seekers of guidance.

Reflection over Divine Attributes safeguards against errors

This then is your Lord, your Master, Perfect in Himself, comprehending all perfect excellences and worthy of all praise. He alone can know Him who deliberates deeply over the

Fatiha, seeking His help with a pining heart. For those who make a covenant with Allah in perfect sincerity, binding themselves fast in perpetual obedience to Him, and cleanse their minds of all rancour and ill-will, are admitted through the portals of this Sura and are endowed with inner sight.

The Fatiha also warns that whoso perishes for lack of his cognition of Allah, the Supreme, through his misconduct or by taking some other than Him as his god, in truth perishes because of his disregard of His excellences, his failure to contemplate His wonders and his neglect of all that is His due, as is the way of those who are the devotees of falsehood. Have you not considered that the Christians were invited to the Unity of God, but it was this distemper that brought about their ruin? Their erring selves and their beguiling passions drew them to the worship of a servant of Allah as their god. They drank deep of misguidance and ignorance and forgetting the excellences of Allah, the Supreme, and His attributes they invented for Him sons and daughters. Had they pondered the attributes of Allah, the Supreme, and the excellences that are worthy of Him, their insight would not have failed them and they would not have perished. That is why Allah, the Supreme, has warned us here that to safeguard ourselves against error in respect of a true concept of Him we must ponder His excellences and should seek out His appropriate attributes and should remind ourselves constantly of them, for they are far superior to every material gift and far more helpful than every kind of succour. We should reflect particularly over those attributes of His which have been manifested in His works, that is to say, His might, His power, His dominance and His bounteousness. Then be mindful of it and neglect it not. Be sure that all Providence belongs to Allah and all Rahmaniyyat belongs to Allah and all Rahimiyyat belongs to Allah and all sovereignty belongs to Allah on the Day of Judgment. Withhold not, therefore, your obedience from your Sustainer and be of those who submit themselves wholly to the One Lord. This verse also connotes that Allah, the Supreme, is far above every suspicion of weakness or shortcoming, such as the assumption



How can I hide any longer this storm?
 Instead I had better scatter my dust to the four winds.
 How far removed are we from the mundane world!
 Holy is He Who has humbled my opponents.

[Durr-e-Thamīn]

Praise and Thanks be to the All-Powerful God (Persian poem)

Praise and thanks be to the Lord God;
It is because of Him that all existence found expression.

This universe is but a mirror of His countenance;
Each and every particle leads the way to Him.

In the mirror of the heavens and the earth,
His unique face is reflected in all its glory.

Each blade of grass is aware of His Being;
Each branch points the way to Him.

The light of the sun and the moon is but a reflection of
His light;

Every manifestation is subject to His decree.

Each brain is but a secret among His secrets;
Each step seeks the portals of His glory.

Every heart's desire is to relish the beauty of His
 countenance;

Even the one that is lost is really in search of His path.

He created the sun, the moon and the earth;
He displayed His creative might in millions of forms.

All these creations are but a register of His creativity;
In which are contained an infinite number of mysteries.

He placed this book of nature before our eyes;
To remind us of the path to righteousness.

So that you recognize the God Almighty
Who bears no resemblance to the world and all who
 dwell in it.



So that it should be a criterion to judge the revelation
 from the Beloved;



To enable you to recognize from among thousands, the
 ones that are from the Friend.

So that all paths of imposture are blocked;
 So that light and darkness can be told apart.

Then whatever the Lord God willed came to pass;
And His handiwork bore witness to His Word.

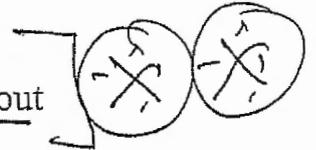


Idolators and all their pretence
 Are pierced by the sharp arrows of these witnesses.

If you call someone else as Gracious God,
 The heaven and the earth will spit in your face.

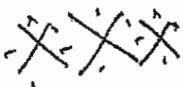
If you invent a son for Him Who is Unique,
 All high and low will curse you.

This world is virtually proclaiming aloud:
That God is Unique, All-Sustaining, and without
 partner.

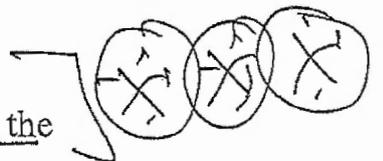


He has nor father nor son nor wife;
He is Immutable since eternity.

If the rain of His grace were to slow down for a
 moment,
All this creation and the universe would come to
 nought.



Take a close look at the laws of nature,
So that you realize the greatness of the Lord of all the
 worlds.



The Radiance of Revelation

God Almighty has not only blessed Muslims with the gift of reason, but has also graced them with the radiance and divine light of revelation. They should not tread the paths that dry logic and philosophers seek to lead them to. Such people are eloquent in speech but their spiritual faculties are immensely frail. Observe, therefore, that God Almighty praises His servants in the Holy Quran in the following words:

أُولِي الْأَيْدِي وَالْأَبْصَارِ¹

Men of strong hands and powerful vision.

He does not say they are men of eloquent speech. This establishes that God Almighty loves those who observe both His works and words, and reflect on them, not only with their physical eyes but with their inner sight as well, and then act accordingly. And all this can never be attained without purification of the self and without cleansing our inner faculties.

How to Attain Success in this World and the Hereafter

If you desire to attain success in both worlds and seek to conquer the hearts of people, then strive to purify yourselves, make use of reason and follow the guidance given in the Word of God. Reform yourselves and serve as an example for others by demonstrating your sublime virtues. Then will you attain success. How wonderful a statement by someone who says:

عَنْ كَرْدِ دَلِ بَرْدِ آيَةِ نَشِيءٍ لَا تَجْرِمُ بَرْدِ

*A word which springs from the heart invariably
finds place in the hearts of others.*

So first and foremost, mould your own hearts. If you desire to touch the hearts of others, then develop the power to do so by practising what you preach. Without practice the force of words and human influence can be of no benefit. There are hundreds of thousands of people who make hollow statements. Many so-called Muslim clerics and scholars stand on pulpits and preach to others, declaring themselves to be representatives of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and the heirs of the

¹ Saad, 38:46

كَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا¹

Allah is Mighty, Wise.

By virtue of His name *Aziz* (the Mighty), God does whatever is needed and the name *Hakeem* (the Wise) denotes that His every action is done with wisdom, and done properly and adequately in accordance with the appropriate time and place. Just observe how plants and vegetation possess diverse properties. Even a *tolab* or two of turpethum is enough to clear the bowels, so too is the case with scammonia. Allah the Exalted has the power to clear a person's bowels without the use of any medicine, or to quench one's thirst without water, but it was necessary for mankind to learn of the wonders of nature. For the extent to which a person increases in their awareness and knowledge of the wonders of nature, is the degree to which they are increased in their understanding of the attributes of Allah Almighty; and this enables one to attain the nearness of God. Through medicine and astronomy we discover thousands of qualities present in nature.

The Properties of Things Are Another Name for Knowledge

What are the sciences? They are nothing more than a knowledge of the properties of things. If the celestial bodies, stars and vegetation did not possess effects, it would become difficult for mankind to believe in the attribute of Allah Almighty known as *Aleem* (the All-Knowing).

It is a certain fact that the foundation of our knowledge is based on our insight into the properties of things. The purpose in this is so that we may learn wisdom. The sciences have also been referred to as wisdom (*hikmat*). As such, Allah the Exalted states:

وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا²

And whoever is granted wisdom has indeed been granted abundant good.

The Purpose of the Supplication 'Guide Us in the Right Path'

Hence, the purpose of the prayer *إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ* (*Guide us in the right path*) is that when a person makes this supplication, they ought to emulate the deeds, morals and beliefs of 'those upon whom God has bestowed His blessings'. In so

¹ *an-Nisa*, 4:159

² *al-Baqarah*, 2:270

لَا يَمَسُّهَا إِلَّا الْمَطَهَّرُونَ¹

None shall touch it except those who are purified.

The word 'mutabharun' refers to the very same 'muttaqin' referred to in the verse: هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ² (*it is a guidance for the righteous*). And this makes it clearly evident that righteousness is necessary for the discovery of knowledge contained within the Quran. There is a stark difference between secular knowledge and the knowledge of the Quran. Righteousness is not a prerequisite for the acquisition of worldly and traditional knowledge. It is not incumbent that one who learns Arabic morphology, grammatical syntax, natural science, philosophy, astronomy, or medicine must regularly observe the Prayer or fasting, and be forever mindful of the commandments and prohibitions of God, and keep their every action or statement in line with the injunctions of Allah the Exalted. In fact, it is often observed and generally the case that experts and students in secular knowledge have an atheistic bent of mind, and are indulged in every form of sin and transgression.

In this day and age, we have a clear example before us in the people of Europe and America. Despite these people attaining outstanding and considerable progress in the field of worldly knowledge, and despite the new inventions they produce every other day, their spiritual and moral state is shameful to say the least. The stories that are published about what goes on in London's parks and hotels in Paris, I cannot even mention. However, righteousness is the first condition for the acquisition of heavenly knowledge and insight into the secrets of the Quran. This requires sincere repentance. Until a person adheres to the injunctions of Allah Almighty with complete humility and modesty, and meekly turns towards Him, trembling in awe of His glory and might, the gate of Quranic knowledge cannot be opened. Moreover, such a person cannot derive from the Holy Quran those means by which the inherent properties and faculties of the soul are nurtured, and the acquisition of which grants the soul pleasure and comfort.

The Holy Quran is the Book of Allah Almighty and the knowledge contained within it is in the hand of God, and righteousness serves as a staircase leading to this knowledge. How then can the faithless, evil and corrupt, and those who are slaves of earthly desire be fortunate enough to receive this knowledge? For this reason, a Muslim, who is a Muslim by name, could well be the greatest scholar of Arabic morphology, syntax, etymology, literary critique, and other such sci-

¹ *al-Waqi'ah*, 56:80

² *al-Baqarah*, 2:3

tion, intellect and faith. The clear distinction between the Quran and other scriptures is that no other scripture has dared to put its teachings up against the heavy and unrestrained criticism of rationality and reflection. The sly followers of this inarticulate Gospel and its supporters know well that the teaching of the Gospel cannot withstand the test of reason in the least. And so they have cunningly interpolated their teachings to suggest that the Trinity and Atonement are such secrets that their essence cannot be understood by the human intellect. In contrast to this, the teaching of the Holy Quran states:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَالاٰخْتِلَافِ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيٰتٍ لِّاُولِي الالْبَابِ الَّذِيْنَ يَذْكُرُوْنَ اللّٰهَ... الخ¹

Meaning, the creation of the heavens and earth, and the alternation of night and day, furnish to those who are wise, clear proof of Allah, to whom the religion of Islam invites the people. This verse explicitly commands the wise to use their mind and intellect.

The God of Islam

It ought to be known that the God of Islam is not an indecipherable being, in whom one can believe only when one discards one's intellect or for whose existence the Book of Nature does not furnish any proof. In fact, the extensive pages of nature's law contain signs so abundant that they clearly demonstrate that God exists. Each and every creation of this universe is like a symbol and signpost, erected at the start of a street or alley, in order to provide information about the name of a certain road, locality or city, guiding a person towards God. Moreover, these signposts not only inform us that this Ever-Present Being exists, but also provide evidence that satisfies the hearts of people. The testimonies of heaven and earth do not support the existence of some artificial or fictitious God. On the contrary, the God that Islam presents is Living and Self-Sustaining; He is one and without partner; He begets not, nor is He begotten.

Hence, Reverend Pfander, who was among the first in India to engage in religious debates and level criticism against Islam, raises the question himself in his book *Mizan-ul-Haqq* that if there was an island where the doctrine of Trinity had not been conveyed, would the inhabitants of such a place be called to account on the Day of Judgement in accordance with the doctrine of Trinity? He then proceeds to provide an answer himself and states that such people would be ques-

¹ *Al-e-Isman*, 3:191-192

tioned in light of belief in the Unity of God. So one may deduce from this that if the imprint of God's Unity was not found to exist in every aspect of this universe and if the Trinity was not a false and unnatural doctrine, why would people be judged in accordance with belief in the Unity of God?

The Imprint of God's Unity is Present in Every Aspect of Nature

The fact of the matter is that the very nature of man possesses the imprint of:

أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ¹

Allah says, 'Am I not your Lord?' They say, 'Yea, we do bear witness.'

The instinctive nature of man and all the elements of the universe have no relation whatsoever to the concept of Trinity. Even if one observes a droplet of water, it emerges round in shape and does not fall in the form of a triangle. This also clearly establishes that the Unity of God is etched into every aspect of nature. One ought to reflect closely that a droplet of water is round. Spherical form bears the hallmark of oneness because it is free from the confines of orientation. A three-sided figure however is bound by relative direction. Similarly, observe fire and you will find that it is cone-shaped and possesses a round abstract figure. Even fire radiates with the light of God's Oneness. If one were to take the earth for example and inquire of the Europeans as to its figure, they would say it is round. Hence, the further our investigations into the natural world advance, it is the Oneness of God that shall continue to emerge in every instance. Allah the Exalted states:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ²

In this verse, Allah expounds that the God presented by the Quran is one in support of Whose existence the earth and heaven are full of proofs. There is an adage by a sage that I like very much where he states that if all the books in the world were thrown into the ocean, the God of Islam would still remain because He is not part of a trinity of three or a tale. In essence, a reality can only be considered firmly established if its truth does not hinge upon some other specific factor insofar that if the latter ceases to exist, then so does the former. Tales and fables leave an impress neither on the heart and nor on the Book of Nature. In fact, such tales existed only until Hindu divines, pundits and the Christian clergy retold them,

¹ *al-Araf*, 7:173

² *Aal-e-Iman*, 3:191

but sooner or later, these stories were forgotten as unlikely tales.

The Teaching of the Quran is Attested by the Law of Nature

Allah the Exalted states:

إِنَّهٗ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ فِي كِتَابٍ مَّكْنُونٍ لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ¹

That this is indeed a noble Quran, In a well-preserved Book,
Which none shall touch except those who are purified.

This means that the whole of the Quran is preserved in the resolute chest of the law of nature. What is implied by the fact that this Holy Quran is preserved in a Hidden Book? This means that it is not only confined to paper, rather it is safeguarded in a Hidden Book, known as the Book of Nature. In other words, the entire teaching of the Quran is attested by every strand and fragment of the law of nature. Its teachings and its blessings are not tales and stories that may be forgotten.

The Need for Revelation

Since every individual does not have the capability to reach the heights of certainty through mere reason alone, it is for this reason that we require revelation, which guides our reason through darkness in the likeness of a brilliant lamp. It is for this reason that even the greatest of philosophers were unable to find the true God depending on reason alone. As such, even a philosopher the likes of Aristotle said in the last moments of his life that he was afraid. He asked for a rooster to be sacrificed for a certain idol. What greater example can there be? The philosophy of Aristotle, and his intelligence and wisdom could not afford him the peace and tranquillity that believers enjoy. Bear well in mind that revelation is extremely essential in attaining heartfelt peace and steadfastness. What I mean to say is that first and foremost, make use of your intellect and bear in mind that a person who employs their reason shall definitely come to behold the God of Islam. For His name is written in bright letters on each and every leaf of every tree, and across the heavenly bodies. However, do not become a follower of reason alone so that the worth of divine revelation is lost to you. For without it, neither can true satisfaction be attained, nor lofty morals. The Brahamos too cannot attain peace and

¹ al-Waqi'ah, 56:78-80

the true light of salvation because they do not believe in the need for revelation. I am true in my statement when I say that those who become the slaves of reason and claim that revelation is worthless, are people who do not even make use of reason itself. Those who make use of their intellect are referred to as 'people of understanding' in the Holy Quran. Then after this, in the same verse, Allah states:

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ¹

Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides.

In this verse, Allah Almighty has elaborated upon another aspect, namely, that the people of understanding and those who possess good sense are ones who remember Allah, the Glorious, at all times. Do not entertain the belief that sense and wisdom are qualities that one can attain without effort. Not at all.

True Insight

In fact, true insight and true wisdom can never be attained until one turns towards Allah the Exalted. This is why it has been stated that one ought to fear the insight of a believer, for they see with the light of God. As I have just stated, true insight and real wisdom can never be attained without righteousness.

If you wish to succeed, then utilise your reason, reflect and contemplate. The Holy Quran repeatedly emphasises the importance of reflection and contemplation. Reflect on the Hidden Book to which I have just alluded and on the Holy Quran, and develop a pious disposition. When your hearts become purified and along with this, you make use of sound reason and tread the path of righteousness, all this together shall give rise to such a state whereby the following voice will resonate from your heart:

رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ²

Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain; nay, Holy art Thou; save us, then, from the punishment of the Fire.

At such a time, it will become clear to you that this universe has not been created in vain, but rather provides evidence in support of the existence and reality of the True Creator, and brings to light the diverse forms of knowledge and science, which lend support to religion.

¹ *Aal-e-Imran*, 3:192

² *Aal-e-Imran*, 3:192

The Radiance of Revelation

God Almighty has not only blessed Muslims with the gift of reason, but has also graced them with the radiance and divine light of revelation. They should not tread the paths that dry logic and philosophers seek to lead them to. Such people are eloquent in speech but their spiritual faculties are immensely frail. Observe, therefore, that God Almighty praises His servants in the Holy Quran in the following words:

أُولِي الْأَيْدِي وَالْأَبْصَارِ¹

Men of strong hands and powerful vision.

He does not say they are men of eloquent speech. This establishes that God Almighty loves those who observe both His works and words, and reflect on them, not only with their physical eyes but with their inner sight as well, and then act accordingly. And all this can never be attained without purification of the self and without cleansing our inner faculties.

How to Attain Success in this World and the Hereafter

If you desire to attain success in both worlds and seek to conquer the hearts of people, then strive to purify yourselves, make use of reason and follow the guidance given in the Word of God. Reform yourselves and serve as an example for others by demonstrating your sublime virtues. Then will you attain success. How wonderful a statement by someone who says:

نَحْنُ كَزَدَلْ يَرُدُّ آيِدِ نَفْسِنِدْ لَا يَرْمِ يَرُدُّ

*A word which springs from the heart invariably
finds place in the hearts of others.*

So first and foremost, mould your own hearts. If you desire to touch the hearts of others, then develop the power to do so by practising what you preach. Without practice the force of words and human influence can be of no benefit. There are hundreds of thousands of people who make hollow statements. Many so-called Muslim clerics and scholars stand on pulpits and preach to others, declaring themselves to be representatives of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and the heirs of the

¹ Saad, 38:46

Prophets. They exhort people to refrain from arrogance and safeguard themselves from evil deeds, but one can gauge the quality of their own actions and behaviour by the degree to which their words have an influence on you.

Harmony in One's Words and Actions

If these people also possessed the power of action and first acted upon the things that they preach to others, what need was there for the Quran to say:

لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ¹

Why do you say what you do not do?

This verse itself demonstrates that there have always been such people in the world who do not act in accordance with the counsel they give others. Such people exist even today and shall exist in the future.

Take heed of my words and remember well that a person's speech can never influence others if it does not spring from a sincere heart and if it is bereft of the power of action. This is a great proof in favour of the truthfulness of our Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. The success and influence that he commanded over the hearts is unparalleled in the history of the children of Adam^{as}. All of this was achieved because there was perfect harmony between the words and actions of the Holy Prophet^{sa}.

Act Upon My Counsel

I have given you this advice because you who hold a relationship with me have become my limbs. Act upon my words and make use of reason and the Word of Allah, so that the light of true insight and certainty develops within you, and so that you may become a path that leads others from darkness into light. For in this era, various allegations are raised on the basis of natural science, medicine and astronomy; it is necessary, therefore, to acquire a knowledge of the scope and background of these sciences so that we are able to understand such allegations before responding.

The Study of Modern Sciences

I consider those Muslim clerics who oppose the acquisition of knowledge in the

¹ as-Saff, 61:3

modern sciences to be in the wrong. For in doing so, they seek to veil their own error and weakness. Their minds are set on the fact that research in the field of modern science distances people from Islam and misguides them. They assert that reason and science are, as if, completely at odds with Islam. Since they do not possess the ability to demonstrate the flaws in philosophy themselves, in order to hide their own incapability, they have formed the notion that it is unlawful to study the modern sciences at all. Their souls tremble in the face of philosophy and submit helplessly before modern research.

True Philosophy Lies in the Quran

However, such people have not been granted knowledge of that true philosophy which comes forth from the Word of Allah and with which the Holy Quran is full to the brim. This is granted to those—and only those—who throw themselves at the threshold of Allah with extreme humility, effacing themselves; those from whose minds the stench of pride has been eliminated; those who being cognisant of their own weaknesses, fervently profess complete devotion to God.

Make the Modern Sciences Subservient to Islam

Hence, in this day and age, it is imperative that you learn the modern sciences and study them with toil and effort for the purpose of service to the Faith and the supremacy of God's Word. However, it is my experience—and so I would like to warn you—that those who became entangled in secular knowledge alone, and became so absorbed and engrossed in such study that they did not receive an opportunity to sit in the company of spiritual and saintly people, and were also themselves devoid of spiritual light, they too have usually stumbled. They became distanced from Islam and instead of looking at these sciences in light of Islam, they made useless attempts to bend Islam to secular thought. And by doing so, in their own fancy, they became defenders in the cause of service to country and nation. But remember, no one can accomplish this task, i.e. of serving the Faith, unless they possess within themselves heavenly light. #

The fact of the matter is that education in these sciences is influenced by Christian theology and philosophical thought. As a result, people who are fond of these studies continue to instinctively adhere to the traditions of Islam on account of their favourable view of the religion. However, as such a person continues to take

further steps towards secular knowledge, they continue to leave Islam further and further behind. Finally, nothing is left but mere rituals and the essence of religion is lost. This outcome does, and has previously come about, due to people becoming engrossed in one-sided investigation and education. Many who are even dubbed leaders of their nation have been unable to understand the point that acquiring knowledge in modern sciences is only beneficial when done so with the sole intention of serving religion, and if one benefits from the company of a holy and divinely inspired man of God.

It is my firm belief that the spread of atheistic naturalism is due to the fact that in order to counter or respond to those satanic onslaughts that are laced with the poison of disbelief and waged against Islam by naturalists, philosophers and astronomers, Muslims employ hollow rationalism along with conjectural and hypothetical argumentation because they deem the teachings of Islam and heavenly light to be inadequate. Consequently, such apologetics are led far away from the deeper meanings and aims of the Holy Quran. They cover their hearts with the hidden veil of irreligiousness, which sooner or later—if not for the grace of Allah Almighty—takes on the guise of atheism, leaving a tinge on the heart, which then leads to such a person's ruin.

Another affliction which plagues the secular academics of today is that they are absolutely ignorant of religious knowledge. And so when they come across an allegation levelled by an astronomer or philosopher, they begin to harbour doubts and objections in relation to Islam. As a result, they either become Christians or atheists. In such circumstances, the parents of such people also commit a grave injustice against their children for not giving them the least bit of time so that they may be educated in religious knowledge; and they involve them in such tasks and engagements from a very young age, which deprive them of pure religion.

The Proper Time for Religious Education and Training

Another point to bear in mind is that the most appropriate and advisable time for the acquisition of religious education is during the period of childhood. How much can one achieve if they begin to learn the basics of Arabic grammar in old age? Retentive faculties are sharp in childhood. The memory is never as firm in the later stages of one's life. I remember vividly certain things from my childhood even now, but have forgotten many instances from fifteen years ago. The reason for this is because the imprints of learning in the early stages of life become so

finely impressed and deep rooted, due to this being the age in which the faculties are developing, that they can never be erased. However, this is an extensive discussion.

In short, in the practice of education, it ought to be considered and especially remembered that religious education should begin from the very beginning. I have always had a desire and this is the case even now; may Allah fulfil this wish. Observe how your neighbouring nations, such as the Aryas, have given importance to education. They have accumulated hundreds of thousands of rupees, if not more, to construct a magnificent building for a college and its necessities. If the Muslims do not take a keen interest in the education of their children, then they should take heed that a time will come when even their children will be lost to them.

The Effect of Company

There is a famous adage:

تعم تاثیر صحبت را اثر

The seed bears influence and one's company carries effect.

The first part of this proverb may be debatable, but the second portion which states that one's company possesses an effect is such an established fact that we need not engage in a lengthy discourse on this matter. You have witnessed the children of many noble families falling into the snare of the Christians, as well as Muslims—even the children of saints, holy men and descendants of the Holy Prophet—dishonour the Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. I have seen the progeny of Syeds whose lineage cannot be doubted and who link their ancestry to Imam Husayn, may Allah be pleased with him, embracing Christianity and God-forbid, raising all sorts of allegations against the Founder of Islam, peace and blessings be upon him. If even in such circumstances, a Muslim does not possess honour and jealousy for their religion and their Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, then who could be more wicked?

If you do not safeguard your children from the company of the Christians, Aryas and others, or if you have no desire to protect them, then remember that you do not gravely wrong your own souls alone, rather you wrong your nation and Islam. This can only mean that you are not the least jealous for Islam and your

hearts are devoid of respect for the Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

Become Virtuous and Righteous So that Your Reason May Be Illumined and Enlightened

Comprehend and reflect! For the sake of God, make use of reason; become virtuous and righteous so that your reason may be illumined and enlightened. Pure reason comes from heaven and brings a light with itself, but it remains in search of gems that are worthy of it. The law of this pure system is in complete accordance with nature's law. Rain descends from heaven and certain lands bring forth flowers, whereas others still grow nothing but thorns and bushes, and in other places, the same droplet of rain falls into the depth of the ocean and becomes an exquisite pearl. As they say;

در باغ لاله روید و در شوره بوم ش

In the garden it grows flowers but on barren land, only weeds and thorns.

If the land is uncultivable, rain is of no benefit; in fact, it is damaging and harmful. And so, heavenly light has descended and it is illumining the hearts of the people. Prepare yourself to accept it and benefit from it so that in the likeness of barren land that gains no benefit from rainfall, you too do not walk in darkness and stumble, and consequently perish, falling into a dark abyss, despite the presence of light. Allah the Exalted is more merciful than a compassionate mother. He does not wish for His creation to be wasted. He reveals to you the paths of guidance and light. But in order to tread these paths, you must utilise your reason and purify your souls. Just as planting does not occur until the soil is ploughed to prepare it, so too pure reason cannot descend from heaven until souls are purified through strenuous effort and rigorous self-discipline.

In this age, God has shown immense grace and as He is jealous for His religion and His Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, He has sent a man, who speaks to you now so that He may invite you towards this light. If the present era had not been plagued by such corruption and disorder and efforts to expunge religion had not been undertaken, then there would be no issue whatsoever. However, at present you can observe from east to west that nations are preoccupied in removing all traces of Islam. I remember, and I have stated this

in my book *Barahin-e-Ahmadiyyah* as well, that 60 million books against Islam have been written and compiled, and printed already. It is strange that the Muslim population in India is 60 million and the number of books written against Islam are also equivalent in number. If we disregard the number of books that have been added to this figure, even still our opponents have handed one book to each and every Muslim in India. If the jealousy of Allah the Exalted had not surged forth and were it not for His true promise ¹ *إِنَّا لَنَحْفِظُوكَ* (*Most surely We will safeguard the Quran*) know for certain that today Islam would have been wiped off the face of the earth and all traces of it would have been effaced. But no, this can never happen. The hidden hand of God is protecting it. What disappoints and pains me is that the Muslims do not care for Islam even to the extent that one cares for their marital relations. I have often had the opportunity to read that even Christian women, on death, bequeath hundreds of thousands of rupees for the propagation and spread of the Christian faith. And as far as devoting their lives for the dissemination of Christianity is concerned, this is something we observe daily. Thousands of lady-missionaries go from home to home and street to street, and strip the people of their faith in any way possible. I have yet to see a single Muslim who has bequeathed even 50,000 rupees on their deathbed for the propagation of Islam. In contrast, at marriages and for worldly customs, they spend extravagantly and even incur debt to squander their wealth relentlessly. But when it comes to Islam, they have nothing. Alas! What a pity! Could the state of the Muslims be any more deplorable?

One Virtue Begets Another

The fact of the matter is that evil actions result in further evil actions. The natural law of God Almighty in Islam is that one righteous act gives birth to another. I remember once reading about an old fire-worshipper of ninety years of age in *Tadhkira-tul-Awliya*. It so happened that in a period of extended showers, the man was feeding seeds to the birds on the roof of his house. A noble man approached him and said: 'Old man, what are you doing?' He responded: 'Brother, the rain has been falling incessantly for six or seven days now and so I am feeding the birds some grain.' 'You do so in vain,' said the noble man, 'You are a disbeliever, what reward can you attain for such action?' The old man responded, 'I will surely receive my reward.' The noble man relates that he went for Hajj and saw the same

¹ *al-Hijr, 15:10*

Fourth Preliminary Point

Reflection upon all of the creations of Almighty God establishes the principle that the wonders and marvels which He has bestowed upon His creations are of two types. Some are those which are easily discernible. For instance, everyone knows that man has organs, such as two eyes, two ears, one nose, and two feet. These are facts which are discovered through a cursory glance. The others are those facts which demand deeper insight—for instance, the structure of an eye, through which both eyes work in unison with each other as one organ and enable one to see everything whether large or small, and the structure of ears through which they can hear different sounds and differentiate between them. These are the facts which cannot be discovered through a cursory glance. Rather, specialists in the physical and biological sciences have discovered these truths after extensive research and deep deliberation spanning over a lengthy period of time. And still, there are hundreds of other undiscovered subtleties and verities of the human body which the mind of no scientist and researcher has yet been able to comprehend.

Undoubtedly, the paramount objective of these subtleties and verities is to lead man to acknowledge the perfect powers of the All-Wise God who possesses absolute wisdom and has worked such wonders and marvels into the creation of man. However, some naive person might object here: 'Why has God made something—the purpose of which is the recognition of God—so subtle and elusive that its understanding requires the exercise of reflection and observation over a long period of time, and even then, there is no guarantee that man would fathom all the secrets of divine wisdom in their entirety; and because of this very difficulty, man has not yet fathomed even a drop out of the whole ocean? All of these wonders and marvels should have been made obvious to fulfil the purpose for which the All-Wise God had invested them in the human body.'

So, the reply to this objection—and others like it that may arise in

NOAH'S ARK

you. Our God possesses countless wonders, but they are visible only to those who become His out of sincerity and loyalty. He does not disclose His wonders to those who do not believe in His Power and who are not sincere and loyal to Him. How unfortunate is the man, who even now, is unaware that there is a God who has power over all things. Our paradise lies in our God. Our highest delight is in our God for we have seen Him and found every beauty in Him. This wealth is worth procuring though one might have to lay down one's life to procure it. This ruby is worth purchasing though one may have to lose oneself to acquire it. O ye, who are deprived! Hasten to this fountain as it will satiate you. It is this fountain of life that will save you. What am I to do? How shall I impress the hearts with this good news? What sort of a **drum** am I to beat in the streets in order to make the **announcement** that this is your God, so that people might hear? What remedy shall I apply to the ears of the people so that they should listen?

If you become one with God, rest assured that God too will be yours. God Almighty shall remain awake for you as you sleep. God shall watch over your enemy and frustrate their designs,

robe of His pleasure, to raise his station, and to enable him to advance on the path of guidance by his love. (Author)

* Pray unto Me; I will answer your *prayer*. (*Surah Al-Mu'min*, 40:61, Publisher)

** And We will try you with something of fear and hunger. (*Surah Al-Baqarah*, 2:156, Publisher)

while you are unmindful of him. You still do not know the extent of God's powers. Had you known, not a single day would you have grieved over the world. Does he who owns a treasure weep, cry and become sorrowful unto death over the loss of a single coin? Had you been aware of this treasure and knew that at every time of need God is able to fulfil your requirements, why would you look to the world so restlessly? God is a **precious treasure**; appreciate Him accordingly, for He is your Helper at every step. You are nothing without Him, nor do your resources and your schemes amount to anything. Do not follow other people for they have become wholly reliant on material means. Just as a snake devours dirt, they consume the filth of inferior worldly means. They gorge themselves on carrion in the manner of vultures and dogs. They have become estranged from God. They have worshipped men, devoured the flesh of swine and consumed wine as though it were water. They have become lifeless, for they place all their reliance on material resources and do not seek the help of God. The heavenly soul has escaped their bodies as a pigeon flies from its nest. They are afflicted with the leprosy of material worship, which has consumed their internal organs. Thus, beware of this leprosy. I do not forbid you to employ material means within moderation; only that you do not become slaves to them like other nations and that you do not forget the God who is the very Provider of these means. Had you possessed insight, you would have seen that God is everything and all else is

LATEST: A challenge for Ahmadi researchers: Hazrat Khalifatul Masih addresses members of AMRA

14th December 2019

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The very first International Ahmadiyya Muslims Research Association (AMRA) conference was held today in Islamabad, Tilford.

The day saw a plethora of speakers from across the world, including university professors, missionaries, scientists, economists, doctors and researchers, who came and delivered their academic findings and research. The conference was well attended, by the grace and blessings of Allah.

Some of the topics included the following:

- From morning to night: How plants behave
- Gratitude: Islam and science - Conflict or concordance
- New advancements in breast conserving surgery for breast cancer
- Islam, Ahmadiyyat and scientific research: The perspective of an Ahmadi woman
- The promise of economic research
- Government inaction: Corruption and conflict in the mining industry
- The shaping of an Ahmadi Muslim scientist

The final session started with the arrival of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V, may Allah be his Helper, at approximately 8:30pm, after the Isha prayer.

Noorudin Jahangeer Sahib was called to the stage for tilawat, who recited Surah al-Anbiya, verse 31-32 of the Holy Quran. Anas Rana Sahib then presented the English translation.

Sadr Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya UK, Abdul Quddus Arif Sahib presented a brief summary report of AMRA. This was the 10-year anniversary of AMRA and the first ever international conference was held. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V^{ra} approved AMRA with the aim to "advance national and social scientific learning" with the view of serving God and His creation.

Nine countries were represented at the conference, including Canada, USA, Germany, Switzerland, Russia, Ghana, Nigeria and Malta. A number of research talks were given, including three by Lajna members. Speakers included international speakers as well.

AMRA has over 60 researchers who continue to contribute to scientific and academic papers, by the grace of Allah. The total attendance of the event was 255, including 19 international guests.

Hazrat Amirul Momineen^{ra} then addressed the gathering. After Tashahud and Ta'awuz, Huzoor^{ra} recited Surah Al-e-Imran, verses 191-192, followed by their English translation.

Huzoor^{ra} said that today, by the grace of Allah, the first ever international AMRA conference was taking place. Huzoor^{ra} expressed that the Holy Quran mentions the creation of the heavens and the earth and instructs mankind to reflect upon it.

"He has encouraged us to use our brains" and reflect upon the earth to find new findings.
Huzoor^{ra} said that man has been given the ability "to think and comprehend" and to decipher between right and wrong.

The Holy Quran has encouraged scientific research and the pursuit of knowledge. Huzoor^{ra} referred to the Promised Messiah^{ra} who said that when one reflects upon the creation of the heavens and the earth, enlightenment occurs and the belief upon Allah is strengthened.

Huzoor^{ra} went on to say that a righteous person and true believer continuously strives and struggles to observe and understand nature and the world around us. When they see this perfection, they are "inevitably" drawn to their Creator and the purpose of their creation.

Huzoor^{ra} explained that when an intelligent person reflects upon the universe, earth and night and day, they behold the majesty of God and seek His grace. This is to "understand and unlock the mysteries of the universe .

In order to gain these blessings, "they remember Him" whilst "standing, sitting and lying on their sides". Huzoor^{ra} said that when such believers pray to Allah for guidance, He grants them clarity of thought. Such people are bestowed the belief that this universe could never have come about by chance.

Such people bow down before their Creator and pray that they are saved from His wrath.

The Promised Messiah^{ra} has stated that the continued study of physics, astronomy and the sciences should always lead a righteous person towards God Almighty. The more they learn, the more they "appreciate the beauty of Allah". Once a believer gains such insight, they not only guide others with the latest scientific research, but also are granted the ability to prove the existence of God. This is the symbol of a true believer.

Hazrat Amirul Momineen^{ra} stressed that "all Ahmadi researchers and academics" should always seek the guidance and help from Allah the Almighty "before, during and after" their works. They should pray that they are given the understanding to prove the existence of Allah. In this manner, "at every junction", Allah will be their guiding light.

Others use their intellect for the sake of material progress, but the research of a believer not only leads to scientific progress and the development of technology, but also serves to offer the truth of the existence of God Almighty.

Ahmadi Muslims researchers, especially those who pursue the sciences, should not only research but try and find proofs the existence of God. This was how Dr Abdus Salam Sahib carried out his work and was able to prove the existence of God.

Scientists and researchers must always "safeguard their faith" and the rights of Allah the Almighty. They must search for additional evidence proving the existence of God.

Huzoor^{ra} said that there should always be a "clear distinction" between Ahmadi researchers as compared to other researchers. The love and majesty of Allah the Almighty must always be engrained "in your hearts".

Hazrat Amirul Momineen^{ra} shared the incident with Professor Clement Wragge and his meeting with the Promised Messiah^{sa}. The Promised Messiah^{sa} confirmed to the professor that there was no contradiction between science and religion. No matter how much science progresses, it would never disprove the words of the Holy Quran, the Promised Messiah^{sa} said.

The Holy Quran does not shy away from science in the slightest, in fact it instructs believers to explore and investigate and further better their human intellect. However, the Holy Quran has also warned humans in interfering with the laws of nature.

Huzoor^{ra} spoke about the boundaries of ethics within science, especially in terms of genetic engineering and cloning. The results of such works would surely be "catastrophic" and responsible for creating a "living hell on earth".

Scientists and researchers must only pursue that which is within the confines of the Holy Quran. Huzoor^{ra} spoke of the great Muslim scientists, academics and philosophers of the Middle Ages who brought about a "remarkable revolution" in the world. They realised their God given talents and faculties while also the existence of Allah. These Muslim scientists are still respected today.

An article on the contribution of Muslim scientists published in *The National Geographic* (published in 2016) was discussed in depth by Huzoor^{ra}. Another article principally on the same topic, was mentioned by Huzoor^{ra} that was published by *The New York Times*.

Though the Muslims contributed in remarkable manners in the Middle Ages, today, the situation is that Muslim nations are severely lacking in intellectual knowledge. They no longer have the drive or motivation to pursue such science and learning.

Huzoor^{ra} referred to an article that encapsulated why the Arab world has turned away from science. In the article, the author referred to the great contribution the Arab world once provided, such as algebra. However, the article goes on to note that now, the situation is dire. The author noted that there have only been two Muslim scientists who won the Nobel Prize.

Huzoor^{ra} detailed different aspects of the article that showed that Muslims nations have now completely declined in academia and contributions to science and research.

Huzoor^{ra} said that it is a "challenge" for Ahmadi researchers to revive the honour of Islam in this regard.

Hazrat Amirul Momineen^{ra} said that in the past 13-14 years, he has instructed Ahmadi students to reach the very pinnacles of their works. However, Huzoor^{ra} noted that hardly any Ahmadi has reached the level he desired for or expected.

Huzoor^{ra} said that the audience must all consider it "your mission to pursue excellence". "You must leave here", Huzoor^{ra} said, to follow the footsteps of people like Dr Abdus Salam.

Contact with one another, especially those working in similar areas of research, is vital. Huzoor^{ra} explained that mutual help would assist in progress. However, the majesty of God should be at the forefront.

Hazrat Khalitfatul Masih^{ra} prayed for the researchers and the dawn of a new intellectual Islamic world.

Huzoor^{ra} then led the congregation in silent prayers, which was then followed by dinner.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

"It is extremely important to re-read the books of the Jamaat as you get older. In particular, you should read the commentary of the Holy Quran, the books of the Promised Messiah (as) and of his Khulafa again and again. As you get older, you gain more life experience and your thought process matures and this enables you to grasp new points that you were not able to understand when younger. You are able to comprehend the deeper meanings, the intellectual points and the wisdom underpinning the words of the Promised Messiah (as) better as you get older."

I thanked Huzoor for his guidance and direction before mentioning I had enjoyed an incident Huzoor had narrated in his concluding address earlier in the day about an Ahmadi lady in Belize.

As I narrated the incident back to Huzoor, it turned out that I had misunderstood part of the incident.

After clarifying exactly what had happened, Huzoor said:

"You still need to improve your Urdu. I have seen that you can translate things quite well from Urdu to English but, despite this, you still misunderstand some things I say in my sermons."

I wholeheartedly agreed and felt a sense of disappointment in myself. A day before, Huzoor had highlighted the need for me to better my religious knowledge and now it was clear that my level of Urdu was not as good as it ought to be.

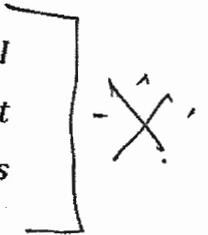
Perhaps the sense of regret I felt showed on my face because, immediately, and very graciously, Huzoor told me that I was not alone in failing to understand some of the points made in his sermons.

Huzoor said:

"There is an Ahmadi lady in the United States who has an excellent standard of Urdu, yet she wrote to me once that she always listens to my addresses or sermons at least two or three times because there are many things she misses on the first listen."

Giving his own example, Huzoor continued:

"I think that when I used to listen to the sermons of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh), I probably only grasped 25% of his message on the first listen and so I would also re-listen or re-read his addresses and sermons and so do not worry too much."



As Huzoor returned up to his residence, I felt determined to try to improve my standards and to make him proud.

A day of meetings

On Monday, 30 September 2019, the majority of Huzoor's day was spent in meetings with the *National Amilas of the Holland Jamaat, Majlis Ansarullah Holland, Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya Holland and Lajna Imaillah Holland.*

From a moment of light-heartedness, Huzoor's tone and demeanour changed ever so slightly and it was clear that Huzoor wished to give me some instructions.

In a kind but serious tone, Huzoor told me that he desired for me to increase my religious knowledge.

Huzoor said:

"You should read Hadith regularly and you should also read the first part of the 5 volume commentary of the Holy Quran repeatedly. You should know the references inside out because sometimes I give you dictation for my speeches or some other research work and it is important that you can easily understand the references and the full concepts."

Huzoor continued:

"You should also read 'Essence of Islam' so you become much more familiar with the writings and teachings of the Promised Messiah (as). However, do not try to read it cover to cover, as you will soon become overwhelmed. Rather you should read some excerpts every day, learn them and try to understand their meanings. Especially focus on those parts which are related to contemporary issues that are very much relevant in today's world."

As he said these words, I thought of how prescient and astute Huzoor is in knowing our weaknesses and our shortcomings. I had heard Huzoor say on many occasions that Ahmadi Muslims should regularly increase their

religious knowledge and often thought that I must make time for regular study and reading myself. Yet, through laziness and neglect, I had not read anywhere near as much as I should have in recent years.

I was also struck at how Huzoor instructed me with kindness and affection.

This is something I have seen many times before, both with me and with others, that Huzoor never purposely makes a person feel embarrassed by their weaknesses.

Rather, he instructs with love and encouragement. He is like the best possible teacher a person can have – a teacher who motivates, inspires and leads by example.

He is the person who, without recourse to anger or coercion, makes you desperate to improve yourself in every aspect of your life.

Huzoor then gave me his own example which left me speechless.

Huzoor said:

"Some time after becoming Khalifa, I spent two full days in my old office in the Fazl Mosque making a detailed index of the writings of the Promised Messiah (as) in Urdu and then I matched them with equivalent passages that had been translated into English and had been published in Essence of Islam. So in Ruhani Khazain (Urdu writings of the Promised Messiah) I now have notes of where the translation is in English."

Huzoor continued:

"It took me two full days of great effort but it was very much worth it and time well spent."

It was incredible to hear how Huzoor paid such close attention to ensuring he had immediate access to the writings of the Promised Messiah (as).

Even though he has an office with staff who can provide him with references, Huzoor's love and complete respect for the Promised Messiah (as) meant he desired to have the references ready to hand at all times.

Imran Khan's United Nations speech

That week, Pakistan's Prime Minister, Imran Khan had delivered a speech at the *United Nations General Assembly* which had been much talked about.

Though I had not heard the entire speech, I had listened to certain parts including a passage where he had questioned why many Westerners criticised Hijab and he described their attitudes as a prime example of Islamophobia.

He also spoke of how the Holy Prophet of Islam (sa) was a defender of rights and that his noble character had been wholly misrepresented in the West.

Another point raised by the Prime Minister of Pakistan related to *Kashmir* and the grave risks of a war between Pakistan and India. He said that if India persecuted the Muslims in Kashmir, it would lead to their radicalisation.

of the apartment where I was staying, Huzoor was wearing an olive green *shalwar kameez* in which he looked extremely graceful.

I mentioned how a young Missionary, Qamar Zafar, who was serving in MTA had told me that he had visited the grave of a Dutch soldier called Sir Philip Sidney earlier that day. Mr Phillips had been mentioned by the Promised Messiah (as).

In an address on 31 January 1898, the Promised Messiah (as) said:

"When Sir Philip Sidney was wounded in the siege of the fort at Zutphen in the Netherlands during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, in his throes of death, at a time of immense thirst, a small vessel of water was brought for him... Another wounded soldier lay nearby and he too was terribly thirsty. The soldier began to look at Sir Philip Sidney with intense longing and desire... Sidney did not drink the water himself, but rather gave it to the soldier as an act of selflessness, saying: 'Thy necessity is yet greater than mine'." (Page 220, Malfuzat, Volume 1, English translation).

After I had mentioned the incident, Huzoor said:

"It is astonishing how the Promised Messiah (as) learned of world events and the latest news of the time in a very prompt fashion."

Upon this, I asked whether it meant that the Promised Messiah (as) was regular in reading the newspapers of the time.

In reply, Huzoor said:

"Yes, most of the world news that reached him was probably from newspapers but the fact he was able to find the time to read them is itself astonishing. Constantly he was engaged in the establishment of the Jamaat, writing books, responding to allegations and even having to bear the burden of unjust litigation filed against him. He was fulfilling the duties given to him by Allah the Almighty as a Prophet and yet still he was able to stay well informed of the latest worldly events."

Smiling, Huzoor said:

"And we think that we are busy people, yet our lives are free and easy in comparison to him."

Upon this, I said:

"Huzoor, no doubt all of our lives are easy, except yours. For you are constantly engaged in the responsibilities and the burdens of the Jamaat."

Thereupon, Huzoor enquired about the latest political updates from the United States, where the opposition Democratic Party was considering launching impeachment proceedings against President Trump.

Huzoor was already very well-informed about the matter and I remember thinking how Huzoor followed the example of the Promised Messiah (as) in all matters.

We had just been speaking a moment before of how the Promised Messiah (as) kept abreast of world events and I have seen over the course of many years how Huzoor keeps up-to-date with worldly news.

Huzoor said:

"Even some of the Opposition party members in USA, who were previously against impeachment, are now stating that they are in favour of bringing impeachment proceedings."

Huzoor asked me what the response of President Trump had been.

I replied that he had published a tweet earlier in the day in which he claimed to be the most victimised President in the history of the United States!

Huzoor smiled before changing the conversation and asking me if I was eating well and comfortable.

In reply, I said:

"Huzoor, I fear that I am eating a little too well and will gain weight because I really like the langhar (kitchen) food here in Holland! Especially, I am enjoying the fresh warm phulkay (flat bread) which are served at meal times!"

Huzoor smiled again before returning to his residence.

موجودہ اصطلاحات سے مراد ہے۔ اس کا معنی ہے کہ جو شخص اپنے آپ کو مسلمان کہتا ہے وہ مسلمان ہے۔ لیکن اگر وہ اپنے دل سے کفر کا اقرار کرے تو وہ کافر ہے۔

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Wang Imperator

Ahmadi Muslim Researchers – Restoring Islam’s Golden Age

During Islam’s Golden Age, Muslim researchers reached the highest echelons in the fields of science, mathematics, geography, astronomy, medicine and inventions. Whilst Europe languished in the dark ages, the Muslims were at the forefront of the world in discovery and innovation. Many of the inventions and scientific methods used by the world today are credited to the academic enlightenment of Islam’s Golden Age. Can this Golden Age of Islam be revived? On Saturday 14th December 2019, the first Ahmadiyya Muslim Research Association (AMRA) Conference, organised by Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya UK (MKA UK), was held at the Masroor Hall in Islamabad, Tilford UK. Over 250 people attended the event throughout the day including 60 researchers. Delegates originated from 9 countries around the world. The concluding session of the event was graced with an address by His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and Fifth Khalifah (Caliph). The Review of Religions is pleased to present the official transcript of the addressed delivered by His Holiness on this occasion.

After reciting *Tashahhud*, *Ta’awwuz* and *Bismillah*, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba), Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and Fifth Khalifah (Caliph) said:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ [191]

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ
فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ [192]

‘These verses of the Holy Qur’an I have just recited are verses 191-192 of *Surah Aal-e-Imran* and the translation is as follows:

“In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed Signs for men of understanding; Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and *lying* on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth: ‘Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain; *nay*, Holy art Thou; save us, then, from the punishment of the Fire.”

Today, with the Grace of Allah, you are holding the first International AMRA Conference.

I hope and pray that the event has proven beneficial and a source of learning for all of the participants.

In many verses of the Holy Qur’an, including those just recited, Allah the Almighty has mentioned the creation of the heavens and the earth and He has instructed us to reflect upon the true purpose of our creation.



He has encouraged us to use our brains, to ponder upon His creation and to search for new roads of human progress and innovation, through research and reflection.

Indeed, Allah the Almighty has deemed humans as the 'best of creation' because of the fact that we have been granted intelligence and understanding.

We have been granted the ability to differentiate between right and wrong.

We have been given the ability to think and comprehend.

Unique amongst all creation, Allah the Almighty has given mankind the insight to appreciate that whatever He has created has been made for our benefit, on condition that we use it in the right way.

Certainly, out of all the heavenly scriptures, the Holy Qur'an is unique in terms of the vast amount of insight it has given about the universe and its inception and how it has encouraged scientific research and the pursuit of knowledge.



In this regard, the Promised Messiah (as) [Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian] has stated that when a believer studies and ponders over the celestial bodies and the entire universe, it causes their minds to open up and for them to become enlightened.



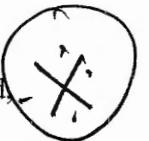
The result is that they are led towards a firm belief in the existence of God Almighty, as they see the signs and evidence for His existence all around them.



On the other hand, the interests of worldly and non-religious researchers are finite and narrow.

When they study something, they assess it in a limited way.

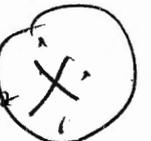
However, a righteous person is not satisfied by merely identifying the dimensions of the world, its material form or calculating the gravitational forces.



Nor are they content by simply determining the main characteristics of the sun, the moon and the stars; rather, a true believer will continually strive and struggle to observe and understand the perfect harmony of nature and the world around us.



He or she will have an unquenchable thirst to identify the hidden characteristics or potential of the physical world and as they realise its brilliance and perfection, they will inevitably be drawn towards their Creator and their faith in the existence of God Almighty will be enhanced.



Consequently, when an intelligent person reflects carefully upon the heavens and the earth, the universe and why the length of the night and day remains constantly in a state of flux, it causes them to perceive God Almighty and appreciate His perfect creation.



When they see God Almighty in this way and recognise His majesty, they turn towards him with increased fervency and passion and seek His Help and Grace, in their efforts to further understand and unlock the mysteries of the universe.

In order to attain His blessings and help, they remember Him whilst standing, sitting and resting, just as has been described as the state of a righteous believer in the verses of the Holy Qur'an recited.

When they pray to Allah for guidance, He grants them clarity of thought, He enlightens their minds and washes away the haze of incomprehension that previously existed.

He grants them an understanding of the universe and planets and they come to recognise with certainty, that such a perfect and precise natural order could never have come about by chance or on its own; rather, it is a reflection and indicator of a Great Creator.

Indeed, it is a testament to the existence of a Universal Creator.

Those people, whose minds are opened in this way, bow down before their Creator and pray that they are saved from His Wrath and that He guides them towards prosperity and a deeper understanding of His creation.

In a similar vein, the Promised Messiah (as) has stated that the continued study of physics, astronomy and the sciences will always lead a righteous person towards God Almighty.

The more they learn about God's creation and the world around them, the more they will appreciate the beauty of Allah the Almighty through the wonders of the universe.

Once a believer gains such knowledge and insight, he or she is not just able to guide others about the latest scientific developments, rather they will also be tooled with the armoury to prove to the world the existence of that One God, who is the Creator of all creation.

This is the symbol of a true believer, the means of their success and their path to attaining real honour and prestige in the world.

It was in this way, reflecting upon the universe, that Professor Dr Abdus Salam Sahib spent his life and he used whatever insight he gained as evidence to prove the existence of God.

Hence, all Ahmadi researchers or academics should continually keep in view the Oneness of God Almighty before, during and after conducting any research or study.

They should seek to conduct their investigations with the firm intention of eliciting evidence that will enable them to prove the existence of the One God to sceptics and disbelievers and to refute those who claim that science and religion are irreconcilable.

When they research in this way and seek the Help of Allah the Almighty at each step, no doubt He will assist them at every juncture and be their guiding light.

As I said before, the research of a secular person is based on a purely worldly approach and they use their intellect for the sake of material progress.

Their efforts can lead to scientific advancement, but the research of a believer has a far greater potential impact.

Their research will not only lead to scientific progress and the development of modern technologies, but will also serve to offer proof of the existence of God Almighty.



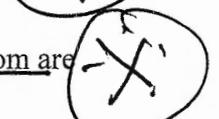
Therefore, Ahmadi Muslim researchers, especially those who pursue the sciences, should not only have the intention of enhancing the understanding of their chosen field, but should also maintain an everlasting resolve to find proofs of the existence of God.



As I have said, this was how Dr Abdus Salam Sahib conducted his work and he attained phenomenal success as a result.



Remember, that the Promised Messiah (as) has said that people of true intellect and wisdom are those who never forget God Almighty and always remember Him.



Thus, where our scientists and researchers strive to excel in their academic pursuits, they must always safeguard their faith, fulfil the rights of Allah the Almighty and fulfil the demands laid upon them to search for additional evidence proving the existence of an All-Powerful God.



Hence, there should always be a clear distinction between Ahmadi scientists and researchers and others who pursue similar fields of study.

And the difference ought to be that the pursuit of knowledge of an Ahmadi must be based upon *Taqwa*—righteousness.

Indeed, the Holy Prophet of Islam (sa) said that a person should fear the acumen and perceptive nature of a believer, because their knowledge is based upon righteousness.

In summary, the love and majesty of Allah the Almighty should be forever ingrained and imprinted in your hearts and minds.

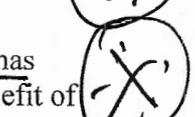


If you research and seek to evolve your work in this way, then Allah the Almighty will bestow upon you great success, *Insha'Allah*.

Some of you may be aware that once, a well-known Western researcher and traveller, Professor Clement Wragge, travelled to Qadian to meet the Promised Messiah (as).



During their conversation, the Promised Messiah (as) explained that Allah the Almighty has created the sun and the moon, the stars and planets to serve human beings and for the benefit of humankind.



In light of this, whilst conducting research to answer questions that remain unsolved, an Ahmadi researcher must keep at the forefront of their mind that whatever has been created by Allah the Almighty has been made for the benefit of humanity.



It should be their objective to uncover and derive the benefits and to ensure that whatever intellectual progress is made is utilised in the right way for the betterment of mankind.



In his discussions with Professor Wragge, the Promised Messiah (as) affirmed that there was no contradiction between science and religion and that no matter how far science progressed, it would never prove a single letter or word of the Holy Qur'an, or the teachings of Islam, to be untrue.



Rather, every discovery and every development would serve as additional proof of the truth of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the existence of the One God.



Certainly, the Holy Qur'an does not shy away from science or discourage its followers from study.



Quite the opposite – the Holy Qur'an instructs believers to explore, to investigate and to utilise their intellect and God-given faculties.



Indeed, those who strive to advance human knowledge for the benefit of humanity will reap the rewards of Allah the Almighty for their efforts.



However, the Holy Qur'an has also warned humans from interfering with the laws of nature or from seeking to change or modify the creation of Allah through unnatural means.

For example, in recent years, the boundaries of scientific ethics have gradually eroded, whereby there have been attempts to pursue immoral and dangerous pursuits such as genetic engineering and the cloning of living creatures.

The results of such undertakings, where humans far exceed their limits and seek to 'play God', will surely be catastrophic and be the means of driving mankind towards its destruction.

It will not only lead the protagonists towards Hell in the Hereafter, but they will also be responsible for creating a living Hell on earth.

This is something every Ahmadi Muslim researcher and scientist must guard against.

You must only pursue those avenues that are for the benefit of humanity and which are according to the limits prescribed by Allah the Almighty.

Always remember that to stay within the confines of the Holy Qur'an is the hallmark of a believer.

If you conduct your work in this way, you can achieve great things and revive the once distinguished reputation of Muslim scholars and academics.

With the Grace of Allah, during the Middle Ages, countless Muslim scientists, philosophers and intellectuals left an indelible mark on humanity by advancing the cause of human knowledge and understanding.

Their pioneering efforts brought about a remarkable revolution in the world and their research and discoveries continue to be the basis for modern science and mathematics.

They utilised their God-given talents and faculties, whilst seeking the Help of Allah the Almighty and reflecting upon His creation and as a result, have been recognised through history and continue to be acknowledged and respected today.

For example, an article published by the *National Geographic* in 2016 titled 'How early Islamic Science advanced Medicine', identifies the contributions of Muslim scientists in the early period of Islam.

The article states:

"Physicians from Islamic countries during the late Middle Ages enjoyed great respect. Their reputation was well deserved, for the study and practice of medicine was then led by Muslim societies across their immense territory, which extended from modern-day southern Spain to Iran."

It further states:

"By the 900s, drawing from a growing body of Greek, Persian, and Sanskrit works translated into Arabic, Islamic medicine quickly became the most sophisticated in the world. Christians, Jews, Hindus, and scholars from many other traditions, looked to Arabic as a language of science. Doctors of different faiths worked together, debating and studying with Arabic as the common tongue."

The article continues:

"The brightest star in the Baghdad firmament was undoubtedly the extraordinary Ibn Sina...Already a doctor at age 18, his great volume *Al-Qanun fi al-Tibb— Canon of Medicine*—became one of the most famous medical works of all time...[Ibn Sina's] attempt to harmonize the medical practices of the Greek thinker Galen with the philosophy of Aristotle reveals the multiple nature of the debt owed to Muslim scholarship, which did not merely revive Greek authors, but stimulated new patterns of thought for the centuries ahead. The reconciling of practical science, thought, and religion ensured *Al-Qanun* was studied by European medics until the 18th century."

Moreover, the *National Geographic* article labels the period of Muslim rule in Spain as a "period of scholarly development" and describes Cordoba in the 10th Century as the "most cultured city in Europe" and "a great centre of study and exploration."

In another article, published by *The New York Times*, 'How Islam Won, and Lost, the Lead in Science' the contribution of early Muslim scientists is also openly praised.

The author writes:

"Civilisations don't just clash, they can learn from each other. Islam is a good example of that. The intellectual meeting of Arabia and Greece was one of the greatest events in history. Its scale and consequences are enormous, not just for Islam but for Europe and the world.

However, the article also notes that many of the contributions made by the early Muslims were not preserved.

In this regard, it states:

"...historians say they know very little about this golden age. Few of the major scientific works from that era have been translated from Arabic and thousands of manuscripts have never even been read by modern scholars."

Hence, the historic contributions of Muslim scholars is unquestioned.

Yet, most regrettably, the recent intellectual state of much of the Muslim world has been lamentable.

Over time, as Muslims moved away from God Almighty and the qualities associated with a believer diminished rapidly amongst them the Muslims, who had previously led the world in science and research, gradually moved to an age of intellectual ignorance that persists to this day.

Instead of continuing to be the leaders of innovation and discovery, the period of Muslim academic enlightenment drew to an end and the Muslims relied on the discoveries and modern technologies made by others.

Instead of being those who gave to the world, the Muslims became those who only took.

As a result, where the world recognises the outstanding historic contribution of Muslims to science and learning, it considers the intellectual status of the modern-day Muslim world to be woeful.

The truth is that, generally speaking, the Muslim world has lost its passion for education and pushing the boundaries of human knowledge.

Muslim nations have become immersed in the luxuries and comforts of the world and so they no longer have the drive or motivation to toil in the pursuit of knowledge or to reflect upon the universe.

The failure of the contemporary Muslim world to excel in science and learning has been discussed by Hillel Ofek, a Research Fellow at the Clements Centre for National Security in the United States, in an article titled 'Why the Arab World turned away from Science'.

He describes how Muslims have gone from leading the world in science and the development of human civilisation to a state where their contributions are now mocked amongst the academic community.

He writes that until around the year 1600, 'nothing in Europe could hold a candle' to the intellectual advancement made by Muslims scientists and scholars.

Furthermore, he notes how many scientific and mathematical terms, such as algebra, algorithm, alchemy and alkali derive from Arabic and reflect Islam's contribution to the world.

Yet he goes on to paint a modern-day picture of science in the Muslim world that is completely at odds with its illustrious past.

For example, he notes that there have only ever been two scientists from Muslim countries who have won the Nobel Prize, despite the fact there are approximately 1.6 billion Muslims in the world.

Another stark statistic he presents is that 46 Muslim countries combined contributed just one percent of the world's scientific literature.

In a similar vein, he states that in 1989, the United States published over 10,000 scientific papers that were frequently cited, whilst in the entire Arab world just four commonly cited papers were published in the same period.

He also notes how between 1980 and 2000, just one country, South Korea, granted over 16,000 intellectual patents, whilst nine Arab countries, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE granted a combined total of just 370.

The article also quotes the Nobel Laureate, Professor Steven Weinberg, speaking about the dearth of scientific material originating from Muslim countries.

Professor Weinberg states:

"Though there are talented scientists of Muslim origin working productively in the West, for forty years I have not seen a single paper by a physicist or astronomer working in a Muslim country that was worth reading."

Thus, in intellectual and scientific terms, Muslims and the Islamic nations have gone from leading the world, to being treated with scorn and derision.

At this time of intellectual ignorance amongst the Islamic world, it is the great challenge for Ahmadi Muslim scientists and researchers to revive the honour and dignity of Islam in the global academic arena.

Indeed, it should be your ambition to take up the glorious mantle of enlightenment adorned by the great Muslim scholars and inventors of the Middle Ages.

Each year, it is a tradition that our Jama'at [Ahmadiyya Muslim Community] awards gold medals for outstanding educational achievement in various fields.

However, when the scheme was initiated by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III (rh) [Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Third Caliph and Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community], he instructed that the gold medals and scholarships were specifically to reward those who excelled in science.

He started the scheme shortly after Dr Abdus Salam Sahib won the Nobel Prize and it was his ardent desire that at least 100 Ahmadi Muslims would soon follow in the footsteps of Dr Abdus Salam and become eminent scientists by the time our Jama'at [Ahmadiyya Muslim Community] entered its second century.

Three decades of the second century of Ahmadiyyat have now passed and regrettably, I do not think we have even produced a scientist who has become world-renowned in that time.

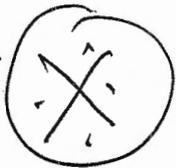
In addition, for the past thirteen or fourteen years, I have instructed Ahmadi students either directly, or through Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya [Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association], to enter the field of academia and research and to endeavour to reach the highest echelons of their fields.

However, so far, it cannot be said that the results have been anywhere near as good as I had hoped.

As far as I know, hardly any Ahmadi has played an outstanding or extraordinary role in the scientific and intellectual development of the world.

Here I would also like to appreciate the efforts of the USA Chapter of the Association of Ahmadi Scientists, who are somehow active and hold regular meetings on science and the Qur'an. Yet, we cannot say they have achieved that exceptional mark expected of them.

Consequently, having gathered here and held this conference, you must all consider it your mission to pursue excellence within your chosen field.



You must leave here with a firm determination in your hearts to follow in the footsteps of Dr Abdus Salam and those outstanding Muslim scholars and researchers, who left behind a rich legacy of knowledge many centuries ago.

You must reflect upon how you can develop a greater understanding of the world and develop new technologies or systems through which humanity can benefit.



As scientists and researchers, it is up to you to exercise your minds and talents to seek out the ways and methods to accomplish great feats of learning.

You should stay in contact with one another and particularly with those who are working in similar areas of research and learn from each other.

Through mutual discussion and coordination, you may be able to achieve better results.

Work with diligence, passion and above all, constantly seek the Help of Allah the Almighty at every step of your academic journey and keep His Majesty at the forefront of your minds.



With these words, I pray that may Allah the Almighty enable you to flourish and to achieve great success in your fields of expertise.



And may we soon come to witness the dawn of a new Islamic golden age of intellectual progress and advancement, led by Ahmadi Muslims across the world - Ameen."

