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ISLAM, III.

MORAL QUALITIES,—*concluded.*

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

Of the innate feelings of man which we see implanted in his very nature, is a search after an Almighty Being, to whom he is drawn by a hidden magnetic power acting upon his soul. Its first manifestation takes place with the birth of the child. As soon as it is born, it is led by an instinctive desire to incline to its mother, and corresponding to the maternal instinct of love, it shows an instinctive impulse of attachment to its mother. With its growth and the development of its faculties, this instinct is displayed more prominently. It finds no rest but in the lap of its mother, and no peace but in her tender caresses. Separation from her embitters all its pleasure, and no blessing, however great, can atone for the pain caused to it by the loss of its mother. It has no consciousness but is impelled by instinct to love its mother and finds no quiet and repose but in her bosom alone. The attraction which thus draws the child towards its parent, points to the secret magnetism implanted by nature in the soul of man which draws him to his Creator, the true object of adoration. It is this same attraction again which excites the affections of man to tend towards and take their rest in some external object. Thus we find the principle of attraction towards God distinctly imprinted within us and instinctively impressed upon our hearts. The emotions of love, however different the objects which call them forth, are all to be traced to the instinct of "love for the Creator." In fixing his affections upon other objects, man only seems to be searching for the real object. He has, as it were, lost something of which he has now forgotten the name and seems to be seeking for it under every other object that comes before him. The attractions of wealth,

the charms of beauty and the fascination of sweet and enchanting voices, are only so many indications of some greater, nobler and real object of love and of some greater power underlying all these which draws all hearts towards it. But as imperfect human reason cannot comprehend, nor the material eye discover this mysterious Being which, hidden like heat in every soul, is invisible to all, a true knowledge of His existence has been attended with the greatest difficulties, and blunders have been made concerning His recognition. Superstition and gross credulity have given the due of the Invisible God to frail creatures and material things. This blunder has been beautifully illustrated by the Holy Quran in a simile where the world is likened to a palace of glasses paved with bright glass. Under this transparent floor, a strong current of water is flowing. A superficial eye that witnesses the scene, shall take the glasses for the water, being unable to get to the reality and discover the truth. That through which the water is seen is wrongly feared as water itself. Such are the great heavenly bodies which we see in the universe, such as the sun, the moon and the stars, which only reveal the existence of the powerful Being working behind them all. But faulty human judgment bows its head in worship before them under the same delusion as the eye in the above instance took transparent glass for water. The Being that manifests itself through these glasses, is a thing quite different from the bodies themselves. The polytheist is foolish enough to attribute the work which is done by the great Power to the material things through which that power is manifested. Such is the interpretation of the verse (انه صرح ممر من قوارير (الذملى)) “(This is not water which thou fearest) but a palace floored with smooth glass.”

In short, the person of God, although He reveals Himself manifestly, is invisible and hidden. The material universe cannot lead us to an undeniable conclusion—to dead certainty, regarding the personality of its Author. The consummate order and perfect arrangement which the material eye discovers in the countless heavenly bodies and the numerous wonders which are disclosed to a thinking mind in nature, have never led, and can never lead to the firm conviction, to the greatest certainty of which the mind of man

is capable, that there is a God, the Creator and the Lord of the universe, whose power and knowledge extend over every atom of it. The greatest astronomers and philosophers who have applied their energies solely to these sciences, have been involved in fatal doubts and scepticism as to the existence of God. All their knowledge, if it ever led them to draw the conclusion of the existence of a God, could never go further than set it down among probabilities. The creation of the sun, the moon and the stars, the order and design witnessed in those orbs which constitute the host of heaven, the consummate laws of order that regulate the universe, the formation of man's body and mind, the marvellous power and wisdom discernable in the government of this universe, no doubt lead all to the conclusion of the probability of the existence of a Creator, but probability does not prove actual existence. This is, in fact, a very low idea and an imperfect knowledge of the existence of God, and there is a vast difference between a probability and a certainty. Unless there is a firm persuasion and a strong conviction that God *actually exists*, the darkness of doubt cannot be dispelled and true light can never enter the heart. The rational persuasion following from an observation of a plan in the universe, can never amount to a certainty and lead to the peace and contentment of mind. It is not the wholesome cup of *elixir*, which can wash off every doubt and quench the thirst which the soul of man naturally feels for a true and perfect knowledge of God. The defective knowledge, which is the result of a study of nature, is fraught with danger, for there is in it more of talk than substantial reality.

In short, unless Almighty God reveals Himself by His *word* spoken to His servants, as He reveals Himself by His works as witnessed in nature, a rational persuasion of His existence, which is the outcome of an observation of His works, is never satisfactory. If, for instance, the doors of a room are all latched from the inside, the natural inference which we shall draw from this wonderful fact in the first instance shall be that there is some one in the room who has bolted the doors. But if years pass away and no sound is heard from within, no voice in response to the repeated cries of the outsiders for years after years, we shall have to change our opinion as to the presence of some one

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of men in the past and made Himself known to them by His own clear voice, yet He does not speak now, I say the assertion is wholly groundless. The unchangeable God who spoke in the past speaks even now and blesses with His Holy Word such of His servants as seek Him with all their heart and all their soul. The chosen ones of God even now drink deep at the fountain of His inspiration and no one ever set a seal upon the lips of God. His grace even now flows in abundance and is bestowed upon men as it was bestowed of old. It is true that the revelation of a perfect Law and necessary rules for the guidance of mankind has put an end to the need of a fresh Law to be revealed from the Almighty and apostleship and prophecy have attained their perfection in the holy person of our Lord and Master the Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, but still an access to the sacred fountain of inspiration is not thereby barred. That the Divine Light should have shone from Arabia last of all, had also been pre-arranged by Divine Wisdom and we can easily discover a purpose in it. The Arabs are descended from Ishmael whom Divine wisdom had cast forth into the wilderness of Paran and thus cut off all connections of this race with the seed of Israel. Paran (Arabic *Faran*) means the "two fugitives." It was destined therefore that those whom Abraham had cast off from himself should have had no share in the Law of Israel, as it had been said that Ishmael "shall not be heir" with Isaac. The Ishmaelites had therefore been isolated from those who were their next of kin and they had no relations with any other people. It is further apparent that in all other countries we meet with traces of the laws and doctrines preached by the Prophets, a fact clearly indicating that those nations had at one time or other received their teachings from God, but Arabia was quite ignorant of these. So far as the influence of the Prophets was concerned, the Ishmaelites were the most backward people. Now this act of a wise Providence could not be purposeless. Why were the Ishmaelites kept aloof from the whole world and cut off from the prophecy of Israel? The conclusion is irresistible. Arabia was destined to be the final scene of Prophetic law-giving, and the mission of its Prophet was destined to be universal. He came last of all and therefore he came for all,

so that he may bless all the nations of the earth and denounce the errors of every people. The transcendent knowledge which he gave to the world is perfect on all sides. The heavenly law which he brought down undertook the heavy task of the complete reformation of men without any distinction of creed or color. Its injunctions were, by no means, meant for a single community like those of the earlier books, but it fully dealt with all the stages of reformation suited for any people. It gave a universal code to the world which furnished the necessary guiding rules for the civilization of all men. To root out a few vices from among a particular community had been the object and aim of all previous books, but the Holy Quran set before itself the grand and all-absorbing object of furnishing a true remedy for the extermination of all sorts of evil and directions for the guidance of all men. Moreover, it has described all the steps necessary for the social, moral and spiritual development of men. It had first to contend with savageness and raise men to the dignity of social beings by inculcating the rules of society. The next step for it was to preach the higher moral doctrines.

The credit of pointing out the true distinction between natural inclinations and moral qualities is also due to the Holy Quran. But it did not stop with the teaching of excellent morals; it had yet to raise men a step higher; it had to raise them to the perfection of humanity. It not only opened the doors to a holy knowledge of God, to a certainty regarding His existence, but actually raised them to spiritual excellence. It enlightened hundreds of thousands of men regarding the true knowledge of God and established them upon a firm basis in respect of the certainty of His existence. It gave admirable directions regarding the three-fold advancement of man which I have discussed above. As the Holy Quran is a comprehensive code of teachings regarding the perfection of man, it has, therefore asserted its excellence and comprehensiveness. Thus it says: *اليوم اكملت لكم دينكم واتممت عليكم نعمتي ورضيت لكم الاسلام ديناً (المائدة)* "This day have I perfected your religion for you and have completed my favors and blessings upon you, and I have been pleased by making *Islam* your religion." Now this verse lays down in clear

and emphatic terms that religion attains its perfection in *Islam*, *i.e.*, upon reaching a stage in which, as signified by the word *Islam*, a person completely resigns himself to the will of God, and seeks salvation by the sacrifice of his ownself (*i.e.*, his interests and desires) and not by any other method, and does not allow this sacrifice to remain a mere matter of theory, but shows it in his deeds and practice. It is to this that the word 'Islam' calls attention, and all excellences culminate in this point.

The philosophers, therefore, who trusted to their imperfect reasons, could not discover the true God. A true knowledge of His existence was given by the Holy Quran, the inspired word of God. The holy Word suggests two methods of attaining to this knowledge. Firstly, it teaches the course by adopting which human reason is strengthened and sharpened in deducing the reasons of God's existence from the laws of nature and is protected from falling into error. Secondly, it points out the spiritual method which we shall discuss hereafter in answer to the third question.

Under the first heading, it has adduced clear and cogent arguments, appealing to human reason, in support of the existence of God. Thus it says (طه) رَبَّنَا الَّذِي اَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى "Our Lord is He who has given to everything a creation suitable to its nature and then directed it to attain its desired perfection." Now, if we were to look to the nature of all creatures from man downwards and consider their constitutions and moulds, we shall find the creation of all things surprisingly adapted to their natures. To enter into any details upon this point here, would be trying too much the patience of the audience. But everyone can think volumes for himself upon this subject.

Another argument of the existence of the Divine Being is deduced by the Holy Quran from His being the cause of causes, or the First cause. Thus it says: (النجم) "وان الى ربك المنتهى (النجم)" "And the whole system of cause and effect ends with thy Lord." This argument is based upon the natural order of cause and effect which pervades the universe. The growth of so many sciences is the result of the universal dominion of this order over every part of the

world, and important laws and principles have been developed out of it. Every cause, which is not itself primary, may be traced to some other cause, and this to another, and so on. But as the series of cause and effect, taking its rise in this finite world of ours, cannot be infinite, it must terminate at some point. The final cause is, therefore, the Author of the Universe. It is to this final or first cause that the verse quoted above calls attention.

Another argument of the existence of the Divine Being is thus described by the Holy Quran : لا الشمس ينبغي لها ان تدرک القمر ولا الليل سابق النهار وكل في فلك يسبحون (يسين) "The sun cannot overtake the moon, nor can the night (which is ruled by the moon) outstrip the day (which is ruled by the sun); and all the luminaries move in their own orbits." Had all these heavenly systems no designer, they would soon have been disorganised and ruined. The vast masses of matter rolling in space without disturbing each other's motion, demonstrate contrivance and design by the regularity of their motions, and hence the designer. Is it not surprising that these innumerable spheres thus rolling on from time immemorial do neither collide, nor alter their courses in the slightest degree, nor show any waste or decay from their constant motion? How could such a grand machinery work on without any disorder for numberless years, unless it were in accordance with the intention and contrivance of a Supreme contriver? Alluding to this consummate Divine Wisdom, Almighty God says elsewhere in the Holy Quran : افي الله شك فاطر السموات والارض (ابراهيم) "Is there any doubt concerning God who has made such wonderful heavenly bodies and such a wonderful earth?"

Another argument relating to the existence of a Creator is thus related by the Holy Quran : كل من عليها فان ويبقى وجه ربك ذو الجلال والاکرام (الرحمن) "All things pass away, and what abideth forever is the face of thy supporter, the Lord of Majesty and Glory." Now, if we suppose the earth reduced to nothing and the heavenly bodies all brought to destruction and the whole material universe made non-existent, still reason and conscience require that something should remain, after everything has thus been reduced to nothing,

which should never die out, nor be ever subject to change or decay. Such a Being is God who brought everything into existence from nothing.

In another place, the Holy Quran adduces the following argument in support of the existence of God : *ا لست بربكم . قالوا بلى* (*الا عراب*) "When the Lord God said to the souls : ' Am I not your Lord ? ' They said : ' yea : we do bear witness ' " In this verse Almighty God relates in the form of a dialogue a characteristic of the souls which He has implanted in their nature, *viz.*, that the nature of souls is not to deny the existence of God. The Athiest rejects the existence of the Divine Being, not because his nature revolts against it but because he thinks that he has no proof of His existence. Notwithstanding this denial, he would admit that every effect has a corresponding cause. No sane person in the world holds that a certain disease for instance is not attributable to any cause. A denial of the system of cause and effect overthrows all principles and all sciences. All sorts of calculations which determine the times of eclipses, storms, earthquakes, &c., and all other inferences would become impossible if every effect were not due to a particular cause. A philosopher, therefore, though denying the personality of God, cannot reject the existence of the first cause as he cannot reject the whole system of cause and effect. This is virtually an admission of the existence of God. Besides this, if a denier of the existence of God be made senseless so that he may be utterly unconscious of the low desires and motives of this world and solely under the direction and guidance of a higher Being, he shall in this state admit the existence of God, as experience has so often proved. The verse above quoted thus tells us that a denial of the existence of God is only so long as the lower desires of man have the upper hand, and that pure nature is strongly impressed with the existence of a Divine Being.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

The above are only a few of the numerous arguments of the existence of the Divine Being which the Holy Quran has mentioned. We shall next consider the attributes of the Almighty Being as taught

هو الله الذى لا اله الا هو عما لم الغيب والشهادة by the Holy Word of God هو الرحمن الرحيم "He is God beside whom there is none who should be worshipped and obeyed." The idea of a partner with God is negatived because had God had a rival, His Divinity would be liable at some time to pass away wholly to His rival. Further, the words that "no one deserves to be worshipped but He" signify that He is a perfect God whose attributes, beauties and excellences are so high and exalted that if we were to select a God from among the existing things, whose selection depended upon the perfection of his attributes, or if we were to suppose certain qualities as the highest and most excellent attributes of God, nothing would come up to Him in His perfection, and in the excellence of His attributes. Injustice, therefore, could go no further than set up a partner or a rival with such a Being.

His next attribute as the verse above quoted indicates, is that He is *عما لم الغيب* i.e., the "Knower of His own person." In other words, no one can comprehend His person with his limited faculties. We can comprehend everything that has been created; for instance, the sun, the moon, &c., in its entirety, but cannot comprehend God in His entirety. The verse then goes on to say that He is *عما لم الشهادة* i.e., He knows everything, and nothing lies hidden from Him. It would be inconsistent with the idea of His Divinity that He should be ignorant of His own creation. He looks to every small particle of the universe, but man cannot do this. God knows when He shall put an end to this system and bring a general destruction over all things, but no one else knows this. God only is He who knows the time of the happening of all things.

هو الرحمن i.e., God is He who provides, out of His bountiful mercy and not in return for anything done by the creatures, all the means of happiness for all living beings before their creation. We see the manifestation of this attribute in God's creation of the sun, the moon and numerous other things for the benefit of men before they or their deeds ever existed. This gift of the Divine Being is due to His attribute of *رحمة* (*rahmaniyat*) or mercy, and it is when this attribute is at work that He

is called الرحمان (Ar-Rahman) or the Merciful. With respect to another attribute of God He is called الرحيم i.e., the God who gives a good reward for the good deeds of His creatures and does not waste any one's labour. Thus displayed His mercy is called رحيميت (rahimiyyat) and the merciful God Himself الرحيم (Ar-Rahim).

Again God is described as ملك يوم الدين i.e., the owner of the day of judgment. In other words, He Himself judges the whole world. He has not made over the dominion of earth and heavens to anybody else so as not to have any connection with His creatures ; nor has He entrusted the business of judgment to any particular person who might have got the sole authority to judge the world.

God is also الملك القدوس i.e., the king who is without a stain of fault or deficiency. The Kingdom of God is not like the earthly kingdoms which may pass away into other hands or cease to exist of themselves. The subjects may all emigrate to another country and thus leave the ruler without anything to rule over. A general prevalence of famine will surely reduce the ruling head to something less than a beggar. If the subjects as a body rise against the monarch and contest his superiority to rule over them, he must give up the reins of monarchy. Such is not, however, the character of the kingdom of God. He has the power to destroy the whole creation and bring new creatures into existence. Had he not been Omnipotent, He should have been obliged to have recourse to injustice in His dealings with His creatures. A forgiveness and salvation of the whole of His first creation would have necessitated the injustice of sending them back to this world to be tried again, for having no power to create new souls, the world should either have been left without any souls or the Almighty would have been obliged to take back the salvation which He had first granted. Either of these courses could not have been consistent with Divine perfection, and, if adopted, would have placed the Divine Being on a level with faulty earthly rulers. The laws which governments make for the management of their affairs are always defective, and when obliged to have recourse to measures of oppression and injustice, they look upon them as based upon principles of justice and equity. Tempo-

ral governments, for instance, deem it lawful to drown a boat with its crew when it is likely to collide with a ship and, therefore, liable to cause a great loss of life and property. But it is not consistent with the idea of Divinity that God should be driven to such an extremity that the adoption of either of two defective courses should become inevitable. If, therefore, He is not Omnipotent, or has not the power to create everything from nothing, we can only liken Him to the ruler of a petty feudatory state, who must either use oppression to keep up His Divinity, or, being just and equitable, must be left without a world to rule over. But the God of power is free from every such defect and the mighty ship of his power floats upon the ocean of justice and equity.

The next attribute of the Divine Being is *السلام*, i.e., He is the God of Peace who is Himself safe and secure against every defect, adversity or hardship, and provides safety and security for others. The significance of this attribute is evident; for, if He himself had been a prey to suffering and adversity, persecuted and beaten by men, or a failure in His designs, no heart would ever have looked to Him in trials and afflictions in the hope of deliverance. Thus He says of the false deities: *ان الذين تدعون من دون الله لن يخلقوا ذبابا ولو اجتمعوا له وان يسلبهم الذباب شيئا لا يستنقذوه منه ضعف الطالب والمطلوب ما قدروا* "Verily, they on whom you call beside God, could by no means create a fly, though they were all assembled for that purpose; nay, were the fly to carry off aught from them, they could not take it away from it. Weak of understanding are the worshippers of these false deities and the worshipped ones themselves are destitute of all power. (Such weak things cannot be deities), but the true Deity is God, who is more powerful than every powerful being, and the mighty one who overcomes everything, who can neither be seized nor beaten by human beings. (Such people who invoke the false deities are in error); they have not formed a worthy and true estimate of God, the object of their worship."

With reference to another attribute of God, He is called *المؤمن*, i.e., the granter of security and the establisher of arguments of His own

nunity and excellence. This attribute calls attention to the fact that the believer in the true God may consider himself safe on every occasion. He is not ashamed before people because he has strong and cogent arguments in support of his assertion; nor shall he be ashamed before God. But the worshipper of a self-made deity is always in trouble. Having no arguments in his favor, he takes every foolish assertion which is contrary to reason for a deep mystery, so that under that name his absurdities and errors may pass unnoticed for something transcending human reason.

The verse then goes on to say (العزیز الجبار المتکبر الحشر) *i.e.*, "Guardian over all, overcoming every power, Mender of every breakage and restorer of every loss, and above every need." And again, "هو الله الخالق البارئ المصور له الاسماء الحسنى" "He is God the maker of bodies, the Creator of souls, the fashioner of the image in the womb, to whom belong all excellent titles that man can imagine." "يسبح له ما فى السموات والارض وهو اعزى الحكيم (الحشر)" "The inhabitants of the heavenly bodies declare His sanctity and holiness as well as the inhabitants of the earth; and He is the Mighty and the Wise." This verse shows that there are inhabitants in the heavenly bodies who follow the Divine rules of guidance.

Again the Holy Quran describes God as *على كل شىء قدیر*, *i.e.*, His power extends over everything. This is the real source of comfort for the worshippers of the true God, for how could man centre all his hopes in Him when He Himself was weak? Elsewhere we also have *رب العلمین الرحمن* and again *اجیب دعوة الداع اذا دعان* "The nourisher of all the worlds, the Merciful, the Gracious, the Lord of the day of Judgment, listening to supplications and answering them, *i.e.*, the Acceptor of prayers." And again *الحى القيوم* "The ever-living and the source of all life, the supporter of all." God is here described as eternal and everlasting in order to exclude all notion of His death ever leaving His worshippers without a master. *قل هو الله احد الله الصمد لم يلد ولم يولد* "He is the One God without an equal, neither has He a son, nor is He a son, nor is there any other being of His kind."

It should be borne in mind that justice in relation to the Creator consists in being firmly established upon the true path of Divine Unity without deviating a hair's breadth from it. The moral injunctions to which I have here called attention form a part of the ethical teachings of the Holy Quran. The most conspicuous feature of all these teachings is a perfect freedom from excess and default. The Holy Quran does not categorise any quality as a moral quality unless it is within the proper limitations. It need not be demonstrated that virtue lies in the middle course; in other words, it is a mean between two extremes. Whatever inclines a man to the middle path and establishes him in the mean course, is conducive to good morals. The man who acts on the right occasion realizes the mean path which alone can lead to any good. The farmer who scatters the seed upon his field either too late or too early, departs, in so doing, from the middle path and the result would be a waste of seed. Virtue, truth and wisdom all lie in the middle path and he only can walk in that path who watches for the opportunity. Between two falsehoods which occupy either extreme, lies the middle course, the path of truth, which can be kept only by the observance of the right occasion. As in other moral qualities, the middle path should be stuck to in the recognition of the existence of God. The mean in this case consists in avoiding, on the one hand, the view of God which divests the Divine Being of every attribute, and in rejecting, on the other, the view which likens Him to things material. This is the position which the Holy Quran has taken with regard to the attributes of the Divine Being. It recognises Him as seeing, hearing, knowing, speaking, &c., but cautions us at the same time not to liken Him to anything which our senses can comprehend. Thus it says: (لشورى) ليس كمثله شيء (لا تضربوا لله الامثال) (النحل) “No one participates with God in His person and attributes. Do not liken Him to any one of His creatures.” Being like to us in some of His actions, He is yet a pure Being,—such is the true conception of God. In short, Islam adopts the golden mean in all its teachings. The opening *sura* of the Holy Quran inculcates the adoption of the mean path when it teaches the well-known prayer : اهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين (الهدى) i.e., Guide us in the *right* path

the path of those upon whom have been Thy blessings, not of those upon whom has been Thy wrath, nor of those who have gone astray." In this verse three sorts of people have been mentioned. First of all, there are the مغضوب عليهم by which the Holy Quran alludes to people who assume an attitude of anger against God and thus following their own savage inclinations call down the wrath of God upon themselves. Then there are the ضالين by which are intended people who are led astray by following their bestial inclinations and their delusions. Midway between these two extremes are the people who walk in the right (the middle) path and whom the Holy Quran denominates انعمت عليهم. In fact to direct people in the middle path is the one object of the Holy Quran. Moses laid stress upon retaliation and Jesus upon forbearance, but the Holy Quran taught the use of both in their proper places. Elsewhere in the Holy Quran we have وكذا لك جعلنا امة وسطا (البقرة) "We have made you walk in the middle path, and taught you the golden mean in all things." Blessed are they who adopt this course, for as the Arabic proverb says "The golden mean is the best."

THE SPIRITUAL CONDITIONS.

We shall now consider the third stage of man's development, viz., his spiritual conditions. We have already stated in the beginning of this discourse that the source of the spiritual conditions is the نفس مطمئنة or the soul at rest, which takes a man onward in his moral progress and makes him godly; in other words, transports him from the moral to the spiritual regions. Upon this topic the following verse has a plain bearing: يا ايها النفس المطمئنة ارجعي الى ربك (الفجر) "O thou soul! that art at rest and rearest fully contented with thy Lord, return unto Him, He being pleased with thee and thou with Him; so enter among my servants and enter into my Paradise." In discussing the spiritual conditions, it is necessary to comment upon this verse in some detail. It should be borne in mind that the highest spiritual condition to which man can aspire in this world, is that he should rest contented with God, and find his quietude, his happiness and his delight in Him alone. This is the stage of life which we term

the heavenly life. The pure and perfect sincerity, truth and righteousness of a person are rewarded by Almighty God by granting him a heaven upon this earth. All others look to a prospective paradise, but he enters paradise in this very life. It is at this stage too that a person realizes that the prayers and worship which at first appeared to him as a burden, are really a nourishment on which the growth of his soul depends and that this is the basis of his spiritual development. He then sees that the fruit of his efforts is not to be reaped in a future life only. The spirit which in the second stage, although blaming a man for the impurities of life, was yet powerless to resist the evil tendencies or to blot them out wholly, and too infirm to establish a man upon the principle of virtue with firmness, now reaches a stage of development in which its efforts are crowned with success. The sensual passions die out of themselves and the soul no more stumbles, but strengthened with the spirit of God is ashamed of its past failings. The state of struggle with sinful propensities passes away; an entire change passes over the nature of man and the former habits undergo a complete transformation. He is perfectly estranged from his former courses of life. He is washed of all impurities and perfectly cleansed. God Himself plants the love of virtue in his heart and purifies it of the defilement of evil with His own hand. The hosts of truth encamp in his heart and righteousness controls all the towers of his heart. Truth is victorious and falsehood lays down its arms and is reduced to subjection. The hand of God sways over his heart and he walks every step under His shelter. It is to this state of the quietude of mind in virtue that the following verses point

اُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْاِيْمَانَ وَايَّدَهُمْ بِرُوحٍ مِنْهُ (المجادلة)
 حُبَّ الْاِيْمَانِ وَزَيَّنَهُمْ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَكَرِهَ الْاِيْمَانَ الْاِيْمَانَ الْاِيْمَانَ الْاِيْمَانَ
 وَالْعَصِيَانَ اُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْاِرْشَادُونَ وَفَضَّلَهُمُ الْاِيْمَانَ وَالنِّعْمَةَ وَاللَّهَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَنِيمٌ
 (الحجرات) جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْاِبْتِغَاءُ الْاِبْتِغَاءُ الْاِبْتِغَاءُ الْاِبْتِغَاءُ الْاِبْتِغَاءُ
 " God has engraved faith on the hearts of the true believers with His own hand and strengthened them with the holy spirit. O believers! God has endeared the faith to you and impressed its beauties and excellences upon your hearts, and has made unbelief and wickedness and disobedience hateful to you, and made your hearts averse to all evil paths. Such are the dealings of God with those who pursue a right course. All this is through grace and favor from God and God

is knowing and wise. Truth came and falsehood vanished away, for falsehood cannot stand against truth."

In short, such are the words of the Holy Quran relating to the third stage of the advancement of the spirit. The person who has not realized this state is without true sight. We must also mark the words that God engraved faith with His own hand upon their hearts and strengthened them with the Holy Spirit. These words can bear no other signification than this, that the attainment of true purity and righteousness is impossible, except through heavenly aid. In the second stage of the spirit, which we have termed the accusing spirit, there is a struggle between the good and the evil tendencies. A person feels the compunctions of his good nature for a time, but the evil propensities again get the upper hand. He is conscious of his fall and sometimes even despairs of his reformation and of a complete victory of his good nature over the evil tendencies. He looks upon his inirmity as irremediable and continues for a while in this stage. When the period of his spiritual struggle is over, a light descends upon him accompanied with Divine strength. The descent of this light work a wonderful transformation in his soul and he feels a strong invisible hand leading him onward. A new world discloses itself to his sight, and he then witnesses the existence of God. His eyes brighten with a new light and things are revealed to him which at first he was unable to see. But how can we find out this path and how attain this light? No effect can be produced without a cause, no end attained without the means thereto, and no knowledge obtained without treading in a particular path leading straight to it. The rules of nature cannot be broken. The laws of nature amply testify that to procure a thing there is a right way, and that its attainment is necessarily dependent upon the adoption of that particular course. If we are sitting in a dark room and need the light of the sun, the right thing for us to do is to open the doors opposite to the sun. Then shall light entering into it illumine all its corners. In like manner, there must be a door through which the blessings and favors of God can be received and a method by which the spiritual state can be attained. Therefore it is our duty to seek this right road for our spiritual welfare, as we are engaged day and night in search of means which are calculated to better our physical or temporal state. But the question is if that road

can be discovered by the weak efforts of reason, and whether we can successfully seek a union in God by the ingenuity of our own mind? Is it true that mere logic and philosophy may open for us the doors which experience tells us can only be opened by the powerful hand of God? Not at all; mere human devices can never reveal to us the shining face of the living and supporting God. Let him who would walk on the right path, first of all completely submit himself with all his faculties and powers to the will of God, and then pray unceasingly and untiringly for the Divine union and thus realize the truth of Divine existence through Divine assistance. The most excellent prayer in this respect, put in proper and opportune words and adapted best to meet the requirements of human nature, drawing at the same time a faithful picture of the natural zeal of the soul, is that taught by the Holy Quran in its opening *sura* and it runs thus :

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ In the name of Allah, the merciful and the compassionate. رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِیْنَ All holy praises are due to God, the Creator and the supporter of all the worlds. الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ The merciful God who out of His mercy provides for our welfare before we have done aught to deserve it, the merciful God who rewards our deeds mercifully. مَلِكِ یَوْمِ الدِّیْنِ Sole judge of the day of judgment who has not given to any one else His right to judge His creatures. اِیَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ O Thou! to whom all these praises are due, Thee alone do we worship, and of Thee alone do we seek assistance in all matters. (The use of the plural *w* in this verse indicates that all the faculties are engaged in Divine worship and working in complete submission to God: for man, considered with reference to his internal faculties, is regarded not as an individual but as a class. This total resignation of all faculties to the will of God is the true signification of the word Islam.) اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِیْمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِیْنَ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَیْهِمْ Guide us, O Lord! into the right path which leads to Thee and let it be so that, remaining firm in that path, we may be guided to walk in the footsteps of persons upon whom have been Thy blessings and favors. غَیْرِ الْمَغضُوبِ عَلَیْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّیْنَ Save us, O God! from the path of the people upon whom has been Thy wrath and of those, who having fallen into errors, have gone astray and not reached Thee. اٰمِیْنِ Be it so, O God.

It is clear from these verses that the blessings of God, *i.e.*, His

favors, descend upon persons who sacrifice their lives and all their interests in the path of God, make a complete submission to Him and resign themselves wholly to His will, and then supplicate Him to grant them all the spiritual blessings, which man can attain, of the nearness and union of God, and of speaking to, and being addressed by, Him. They engage all their faculties in devotion to God, eschew every act of disobedience and prostrate themselves before Him. They shun, so far as possible, every path of evil and avoid occasions of the wrath of God. They seek God with true sincerity and exalted magnanimity, and their efforts are, therefore, crowned with success, and they are made to drink of the cup of the knowledge of God. The verse further refers to constancy in the path of God, thus indicating that the Divine blessings which bring about the spiritual state, do not flow in their fullness, unless a person shows a firmness and a sincerity unshaken under the severest trials. He must have a union which cannot be cut asunder by swords nor burned by fire; adversity cannot loosen the tie, the death of the nearest relatives has not the slightest effect upon it, the separation of dear objects does not interfere with it, and the most fearful calamities do not shake it. Narrow is the door indeed and difficult the path! Ah, what a mountain to ascend! The following verse of the Holy Quran calls attention to this difficult point: *قل ان كان آباؤكم و ابناءكم و اخوانكم و ازواجكم و عشيرتكم و اموال ان اقتروا فتموها و تجارة تخشون كسبها و مساكن ترضونها احب اليكم من الله و رسوله و جهاد في سبيله فذربوا حتى ياتي الله بامر و الله لا يهدي القوم الفاسقين* (التوبة) Say to them: "If your fathers and your sons and your brethren and your wives and your kindred and wealth which you have gained with labour, and your trade which you fear may come to a standstill, and your spacious dwellings which please you, be dearer to you than God and His apostle and efforts in His path, then wait until God issues His behest: and God shall never guide the transgressors." It appears from this verse that those who love their wealth and kindred in preference to the will of God, are transgressors in the sight of God. Their end is described as destruction for having given preference to other things over God.

This is the third stage of advancement, and it is on reaching this stage that a person becomes godly, provided that he is willing to subject

himself to every disgrace and affliction for the sake of God, and turns to Him with such exclusive devotion and sincerity as to regard all others beside Him as dead. But the truth is that it is impossible for us to see the Living God unless a death comes first over all our own passions and desires. The day on which death comes over our physical life is the day of the triumph of spirituality and the day of the revelation of the Divine Being. We are blind so long as we are not blind to all other sights; and we are lifeless so long as we are not lifeless under the hand of God. The uprightness which enables us to overcome all carnal passions is granted to us when and only when our face is directly opposite to God. Uprightness deals a death-blow to all carnal desires and it is to this state that the words *بلى من اسلم وجهه لله وهو محسن* call attention, requiring that we should bow down our neck in complete submission to Him. This stage of uprightness is not attained unless all the members of our body and all the faculties which sustain us, are made to work in total submission to God, and our life and death have no other object but the pleasure of God, as is elsewhere said: *قل ان صلواتي ونسكي ومحياي ومماتي لله رب العالمين (لا نعاصم)* "Say my prayers and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for the sake of God." When man's love for God is so great, when his life and death have no interest for himself but are solely for the sake of God, then God who loves those who love Him, causes His love to descend upon that person. From the union of these two loves springs up a light which cannot be seen or realized by those who are bent low upon this earth. Thousands of the faithful and righteous have been murdered in cold blood by the worldly-minded, because the world was blind to the light which descended upon them. They were looked upon by the world as covetous and deceitful contrivers, for it could not see their bright faces. The Holy Quran attests to this spiritual blindness in the following words: *ينظرون اليك وهم لا يبصرون (الاعراف)* "The unbelievers look towards thee, yet they do not see thee."

In short, an earthly person becomes a heavenly being when illumined by the heavenly light. The Author of all existence speaks within him and illumines him with the lustre of Divinity. His heart which overflows with the love of his Divine Master, becomes God's habitation and the throne of His Glory. From the moment that such a man is renewed, having undergone a pure transformation, God also becomes

new to him, for His dealings and laws with him are changed. Not that God becomes new or His laws or dealings are new but that these laws or dealings are distinct from those displayed in connection with the masses of men, and such as the worldly wise are not cognisant of. It is to such a transformed person that the following verse of the Holy Quran refers : **ومن الناس من يشرى نفسه ابتغاء مرضات الله والله رؤف بالعباد (البقره)** “And from among men are those (types of perfection who are lost in search of the pleasure of God), who sell their very selves in return for the pleasure of God ; these are they on whom the mercy and blessings of God descend.” Such is the case of the person who has attained the spiritual stage of perfection, *viz.*, that he sacrifices himself in the path of God. In the verse quoted here, we are told that the mercy of God encompasses the person, and consequently he only is delivered from all sufferings and sins, who gives away himself in the path of God and Divine pleasure, and with this sacrifice gives proof of his exclusive devotion to God. He regards himself as having been created for no other object but the obedience of God and sympathy for His creatures. When he has thus submitted his will and intention to the will of God, every faculty is engaged in the performance of pure virtue, not formally or coldly but with sincere interest, zeal and pleasure as if actually seeing his Master in the looking-glass of his obedience and submission. The intention of God becomes his intention and he has no delight but in obedience to Him. He does not perform good or virtuous deeds simply on account of their goodness, but his very nature is drawn in that direction and he finds his highest pleasure and bliss in them. This is the paradise upon earth which is granted to the spiritual man, and the promised heaven in the next world is only an image of the present paradise, being an embodiment of the spiritual blessings which a man enjoys even here. Referring to this Almighty God says : **ولمن خان مقام ربه جنتان (الرحمن) وسقاهم ربهم شرابا طهورا (الدهر) ان الابرار يشربون من كاء س كان مزا جها ك فور ا عينا يشرب بها عباد الله يفجرونها تفجيروا . ويسقون فيها كاء سآ كان مزا جها زنجبيل عينا فيها تسمى سلسبيل (الدهر) انا ا عندنا للكافرين سلسلا واغلا وسعيرا (الدهر) ومن كان في هذه اعمى فهو في الآخرة اعمى واضل سبيلا (بنى اسر ائيل)**

“And for him who fears his Lord and stands in awe of His majesty and glory, there shall be two paradises, one in this world and the other in the life to come. To those who are lost in the contemplation of Divine glory, their Lord has given a drink which has purified their hearts, their ideas and their intentions. The just are quaffing a drink tempered with camphor (*kāfir*); they are drinking of a fountain which they have made to gush forth with their own hands.” The word *kāfir* used in connection with the state of the just is derived, as already indicated, from كَفَرَ (*kafira*) meaning to cover and to suppress, and refers to the total extinction of worldly love and the complete suppression of all worldly desires of those who have drunk of the cup of love of God and severance from all other connections with true sincerity. It is plain that passions take their growth in the heart, and if the heart is removed farther off from impurities, the passions lessen gradually and ultimately die out. The more a man leans towards God, the farther off he is from the control of carnal passions, and therefore the righteous who trust to God only for support have their hearts cooled from the fire of passion and their sensual desires as completely suppressed as poisonous matters by camphor.

The verse then goes on to say “(And after they have drunk of the cup tempered with camphor), they are made to drink of another cup tempered with *zanjbeel* (ginger).” The last word requires a brief notice. *Zanjbeel* is a compound of زَانَا (*zana*) and جَبَل (*jabl*). Of these component parts the first means “to ascend” and the second “mountain.” The compound word زَنْجَبِيل therefore means “he ascended the mountain.” Now, from a severe attack of a poisonous disease to perfect restoration of health, there are two stages. In the first stage, the poisonous germs are completely destroyed and the violence of the attack is mitigated and the danger which threatened life itself is over. But the weakness, which is the result of the attack, does not vanish with the poison. The patient, though out of danger, cannot be said to be in sound health unless strength is restored to him. If he can walk only stumbling and falling, he is not yet a healthy man. The second stage of restoration is, therefore, that in which the patient regains his strength. The body is again full of life and vigour and he is not only able to walk with firm legs upon even

ground but has courage and strength to try an ascent up a steep mountain and scale the heights with good spirit and without any fear. This is the spiritual state which a person attains in the third stage of development. It is in reference to this stage that Almighty God says of the perfectly righteous that they are made to drink of a cup tempered with *zanjbzel*, i.e., they having attained full spiritual strength, are able to go up steep mountainous paths, accomplish most difficult tasks and perform astonishing deeds of sacrifice in the path of God.

It should also be borne in mind in connection with this point that *zanjbzel*, or ginger, is the root of a plant very useful as a promotive of the natural heat of the body. The name given to it points to its property, for it gives strength to, and generates heat in, the weak body so as to enable a man to ascend precipitous heights. These two verses in which *káfur* and *zanjbzel* are respectively spoken of, call attention to the two stages through which a person must pass in order to make an advancement from the low position of the slavery of passion to the heights of virtue and righteousness. After the first movement which a man makes to rise up, the first stage is that in which the poisonous matters are suppressed and the flood of passions begins to subside. This we may term the *káfur* stage, for in this stage what is effected is only the suppression of the poisonous matter, just as *Káfur* has the property of nullifying the effect of poison. But the strength which is required to overcome all difficulties is only acquired in the second stage, which is hence called the *zanjbzel* (or the strengthening) stage. The spiritual *zanjbzel*, which has the effect of a tonic on the spiritual system, is the manifestation of Divine Beauty and Glory which affords nourishment to the soul. Braced with this manifestation, man is able to traverse the dreary deserts and climb the steep heights which the spiritual wayfarer must pass to reach the goal. The wonderful deeds of self-sacrifice that he is then able to perform are beyond the comprehension of one whose heart is devoid of the zeal of love. To bring these two spiritual stages nearer to the understanding of men, two words have been adopted in the Holy Quran, viz., *káfur* or that which suppresses

the poisonous matters and *zanjbeel*, or that which gives strength to ascend the heights and overcome all difficulties.

The verses quoted above go on to say, "Verily, we have prepared for those who would not accept the truth, chains and collars and burning fire." This verse signifies that those who do not seek God with a true heart, are by the Divine laws repaid in their own coin. Their entanglements in their worldly affairs do not allow them to move a step as if their feet had been enchained; they are so bent low upon the mean cares of the world that they appear to have collars round their necks which do not allow them to raise their heads heavenwards; their hearts burn with carnal desires and greed to get some property or overthrow a certain rival. Since God finds them engaged in low desires and unfit for higher and sublimer pursuits, therefore He makes these three afflictions, *viz.*, chains, collars and fire, their constant companions. There is also an allusion here to the fact that every deed which a man does is followed by a corresponding deed of Almighty God. If a man, for instance, closes all the doors of his room, the darkness that follows is an act of God. In fact, whatever we term the natural consequences of certain deeds of ours, are really the deeds of God, for God is the cause of causes. The taking of poison is a man's own deed, but this shall be followed by God's punishing him with death. As in the material world, so too in the spiritual, the law holds good that whatever is done, is followed by a necessary consequence. The Holy Quran refers to this law in two different instances. Thus it says in one place *لذین جا هدوا فینا* (لذین جا هدوا فینا) and elsewhere *فلما زاغوا ازاغ الله قلوبهم* (الصفه) (لذین جا هدوا فینا) and elsewhere *فلما زاغوا ازاغ الله قلوبهم* (الصفه) (لذین جا هدوا فینا). If there are "those who have made efforts for us to their best, we shall as a necessary consequence of their deeds guide them in our paths." but for those "who go astray and walk not upon the right path, we also cause their hearts to swerve from the line of duty." This point has been further explained in the following verse of the Holy Quran: *من کان فی هذه اعمى فهو فی الآخرة اعمى و اضل سبیلا* (بنی اسرائیل) "He who is blind here, shall also be blind hereafter, nay, worse than the blind." These words clearly indicate that

it is in this life that the righteous see the face of God and that it is in this very world that He appears to them in all His majesty and glory. In short, it is in this world that a heavenly life begins and it is here, and not hereafter, that the basis of a hellish life is laid in the impurities of this life and blindness to spiritual facts.

Another verse bearing upon this subject runs thus : **و بشر الذين آمنوا وعملوا الصالحات ان لهم جنات تجري من تحتها الانهار (البقرة)** “And give good tidings to those who believe and do what is right that they shall inherit gardens beneath which streams flow.” In this verse Almighty God compares belief to gardens beneath which rivers flow. These words reveal a deep secret indicating the connection between faith and good deeds. As trees would wither away if they are not watered, so faith without good deeds is dead. Faith without deeds is useless, and good deeds not actuated by faith are a mere show. The Islamic paradise is a true representation of the faith and good deeds of this world. Every man’s paradise is an image of what he has done here below; it does not come from without but grows from within a man himself. It is his own faith and his own good deeds that take the form of a paradise for him to live in, and its delight is tasted in this very life. The tree of faith and the streams of good deeds are even here discernable, though not manifest, but in the next world all veils that hide them from the eye, shall be uplifted and their existence shall be palpably felt. The perfect teaching of the Holy Word of God tells us that the true, pure, strong and perfect faith in God, His attributes and His will, is a delightful garden of fruitful trees, while the good deeds which a man does, are in fact the streams flowing in the garden and giving life and fruit to its trees. The same idea is elsewhere expressed in the Holy Quran in the following words : **مثلاً كلمة طيبة كشجرة طيبة اصلها ثابت وفروعها في السماء تؤتي اكلها كل حين (ابراهيم)** “The good word of faith which is free from every excess or default and every defect, lie or joke, is like a good tree whose roots are firmly fixed in earth and branches shooting heavenward, yielding its fruit in all seasons and never witnessing a period of fruitlessness.” By comparing a good word of faith to a

good tree that ever yields its fruit, Almighty God has called attention to three facts: (1.) That its root, which indicates its true significance, should be firmly fixed in earth which represents the heart of man. The firm fixture of the root indicates the unqualified acceptance of the reality and truth of the faith by the nature and conscience of man. (2.) That its branches should be in heaven, *i. e.*, reason should attest to its truth and the heavenly laws of nature being the work of God, should agree with it. In other words, that arguments of its truth should be deducible from the laws of nature and should be so high as if they were in heaven, being above every objection. (3.) Its third sign is that it yields its fruit without ceasing, *i. e.*, its influence and blessings are never intercepted and are felt in every age and every country. It is not true that they exist for a time and then cease. Another verse then follows: ومثل كلمة خبيثة كشجرة خبيثة ان اجتثت من فوق الارض وما لها من قرار (ابراهيم) "And an evil word is like an evil tree torn up from the face of the earth (*i. e.*, rejected by the nature and conscience of man) without strength to stand (*i. e.*, is neither supported by arguments nor by the laws of nature and is a mere assertion or an idle tale).

It should, therefore, be borne in mind that as the Holy Quran has compared the holy words of faith to plants bearing delicious fruits, such as grapes, pomegranates, &c., as being embodiments of what is spiritually enjoyable in this world, it has also described the evil tree of unbelief under the name of زقوم (*zaqqoom*). Thus it says: اذالك خير نزل الام شجرة الزقوم انا جعلناها فتنة للظلمين . انها شجرة تخرج في اصل الاحميم . طلعتها كانه رؤس الشياطين (الصف) ان شجرة الزقوم طعام الاثيم كالمهل يغلى في البطن كغلي الحميم ذق انك انت العزيز الكريم (الرخان) "Are the gardens of paradise better or the tree of *zaqqoom*? Verily, we have made it an affliction for the wicked; it is a tree which comes up from the root of hell (*i. e.*, grows up from vanity and self-glory as being the root of hell); its fruit is as the heads of Satans. (شيطان *shaitan* or *satan* means one whose end is destruction being derived from شيط meaning to perish. What is meant by these words is that the eating of it brings damnation and destruction as the result). Verily, the tree of *zaqqoom* shall be the food of those who wilfully

incline to a sinful course of life ; it is like molten copper and shall boil up in their bellies like the boiling of scolding water; (and addressing the damned one it goes on to say): “Taste the fruit of this tree, for thou, forsooth, art the mighty, the honorable.” The closing words are expressive of the wrath of God. They indicate that if the sinner had not been self-conceited or had not turned his back upon truth for the sake of his pretended honor and greatness, he would not have had to taste that fruit and affliction. The last verse also suggests that the word *zaqqoom* is made up of ذق (*zuq*) and ام (*um*), the former part meaning “taste thou” and the latter being an abbreviation of the whole sentence انك انت العزيز الكريم, in which the first and last letters of the sentence are taken. Frequent application has changed ذ into ز (both sounding like z).

In short, God has likened the words of faith uttered in this world to the trees of paradise and the words of faithlessness to *zaqqoom*, the tree of hell, and has thus shown that a heavenly or a hellish life commences in this world. Relating to hell, the Holy Quran also says : “ Hell is a fire of which the source is the wrath of God and it is kindled in sin and the flames thereof reach the heart first of all.” This is an allusion to the fact that the grief, sorrow and affliction which overpower the heart, really kindle the fire of hell, for all spiritual tortures overtake the heart first and then consume the whole body. Again, we also read of hell-fire in the Holy Quran : وقودها للناس والنجاسة “The fuel of hell-fire (things which keep it constantly burning) are two things : Firstly, the people who, instead of the true God, worship other things or with whose consent other things are worshipped, as is elsewhere said : انكم وما تعبدون ‘Verily, you and your false gods who in spite of their being creatures asserted their Divinity, shall be cast into hell.’ Secondly, the idols shall be the fuel of hell, for their existence has also called forth a hell.” From these remarks it would appear that Heaven and Hell are not material worlds like this but that spiritual facts are their source and origin. This remark requires to be qualified in one way, viz., that the blessings and tortures of the next world shall be the embodiments of the spiritual facts of this one, but notwithstanding this they shall not be things of this world.

Returning to the main point of the subject under discussion, the Holy Quran has taught us two means for a perfect spiritual union with God, viz., complete resignation to the will of God, which is known by the name of *Islam*, and constant prayers and supplications as taught in the opening *sura* of *Alquran* known by the name of *fatiha*. The essence of the religious code of Muhammadanism is contained in *Islam* and *fatiha*. These are the two channels which lead to the fountain of salvation and the only safe guides which lead us to God. These are the only means to attain the desired end of the highest spiritual advancement and ultimate union with God. They only can find God who realize the true signification of Islam by actually entering into it and constantly pray as taught in the *fatiha*. What is Islam? It is the burning fire which consumes all low desires and setting fire to the false gods, offers our life, property and honour as a sacrifice before God? Entering into this fountain, we drink the water of a new life. The spiritual powers within us are united together as strongly as the links of a chain. A fire resembling that of the lightning flashes out of us, and a fire descends from above. These two flames coming into contact with each other consume all low motives and carnal desires and the love of others than God. A death comes over the first life and this state is signified by the word *Islam*. *Islam* brings about a death over the passions of the flesh and gives a new life to us. This is the true regeneration, and the word of God must be revealed to the person who reaches this stage. This stage is termed the meeting of God, for it is then that a man sees the face of God. His connection with God is so strong that he, as it were, sees God with his eyes. He is granted strength from above; the internal faculties are all brightened and the magnetism of a pure heavenly life works strongly. Upon reaching this stage, God becomes his eye with which he sees, his tongue with which he speaks, his hand with which he attacks, his ear with which he hears and his foot with which he walks. It is in reference to this stage that Almighty God says: *يد الله فوق أيديهم*: "The hand of the Prophet which is above their hands is the hand of God," and again: *ما رميت إذ رميت ولكن الله رمى*: "Whatever thou castest, not thou but God has cast."

In short, this is the stage of the perfection of humanity and of its strong union with God. The will of God predominates over every desire, and the moral conditions which were at first defenceless against the passions of the flesh, are fortified so as to be proof against every attack. With this holy transformation reason and understanding are also refined. It is to this condition, that the verse *وايدهم بروح منه* (and aided them with His Holy Spirit) refers. The love of such a person for his Lord knows no bounds. To die for God and to suffer persecution or disgrace for His sake, however strange the expressions might sound to other ears, are ordinary things for him. Being drawn he flies towards God, but does not know who attracts him. An invisible hand supports him under all conditions, and to fulfil the Will of God becomes the principle and object of his life. He finds himself close to God as the Holy Quran says : *نحن اقرب اليه من حبل الوريد* " We are closer to him than his neck-vein." As no effort is required to pluck a ripened fruit from a plant, the low connections of such a man, in like manner, sever of themselves. He has a deep connection with God, and is removed far off from the creatures. He speaks with God and is spoken to by Him. To reach this stage the doors are as wide open now as they were in time past. The grace of God does not withhold this blessing from the earnest seekers now, but vouchsafes it to them as bountifully as it did previously. But the vanities of the tongue do not lead to this way, and mere bragging or idle talk does not open this door. Many desire to attain it, but there are very few who find it, because it cannot be found without an earnest search and a true sacrifice. Sing *To triumphe* as long as you will, it cannot avail. Difficult is the way and dangerous the path and you cannot walk in it so long as you do not set your foot, with true sincerity, upon the burning fire which others fly from. Boasting avails little when practically there is no zeal and earnestness. Read the verse of the Holy Quran which says : *واذا سألك عبادي عني فاني قريب اجيب دعوة الداع اذا دعان فليستجيبولي وليؤمنوا بي لعالمهم* *يرشدون (البقرة)* " And if my servants ask thee concerning me, then tell them that I am very near to them; I listen to the supplications of the supplicators, therefore they ought to seek my union with prayers and believe in me, so that proceeding aright they may be successful."

(To be continued.)

[From Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah.]

A SAFE-GUARD AGAINST THE DAY OF VISITATION

AND

A CRITERION OF TRUE PIETY.

PREFATORY NOTE.

In delivering this message to my countrymen, I am not quite unaware of the treatment I shall meet with. Whatever the former prophets have experienced, I must also do, and as they have been received, I must also be. The immediate consequence of the delivery of this sympathetic message shall only be a volley of abuses and imprecations hurled at me from the clerical orders of all religions, Maulvies Missionaries and Pundits, all coming in for a share. These considerations cannot, however, keep me back from the communication of the message with which I am entrusted. Abuses and persecutions may have the upper hand, but it is also probable that in this time of general affliction when the foundations of the earth are being shaken with troubles, there shall be not a few hearts that shall pause before they open their mouths and not being blinded by prejudice, shall ponder over the words of a sincere adviser and be prepared even to try the remedy suggested. To such I must repeat the word of caution that the advice I offer is based on the motive of showing the way of deliverance—a way, tried and proved to be the path of safety—from the prevailing evils. When I see people having no aversion to use even the urine of certain animals and other unclean things as a remedy for certain diseases, I cannot see why they should shun a pure remedy for the safety of their lives. But if they do not heed my words, the day shall come when they shall learn the painful truth that they were simply deluded as to the intercession of their supposed leaders and gods. They shall then know the true religion that can lead men to the goal of salvation and whose founder can truly be called the Intercessor. We, no doubt

believe that Jesus Christ was a righteous person and better than most of his contemporaries,* (and God knows better), but to take him for

* This is simply our good opinion of Jesus. We consider it not only possible but even probable that there may have been men upon this earth in the time of Jesus who may have been far superior to Jesus in their righteousness and close connections with God. Almighty God says of him in the Holy Quran : *وجيهاً في الدنيا والآخرة ومن المقربين* "Honorable in this world and the next, and one of those who had near access to God." This verse establishes conclusively that in the time of Jesus there were many persons who had near access to God, and that Jesus was only *one of them*, from which it by no means follows that he was superior to them all. This circumstance, on the other hand, makes it probable that others beside him might have been greater than he. This view is corroborated by the description of Jesus Christ, in the Holy Quran as well as in Gospels, as an apostle of the Israelites only. His Mission did not extend to any other nation. There is nothing to exclude the possibility that some other apostles of his time included in the verse : *ومنهم من لم نقصص عليك* "And there are other apostles whom we have not mentioned to thee," may have been greater than he. Moses himself, the great Israelite Law-giver, of whose followers Jesus was one, had a contemporary whose excellence is thus described by the Holy Word *وعلمناه من لونا علما* "And him we instructed with our own knowledge." In the face of this fact how can we deny the superiority over Jesus of some of his contemporaries when we know that Jesus was not even the equal of Moses, not himself the founder of a new law but only a follower of that taught by Moses? Jesus was no more than a humble preacher of the law of Moses notwithstanding the extravagances of those who deify him, or, reserving the Divine name only, give him all the attributes of Divinity. They may seat him on the heavens or even on the throne of God's Majesty, and declare him the creator of birds like God Himself, but coming to facts and subjecting his Divinity to a critical examination, we are obliged to bring him back to the level of human beings and place him in a position, at any rate not more exalted than that occupied by some of his contemporaries. Even John the Baptist, who was also like Jesus an apostle of the Israelites, excels him in many respects. He was a total abstainer, while Jesus refers to his being called a wine-bibber and always drank wine. Unlike Jesus, he never had too familiar connections with women of dubious character, nor ever allowed a harlot to touch him or anoint him with the earnings of her adultery. Perhaps it is in allusion to these circumstances that John, and not Jesus, has been called *حضور* or "chaste" by the Holy Quran. There are other very clear evidences establishing the excellence of John over Jesus. Jesus was a disciple of John and had made a confession before him, while of John we are not told that he ever did repentance at the hands of anyone else. This circumstance alone gives him a better title to sinlessness than Jesus. Out of the numberless erroneous views regarding the person of Jesus, reference may here be made to the following error :

There is a well-known tradition among the Muhammadans that Jesus and his mother were free from the touch of Satan, but a mistake is made in the interpretation of these words and it is supposed that these words reveal some exclusive glory of Mary and her son. The fact, however, is that Jesus and his mother were falsely charged by the Jews with flagrant crimes of the vilest type. Satanic works were attributed by them to both

the great deliverer of the world is to attribute to him a false dignity.

To say that he was the real intercessor of mankind for all time, is a charge against Jesus himself. The only true and noble deliverer of mankind who brings to every one the fruit of salvation, and shall bring it even to the day of judgment and whose blessings shall never be intercepted, is the Holy one who was born in Hedjaz and came for the salvation of the whole world for all time. He has come again into the world, but now his power and spirit appear in the person of another man. May all the nations of the earth be blessed in him! Amen.

**In the name of Allah the Merciful and the Compassionate,
We praise Him and pray for His choicest blessings
upon His Noble Prophet.**

THE PLAGUE.

When the plague has come from thy Lord, regard it with honor.

Thou art accursed thyself, O transgressor, why callest thou it the accursed?

The hour of repentance is come, walk in righteousness therefore and give up the evil courses of life.

Who sticks to evil now shall meet with an evil fate.

With regard to the origin and spread of this terrible epidemic different classes of people hold different views. Medical authorities are generally agreed that the disease owes its origin to the generation of the plague bacilli in the soil owing to natural causes which first affect, and cause death among, the rats which live underground,

mother and son. It was to refute these base charges against chastity and to cleanse them of the guilt attributed to them that the words had originally been used. It is from this point of view that tradition describes Mary and her son to have been free from the touch of Satan. The words have not been used of other prophets, because there is no such circumstance in their lives and no such impure charge imputed to any one of them.

and being then received into the human body multiply and cause mortality among men. They deny the existence of any spiritual element, and lay stress upon the improvement of external conditions and the efficacy of hygienic measures. They advise the removal of foul matters, the clearance of drains and their purification from poisonous germs by Phenyle and other disinfectant medicines, the warming and free ventilation of houses, prevention of overcrowding, healthy food and anti-plague inoculation. These are the preventive measures which medical experience regards as efficacious. To prevent the spread of the plague when its first signs have appeared, when rats are found dying in a house for instance, they would recommend the total evacuation of such villages and houses, the removal of the populace to open fields, and the burning or disinfection of dirty clothes. Restrictions are to be placed on the movements of the population of infected villages. The segregation of the sick and their isolation is also recommended as preventing the spread of the plague.

Such is the opinion of able and experienced medical men and no one can object to these measures as simply useless. But at the same time we do not consider these measures as permanently efficacious in checking the plague. That these measures are not sufficient and established beyond contest, has been clearly demonstrated by experience. That people have been attacked in segregation camps, that cleanliness has supplied no resistless barrier to the virulence of the plague and that in spite of inoculation, the greatest medical anti-plague safeguard, it has launched many into the grave, are facts only too well-known to those living in or about the centres of the plague. To trust to these measures alone for the complete extirpation of the plague is, therefore, a vain hope, and without objecting to the partial success obtained by these measures, we have to admit their insufficiency as permanent remedies or preventives.

Nor do we say that all these measures have produced no good effect at all, for wherever God wills, these measures have worked with a certain degree of success. But their fruitfulness is not at all satisfactory. Thus although it is true that the percentage of mortality among the inoculated is less than that among the uninoculated, yet inoculation does not take a man quite out of danger and the effect of inoculation extends only to two, or at the utmost to three, months. Inoculation

therefore is not a true safeguard against plague, though it may do some good in certain cases. The truth is that the man who does not get inoculated travels to the shores of immortality on a swift horse which would carry him to the end of his journey in twenty-four hours, while the inoculated person rides on a slow pony which may take, at the most, twenty-four days instead of twenty-four hours. In short, it is foolish to condemn the medical measures as useless on the one hand, and equally so to regard them as perfectly efficacious on the other. Under these circumstances we are bound to search for some other impregnable barrier against this destructive flood.

The various religious sects are not silent upon this subject. The Muhammadans suggest, as appears from a handbill issued by the Secretary of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, Lahore, that all the Muhammadan schisms, in every town and village, should gather together on a certain date at a certain hour of the day, and forgetting their sectarian differences for a moment, should all together pray to God to take away this affliction. This measure, it is asserted, shall afford an instantaneous relief from this visitation. The publisher of the hand-bill, however, makes no suggestions as to the manner in which the sectarian differences can be removed and prayers said together by the various Muslim sects, for there are essential differences among them which, according to one sect, render void the prayers of the other. We are not, moreover, told what the Hindus are to do at this time of general affliction. Are they too allowed to seek the assistance of their idols? Should the Christians worship and beseech Jesus Christ to save them from this destruction? We ought also to have been informed as to the course which those sects should take which look upon Ali or Husain as their deliverer and the supplier of all their needs or which worship Syed Abdul Qadir Jilani, or Shah Madar or Sakhi Sarwar. All these sects call themselves Muhammadans, but in the above-mentioned announcement no directions are contained for them and we are not told whether, being Muhammadans, they should, or should not, call upon their own gods for assistance. We may also ask another question from the advertisers of this general prayer at a fixed hour whether all their various sects are not now, frightened and terror-stricken, engaged in prayers and supplications to their idols and gods. Walking into a ward of the Shias, one would find every door witnessing the truth of this couplet :

“ I have five saints with whose names I extinguish the fire of the burning plague, *viz.*, Mustafa (*i. e.*, the Holy Prophet), Murtaza (*i. e.*, Ali), Fatima and their two sons (*i. e.*, Hassan and Husain).”

My tutor, a learned Shia, used to say that the only remedy for plague is *تولا* and *تبری* *i. e.*, excessive love, bordering upon worship, of the Imam of the house of Ali, and excessive hatred, displayed in abuses and imprecations, of the other companions of the Holy Prophet. This is the Shia amulet for the plague. It is also said that the first appearance of the plague in Bombay was looked upon as a miracle of Imam Husain, for its first victims were the Hindus who happened to have had a quarrel with the Shias. But when it levelled its attacks against the votaries of their idol, the cries of “ Husain ” began to die away.

Passing on to the Christian religious view of the plague, we notice a hand-bill issued by Revd. H. M. Weitbrecht as expressing the views of a Christian Religious Society. It also suggests a remedy for the extirpation of the plague which it regards as the only true safeguard, all others being merely useless. Our intelligent readers might have guessed it. It consists in taking the man Jesus for God and believing in the efficacy of his blood.

The Arya sect of Hinduism lays stress on the point that this Divine visitation in wrath is owing to people having given up the Vedas. All men should believe, the Aryas assert, in the truth of the Hindu scriptures and look upon all the righteous prophets of God as impostors, and then the plague is sure to vanish.

All these views could have been easily guessed by an intelligent person, but the most wonderful proposal comes from the Sanatan Dharm quarter of the Hindu religion. But for the organ of conservative Hinduism, the *Akhbar-i-Am*, this valuable mystery could never have been revealed to the world. The plague, we are told, is in consequence of the suffering of cow, and the only measure which can ensure its extirpation is a prohibition against cow-slaughter. The same newspaper goes on to assure the public that a person heard a cow speaking that all this evil and affliction which distressed the country was on its account.

However superstitious this last statement may appear, all of them are equal in one respect, viz., that they are all assertions without any arguments to establish their truth, each the belief of a different religious sect, and therefore not acceptable to the public at large. If at this critical hour a person were required to sit as a judge over all these various beliefs, he would probably himself pass away before he could pass a judgment over the truth of anyone of them. This is not the time for the solution of the intricate problems of belief but we need some decisive measure, more easily comprehensible, and accompanied with evidence of the clearest and most conclusive type. It is with this object that I now appear before the public.

Four years ago I published a prophecy that the Punjab was about to be visited with severe plague. I then wrote that I had seen in a vision black trees of plague planted in the villages and towns of this province, but that if people repented, the disease would have run its course in two winters only. Vulgar abuses and denunciations were, however, hurled at my head in response to this call of warning, and the result is the destructive state of the plague in the Punjab as witnessed to-day. God revealed to me His Word, then, saying: ان الله لا يغير ما بقوم حتى يغيروا ما با أنفسهم انه اوى القرية "Almighty God has willed that He shall not take away His visitation which He has brought down upon the people in wrath until the people change their own condition with respect to their behaviour towards the apostle of God, and He, the All-powerful one, shall protect* the

*The word اوى occurring in the revelation quoted above signifies the "affording of protection from a general dispersion and destruction and taking in one's own shelter." The word has here been used, in fact, in reference to the highly destructive form of plague known as the "Ta'un-i-Jarif" or the destructive plague which sweeps away whole villages and towns in its onslaughts. This frightening epidemic depopulates whole towns, one part falling victim to its attacks, and the other flying away from the terror of its name. On account of its fearful severity and destruction it causes a panic in the country. *The revelation therefore promises a protection against such destruction.* This is made clearer by the words of another revelation لو الا كرام لهلك المقام "Had it not been for the regard in which this propaganda is held by God, Qadian should have been laid waste with destructive plague." This revelation establishes two things: (1) It is not against the plain interpretation of the words of the revelation that rare cases of plague may occur in Qadian without causing any destruction or evacuation of the village. (2) It is necessary that, in exact contrast with Qadian, places which in comparison with Qadian, are the abodes of more refractory, wicked, atrocious and corrupt persons and of the bitterest

village of Qadian from the destruction of plague," so that there may be a sign that Qadian was saved out of respect for the messenger of God who was there. The truth of this prophecy has already been made clear. While, on the one hand, plague has widely spread in the Punjab and rages severely in numerous towns and villages in the province, being in the fifth year of its life here, we witness, on the other, that Qadian is up to this moment quite free from the epidemic, in spite of the fact that it has appeared in villages situated at not more than two miles from it. It also deserves to be mentioned that certain persons who were sick with plague were brought in here from infected villages and they all escaped death. What stronger proof than this could be demanded that what had been said four years since is being fulfilled to-day. The appearance of the plague in the Punjab had been foretold in the Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya more than twenty-two years ago. To reveal such deep secrets of the future could not be within the power of a mortal. The message which Almighty God has now given to me as to the means which can cause the plague to disappear from the country, is that people should believe in me with a sincere heart as the Promised Messiah. Had my assertion not been accompanied with adequate proof like the assertions of other religious leaders, I would have been an idle-talker like them. But I told you of what was to happen before there was any sign of the thing, and what I said ere now has been fulfilled to-day. Almighty God has again revealed to me His word, saying :

ما كان اللد ليعذبهم وان انت فيهم انه اوى القرينهم . لولا الاكرام لهلك المقام .
 انى انا الرحمن دافع الاذى . انى لا يخاف لدى المرسلون .
 انى حفيظ . انى مع الرسول اقوم . والوم . من يلوم . افطروا صوم
 غضبت غضبا شديدا . الامراض تشاع . والنفوس تضاع . الا الذين
 امنوا ولم يلبسوا ايمانا بهم بظلم اولئكم امن وهم مهتدون . فان اتى

enemies and unrelenting persecutors of this propaganda, shall be visited by destructive plague, and deserted by the people who shall take to flight in all directions. We therefore, assert that Qadian shall never be visited by *Ta'un-i-Jarif* or destructive plague which depopulates inhabited places and eats away the inhabitants, and that other towns and villages, the abodes of iniquitous and turbulent spirits, shall be the frightful scenes of destructive plague in comparison with Qadian. This is the only place in the whole world for which Almighty God has promised this protection. All praise is due to Him for this favor.

الارض ننقصها من اطرافها . انى اجهز الجيش فاصبحوا فى دارهم
 جا ثمين . سنريهم ايا تذا فى الافاق وفى انفسهم نصر من الله وفتح مبين .
 انى بايعتك بايعنى ربى . انت عنى بمنزلة اولادى . انت منى وانا
 منك . عسى ان يبعثك ربك مقاماً محموداً . الفوق معك والتحت مع
 اعداءك فاصبرحتى ياتى الله بامرءه . ياتى على جهنم زمان ليس
 فيها احد " God is not going to punish them (*i.e.*, the people of Qadian) with severe tortures whilst thou art among them. Verily He shall protect this village from the virulence and destruction of the plague. Had it not been for the regard and esteem in which you are held, I should have destroyed this village. I am the Merciful who remove the afflictions. Verily, my messengers shall have no fear or anxiety before me ; I am their protector. I shall stand by my Messenger and reproach the man who chides him ; I shall break the fast and keep it (*i.e.*, for a certain portion of the year, I shall destroy people with the plague and for another portion let them live in peace). My wrath has been kindled, diseases shall prevail and lives shall be destroyed. But those who believe, and their belief has no defect in it, shall live in peace and be delivered from all afflictions. Do not think that the criminals are quite safe, we are coming nearer and nearer to their residence. I am preparing my armies, *i.e.*, am multiplying the plague bacilli. The people shall be found lifeless in their houses like so many dead camels. We shall show them our signs first in distant parts and then among themselves. Those shall be the days of the assistance and victory of God. I have made a contract of exchange with thee, *i.e.*, something which was thine has been transferred to my ownership and something which was mine I have made over to thee ; do thou also say ' God has made a contract of exchange with me.' Thou art to me as a son.* Thou art

* It should be clearly borne in mind that God is free from having sons. He has neither an equal nor a son. No one has the right to call himself God or the Son of God. The relationship of Son towards God is, therefore, a metaphorical expression. In the Holy Quran, Almighty styles the hand of the Prophet as His own hand saying "يد الله فوق ايديهم" "The hand which is above their hands is the hand of God ;" and again addressing the Prophet says : "قل يا عبادى" "Say, O my servants" instead of "قل يا عباد الله" "Say, O the servants of God" ; and elsewhere we read also "فاذكروا الله كذكريم اباكم" "And remember God like your fathers." Do not stumble therefore at such metaphorical expressions and be careful when you construe them. Believe in the words as they have been revealed without seeking the "why and wherefore" of them. The clear words of my revelation which refute the idea of any one being

from me and I from thee. The time is coming when I shall exalt thee to such a high position that the world shall praise thee. Success is with thee and failure with thine enemies. Wait patiently until the promised day arrives. Time shall come when plague shall wholly die away and no one shall suffer from it, *i.e.*, at last there will be peace and safety.”*

This revelation establishes three things :—

(1). It states that the plague has made its appearance, because the promised Messiah was not only rejected but also abused and persecuted. Plans were formed against his life and he was called an unbeliever and Antichrist. But God did not desire to leave His messenger unsupported. He, therefore, made heaven and earth the witnesses of his cause. Heaven gave the evidence of the truth of his claim by the eclipses of the sun and the moon in the month of Bamzan, and the earth gave similar evidence by bringing forth plague, so that the Word of God may be fulfilled which said : *قل عندى شهادة من الله فهل انتم تسمعون* “ I have an evidence from God, will you therefore believe? I have another evidence from God; will you therefore submit?” The

actually the son of God are as follows : *قل انما انا بشر مثلكم يوحى الى انما* “ Say : I am a man (*الاحمد يه*) *(البراهين)* like yourselves, and it has been revealed to me from the Most High that your God is God alone, and everything good is contained in the Quran.”

* Long ago, Almighty God had told me of the plague in the words in which a third person is supposed to be the speaker *يا مسيح الخلق عد وانا* and on the 21st April 1901 the word of God was again revealed to me *يا مسيح الخلق عد وانا لن ترى من بعد* “ O, thou Messiah of God who hast been sent to the world, hasten *نا وفسادنا* for our assistance and intercede for our protection with God; thou shalt not see hereafter any wickedness or disturbance from us (*i.e.*, we shall be plain and candid in future and shall not abuse thee).” In accordance with this, there is also another revelation “ *كذالك مننا على يوسف لنصرف عنه السوء واللفحشاء* we shall bestow a favor upon this Joseph, *viz.*, that people shall not abuse him because of the terror of plague.” Relating to these days is also the revelation of God in which the earth is made to say addressing me : *يا ولى الله كنت لاعرفك* “ O, thou Saint of God, I did not recognise thee before this time.” The earth was, in a vision, brought before me and it addressed me in the words quoted above, meaning that it did not recognise me as being the sanctified one of the Merciful.

first evidence is the evidence of heaven as is evident from the use of the expression (will you believe ?) which implies no force. The second evidence is that of the earth which has brought forth plague; and in this case people are required to submit (not believe as before), because there is a sort of compulsion caused by the terror of the plague which makes them submit to God.

(2) The revelation asserts in the second place that the plague shall only abate, in case the people accept the messenger of God, or, at the least, do him no violence, harm or mischief. In other revelations of earlier date than that of the Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya and published in that book. Almighty God says that He shall send plague upon earth in order to check the mischievous and wicked people who vilified His holy messenger. The truth is that a mere denial of the apostles of God does not bring down punishment in the present life. Anyone who denies the mission of an apostle, yet keeps within due bounds of respect and decency, shall find his punishment in the next world. Death and destruction sent upon a people on a rejection of the prophets was ever the result of their excesses, abuses and persecutions directed towards the prophets that were sent to them. If people even now hold their tongues, refrain from the mischief, oppression and injustice, they have been doing to the Messiah of God, and repent of all these ways of wickedness, the afflictions too shall be averted. Thus plague is a warning from God, and on this occasion many capable hearts shall turn to truth, accept the messenger of God and receive the Divine blessings. Thus shall the earth be filled up with good and virtuous men.

(3). Lastly, the Revelation establishes that however long the period of the plague may be, Qadian shall ever be safe from the destruction and havoc which it works in other towns and villages, for it is the seat of God's holy messenger. This is a sign for all nations of the earth,

Now if there is anyone who rejects the messenger of God or denies the supernaturalness of this sign, and thinks that formal prayers or the worship of the son of Mary or reverence for cow or a belief in the Vedas, can avert this evil, despite the enmity, opposition and disobedience of this messenger, he must furnish like proof of his assertions. It is no doubt the time to judge the truth of every religion and every

claimant has the opportunity to offer proof of the Divine favor he enjoys. It seems as if Almighty God had appointed this day as the day of final triumph for the true religion, and brought about this grand exhibition for every religion to display its truth or falsehood before all the world. In this grand arena a champion has already appeared to challenge others, and Almighty God has named Qadian as the seat of His chosen one which He shall, for His messenger's sake, protect from the destruction of plague. If the Aryas believe in the truth of the Vedas, they should prophesy that the plague shall find no access to Benares, the birth-place of the Vedas, and the most ancient seminary for the instruction of students in Vedic lore. The conservative Hindu party, the Sanatan Dharm section of the Hindu religion, should also name some city where cows are found in large numbers and particularly revered, Amritsar for instance, as enjoying a similar protection out of regard for the cow. If this revered animal is willing to show some such supernatural miracle, Government, we think, shall gladly prohibit its slaughter. The Christian should also come forward and name, for instance, Calcutta, which enjoys the favor of being the seat of the great Lord Bishop and as such the great representative of Jesus Christ, and inform the world that out of respect for his great representative, Jesus shall save that city from the ruin of plague. The Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam of Lahore should also, with the aid of some inspired residents of Lahore, such as Munshi Ilahi Bukhsh, Accountant, P.W.D., publish a similar prophecy relating to the grant of a similar protection to Lahore. This is also the time for Abdul Haqq and Abdul Jabbar to stand forth as the inspired champions of the city of Amritsar, their place of residence. Shamsul-Ulama Nazir Husain and his disciple, Muhammad Husain of Batala, the leaders of the Wahabi sect, shall not, we hope, lag behind in securing such protection for Delhi, the birth-place of Wahabism. If all these religious leaders take these steps, there is no doubt they shall relieve the country of great afflictions and the Government of heavy responsibilities. But if they do not come forward now and bring their religions to the test of this great touchstone, it shall be clear and unquestionable that the true and Living God is only He who has sent His messenger at Qadian.

It should also be borne in mind that if all these men, includ-

ing the inspired leaders of the Muhammadans, the Hindu Pandits and the Christian Missionaries, make no answer to this call and assume a conspiracy of silence, no other argument shall be needed to prove the falsity of the principles which they teach against this messenger of God. The day is fast approaching when Qadian shall shine out like the noontide sun from among all villages and towns and prove to the world that it is the habitation of a righteous servant of God. Last of all, the Secretary of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, Lahore, who thinks that God will hear their prayers because they are afflicted, is in manifest error as to the applicability of the verse *من يجيب المضطر اذا دعاه* i. e., "He is the God who hears the afflicted," because the afflicted spoken of in this verse are those afflicted by way of trial and not by way of punishment. Had the case been as he deems, the people of Noah, of Lot and Pharoah would all have escaped the afflictions with which God punished their transgressions against His messengers. The verse applicable to their case is found elsewhere in the Holy Quran and runs thus: *وما دعاء الكافرين الا في ضلال* "And the supplications of the rejectors of the messenger of God are useless."

To clear all doubts upon this point, I take the liberty of repeating the real object of this announcement. The message which I bear to my countrymen is, that the plague which now prevails in this land is due to no other cause than the persistent rejection, accompanied with abuses, persecutions, *fatwas* of heresy, and threats of murder, of the Promised Messiah, who has made his appearance in the seventh thousand after Adam, in accordance with the prophetic utterances of the former prophets. The jealousy of God has therefore come into motion for His messenger and He has sent down His warning upon the people for their mischiefs and insolence. Almighty God had also made it known in the sacred writings that in the days of the appearance of the Promised Messiah, severe plague shall rage in the country on account of his denial. The appearance of the plague was, therefore, inevitable. The name *T'a'oon* given to this plague throws light upon its real cause. *T'a'oon* is derived from *T'a'n*, which means to revile and the word therefore literally means a great reviler. The plague is called *T'a'oon*, inasmuch as it is the punishment of those who revile the Prophets of God, thus being an answer to their calumnies. The Israelites used to be infected with it

whenever they calumniated their prophets. The intensity found in the meaning of the word *Ta'oon*, as stated above, indicates that it does not overtake people at an early stage of calumny but only when the heavenly messenger is abused and persecuted intolerably and when the slanderers exceed all limits. Therefore nothing but an acceptance of the messenger of heaven can check it in its onward march. My message to my countrymen is that if they have a mind to be delivered from the sore distresses which afflict them, they should accept the Messiah with a sincere heart. This is a sure and certain remedy. An inferior remedy is that people should at least refrain from rejecting and abusing him, and that their hearts should be impressed with his greatness and dignity. I say it truly that the time shall come when people shall fly to me with the cry of **يا عيسى** (يا خلق عدونا) These words are a revelation from God and mean: "O thou who hast been sent as a Messiah to the world, intercede with the Lord that He may save us from this destructive epidemic."

These are not the vain words of a boaster and should be taken seriously. Believe it that save this Messiah, no one can now intercede for you with God. Yes, there is another intercessor too, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, but this Messiah, your intercessor for the present, is one with that Holy Prophet, and his intercession is really that of the great Prophet whose follower he is. Ye Christian Missionaries! say no more that Christ is your God, for there is one among you who is greater than Christ. Ye Shias! do not take Husain for your redeemer, for I say to you truly that there is one among you who is greater than Husain. If I say these things from myself, truly I am a liar, but if I have the witness of God in support of what I say, beware that you do not resist God, perchance you may not be counted among those who fight with God. It is high time that you should fly to me for I afford you shelter. He who in this time of trouble flies to me, is like the person who takes shelter in a ship when a severe storm rages in the sea, but he who does not come to me even now is throwing himself quite unguarded into a stormy sea. I am the real intercessor of mankind, because I am the perfect image of the great intercessor who was born thirteen centuries ago and rejected by the blind men of his time. With one word has Almighty

God taken His revenge upon the Christian Missionaries who made the son of Mary their God, abused the Holy Prophet, the true and noble intercessor of mankind, and defiled the earth by vilifying his sacred name, He has raised the Promised Messiah from among the followers of the Prophet as against the first Messiah who was wrongly called a God, and to this Messiah, He has given a glory and dignity for surpassing that of the first Messiah. Moreover, He has named this Messiah *Ghulam Ahmad, i. e.*, the servant of Ahmad, to indicate the weakness of the Christian Deity who cannot come up to even a servant of the Holy Prophet Ahmad. In nearness to God and intercession, the Messiah who has been made a God, is far inferior to the *servant of Ahmad*.

Let no one get excited at these statements, for these, are not mere assertions but facts based upon sure and certain evidence. If there is anyone who is not willing to admit the superiority of this Messiah, the servant of Ahmad, over his first namesake and who still persists that Jesus only is the real intercessor and deliverer of mankind, he must bring forth some proof in support of his assertions. To the *servant of Ahmad*, God has given His sacred promise in His own words " *انه اوى القرية - لولا الاكرام لهلك المقام* " God has protected the village of Qadian from destructive plague, and has done this to manifest the honour of this intercessor." The truth of this revelation has already been made manifest to a certain extent, for, for more than five years, since the plague has gained a footing in the Punjab, Qadian has been free from infection. Almighty God has also said that " had it not been for the honour and glory of this servant of Ahmad, this village also would have been destroyed by severe plague." Let those who still look upon the son of Mary as the intercessor and deliverer of mankind, name some city or village of the Punjab (Batala or Narowal, for instance), and declare that it shall remain safe against the destruction of plague for the honour and glory of Jesus' name and because of his intercession with the Lord. If they cannot do this, let them consider with a cool mind that he who cannot intercede in this world can do nought in the next.