

OUR TEACHING

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Our Teaching is the English translation of a portion of the Urdu book *Kishti-e-Nuh (Noah's Ark)* published in 1902 and written by *Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad* of Qadian, India.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad claimed that he was the *Promised Messiah* and *Mahdi*, whose advent had been foretold by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). His mission was to revive the original and pristine teachings of Islam as enunciated in the Holy Qur'an and as explained by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Hadith. *Our Teaching*, therefore, contains nothing but a gist of the teachings from the above two sources.

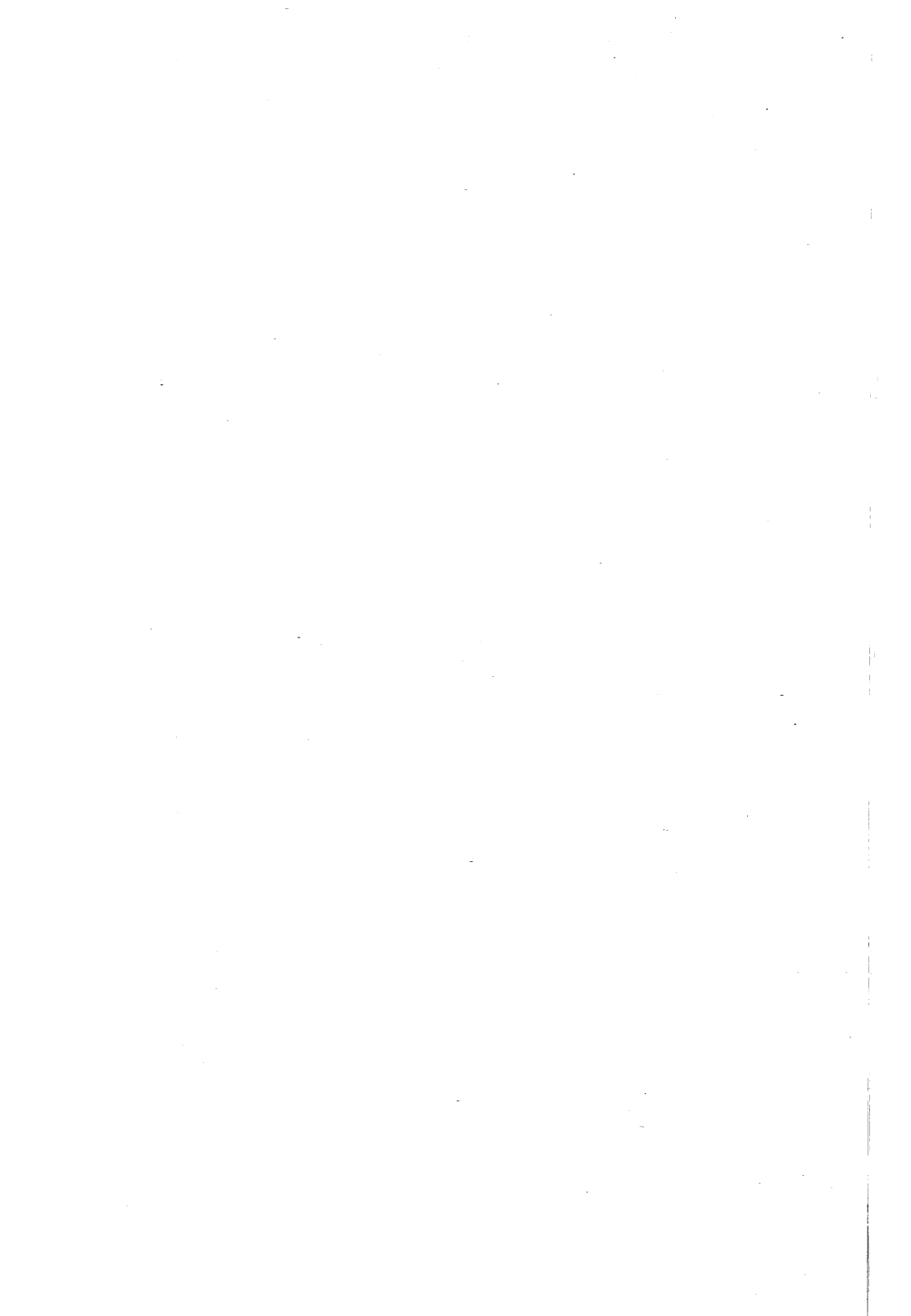
Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founded the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at*, in 1889, under express divine guidance, for the renaissance of Islam. He invited Muslims in particular and all members of the human race in general, to join it, stating that this was the path of salvation. That is why he entitled the complete book *Noah's Ark*, meaning that those who wanted to be saved from the deluge of irreligion and materialism, should enter into the fold of the Community.

Our Teaching was addressed primarily to members of the Community for their moral and spiritual education. Its contents, however, is so soul-inspiring that every soul in search of spiritual upliftment can derive benefit from it.

We wish to point out that one chapter, entitled *Our Beliefs*, has been added to the original booklet. This is an extract from *Invitation to Ahmadiyyat*, written by *Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad*, Second Successor to the Promised Messiah.

Since its original publication, *Our Teaching* has been translated in various languages of the world and has gone through many editions. The present edition is being presented by *Islam International Publications Ltd.*

THE PUBLISHER



FOREWORD

This is a time when the darkness of materialism has overspread the entire face of the earth and obscured people's vision. Many there are who profess faith but are deprived of its true sweetness and strength. They are unaware of the One Living, Omnipresent God. For the benefit of seekers after truth, therefore, I present an abridged version of the teaching of the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement as laid down in his book *Kashti-Nuh* (lit. Noah's Ark) which he wrote to save men from the current deluge of irreligion and materialism. This book was intended mainly for the members of the Ahmadiyya Community but Muslims in general have also been addressed in it. The book is a torch of guidance through which every Muslim, nay every man with a craving for truth and spirituality can rekindle his inner lamp and illuminate his heart.

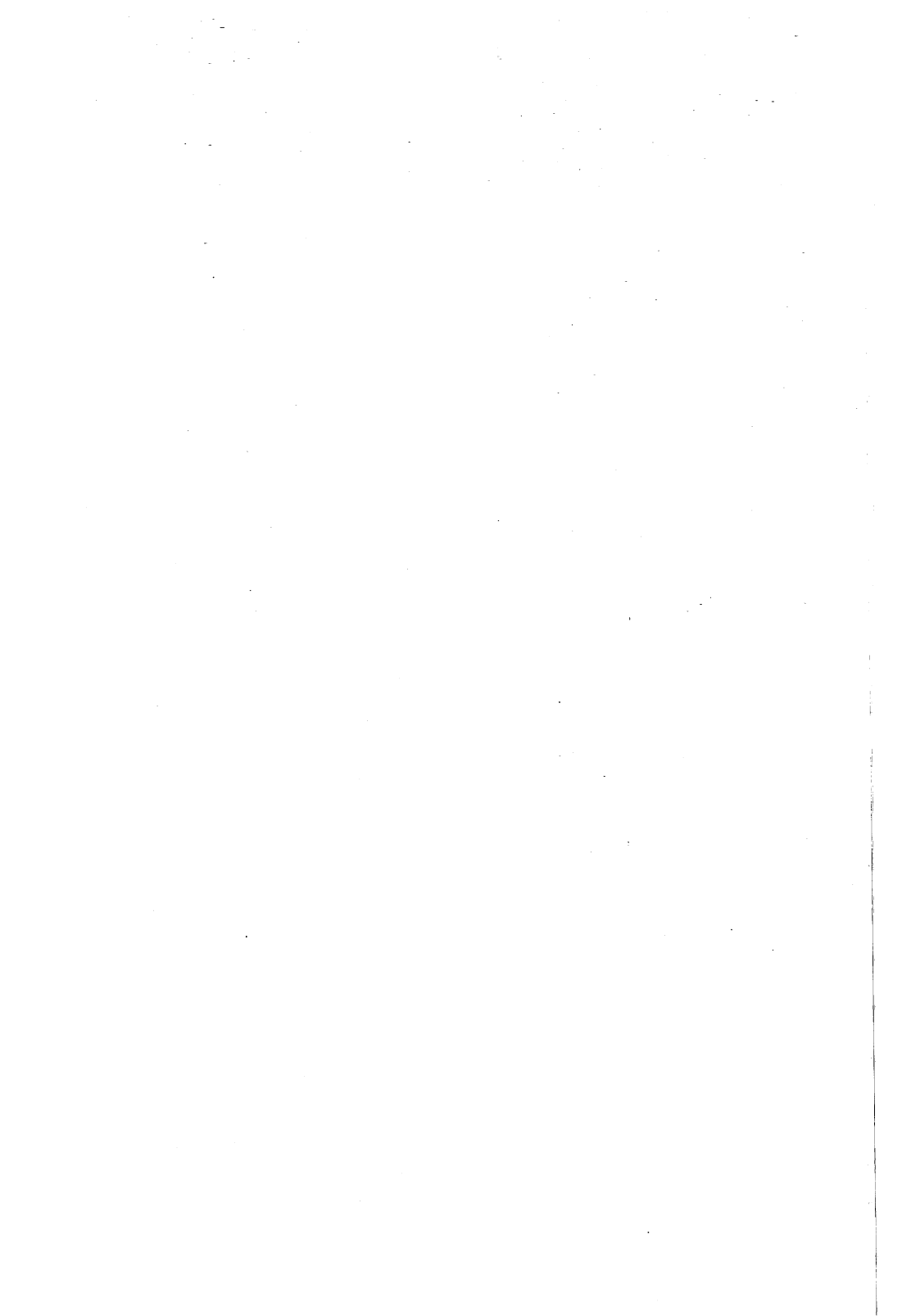
The present abridgement is an English rendering of the Founder's own sacred words and, therefore, is replete with all the blessings that descend from heaven on the heart of a holy person. Read it and be blest.

A list of words, mostly terms of Islamic theology, is added at the end with brief explanation which, I hope, will be of some facility to the foreign reader.

Mirza Bashir Ahmad

RABWAH

22nd of Sept. 1958.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

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Let it be absolutely clear that a mere verbal pledge has no value if it is not supported by a genuine and firm resolve to live up to it in every way. Therefore, whoever fully lives up to my teaching, he alone enters that house of mine with reference to which God Almighty has promised *أحافظ كل من في الدار* i.e., “I shall Myself protect all those who are in this house.” It should not, however, be understood here that this Divine protection is extended only to those living within the compass of my house made of mud and bricks: the pledge also encompasses those who follow my teaching to the fullest extent, and who, therefore, can truly be said to be the inmates of my spiritual home.

Relevant to a proper observance of my teaching it is essential that one should firmly believe that there is an all-Powerful, all-Sustaining Supreme Being, the Creator of everything, Changeless, Everlasting and Eternal. He does not beget, nor was He begotten. He is Holy, so that there is no need or occasion for Him to go on the Cross, or suffer in any way, or be subject to death. He is such that being far removed, He is still very near; and being very near, He is still very far. Although He is One, and absolutely unique, His manifestations are diverse and multifarious. Whenever there occurs in man a new change, for the changed man He becomes a new God, dealing with him on the basis of a fresh manifestation, the man witnessing a change in God in proportion to the change in himself – not that there occurs any change in God, He being Eternal, Changeless and

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most Perfect in Himself; but with every change in man for the better, God also reveals Himself to him in a fresh and clearer manifestation. With every progressive effort on the part of man God also shows Himself with higher and more powerful manifestation. He displays an extraordinary manifestation of His power and glory only, when man shows an extraordinary change in himself-this being the root and the bedrock basis of the marvels and miracles witnessed at the hands of all servants of God. Belief in this God, with these powers, is the foremost essential condition of our Movement. Inculcate this belief in your hearts, giving to its implications and requirements the first and top most priority over all considerations of self, over its comforts and relationships. By means of actions in the field of your daily life, with unflinching courage, show a steadfast loyalty in His way. Others in this world do not give Him preference over material means and the support they hope to get from their friends and relations. But do you give him the first place, so that in heaven you should come to be reckoned His people.

To show signs of grace is the eternal way of God. But you can partake of this blessing only when there remains no difference and no distance between Him and you; only when all your wishes, hopes and desires merge into His will; only when at all times, in success or failure, in hope or disappointment, you remain in humble prostration at His door, so that He should do with you what He will. If you act like this, in you would appear that God, Who for a long time has kept His face concealed from the world. Is there any among you, then, who would act upon this teaching, seeking only His pleasure, without the slightest sense of dissatisfaction against the way His will works? Even in distress you should put your best foot forward, for this is the secret of your success; and you should strive to the utmost of your power to spread the idea of His singleness and unity all over the earth. Be kind and merciful to humanity, for all are His creatures: do not oppress them with your tongue, or hands, or in any other way. Always work for the good of mankind.

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Never unduly assert yourselves with pride over others, even those who are placed under you. Never use abusive language for anyone, even though he abuse you. Be humble in spirit, kind and gentle, and forgiving, sympathetic towards all and wishing **them** well, so that you should be accepted. There are many who **pretend** to be kind, gentle and forgiving, but inside they are **wolves**; there are many on the outside who look pure, but in **their** hearts they are serpents. You cannot be accepted in the presence of the Lord unless you are pure, both on the outside **and** inside. If you are big, have mercy for those who are small – not contempt; if you are wise and well versed in learning serve the ignorant with words of wisdom: never desire to bring disgrace on their ignorance by trying to show off your own learning. If you are rich, instead of treating them with self-centered disdainful pride, you should serve the poor. Beware of the paths of destruction. Fear the Lord, be righteous, do not fall in worship before the creation of God. Turn wholly and solely to Him, so that you lose interest in this world. Become entirely His, living wholly for His will and pleasure, for His sweet sake, hating everything impure and sinful; for indeed He is Holy. Every morning should be a witness for you that you spent the night with righteousness, and every evening should be a witness for you that you went through the day with the fear of God in your heart.

Do not fear the curses the world might heap on you for they melt in the air like smoke, they cannot turn day into night. What you should be afraid of is the curse that comes from God, which totally uproots from both the worlds, those on whom it falls. You cannot save yourselves with hypocrisy and pretence, because thy God Who is your Lord can see to the inner-most depths of your being. How, then, can you hope to deceive Him? Therefore strengthen yourself and cleanse yourself to become pure and precious without a particle of dross anywhere in your being, for if there be any such, it will take away your light. And if in any corner of your heart there be pride, empty pretence, hypocrisy, vanity, love of self, or laziness of disposition, you do

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not amount to anything acceptable in the sight of the Lord. Take care that on the basis of a thing or two, which you think you have accomplished, you do not fall into the delusion that you have done all that needed to be done; for God desires that your entire life, your whole being, should undergo a deep and thorough revolution. Indeed He demands from you that you accept a death, after which He would give you another life. Immediately compose all your differences and make peace among yourselves: forgive the transgressions of your brothers for indeed he is evil who is not willing to make peace with his brother. He would be cut off for he tries to create disruption. Leave off vanity and emphasis on self and all mutual resentments, all unpleasantness. Though truthful and justified in your stand, be humble in your demeanour as though you were in the wrong, so that you yourself should be treated with forgiveness. Leave off everything which fattens your vanity, for the door you have been invited to enter is not one that would admit a fat person.

How unfortunate is the man who fails to yield belief to things, coming from the mouth of God, which I have stated to you. If at all you desire that God in heaven be pleased with you, hasten to become one among yourselves, as though you were brothers born of the same mother. Only he is most honoured among you who most forgives the transgressions of his brother; and unfortunate is he who remains obdurate, and does not forgive. He is not part of me and he has no share with me. Remain in great fear of the curse of God, for He is holy, intensely jealous and particular in His holiness. An evil-doer cannot win nearness to Him. No one who is proud can win His nearness, nor the oppressor and unjust, nor one who is dishonest, nor anyone who is not jealous for His name. Those who fall on worldly benefits like dogs, or ants, or vultures falling blindly on carrion, those who have only sought comfort in life; they cannot win nearness to Him; Every impure eye remains far removed from Him; every impure heart remains unaware of Him. For Him whoever lives in fire, shall be saved from the flames; he who weeps for His sake shall be made happy, full of laughter and jubilation. He

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who breaks away from this world for His sake, shall find Him. With the deepest sincerity of heart, with a steadfast strength and become the friends of God, so that He too should become your friend. Show mercy to your subordinates, be kind to your spouses and to your brethren who are poor, so that in heaven you too be received with mercy. You really and truly become His, so that He too should be yours. This world is a place of thousands of evils, tribulations and trials: in all sincerity and steadfastness of heart catch hold of God, so that He keep these evils, tribulations and trials away from you. No evil and no distress takes its birth on this earth without a decree from Heaven to that effect; and no distress is lifted until mercy descend from Heaven. Therefore wisdom on your part lies in this that you take firm hold of the root, without worrying about the branches. It is not forbidden unto you to have recourse to remedies or plan with human endeavour: what is forbidden is that you place your entire reliance on them. In all circumstances it is God's will that will be done, and for one who has the power to take his stand on this point, the position of faith in and reliance on God is the best of all positions.

Those who do honour to the Holy Quran shall be honoured in heaven. For you another very essential teaching is this that you do not leave the Holy Quran like a book that has been forsaken, since it is therein, and nowhere else, that your life lies. Those who do honour to this Holy Book shall be honoured in heaven. Those who will hold the Holy Quran superior to every tradition and every other saying shall be given preference in heaven. For mankind now, all over the surface of the earth, there is no Book except the Holy Quran: for the sons of man there is no Messenger and no Mediator except Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him. So strive that you cherish the purest love for this Prophet of power and glory, giving no one else any kind of preference over him, so that you be put down in heaven as those who have been saved. And very clearly bear in mind that salvation is not something that you will experience in the life after death. The real and true salvation is

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only that which shows its light in this very life. Who is the saved? Only he who maintains a firm faith that the living God is a reality, and that Muhammad, peace and the blessings of God be upon him, is the Mediator between Him and mankind; that under the skies there is no one equal to him in rank and elevation: nor any book to rival the Holy Quran: that for no one else did God wish that he should live for ever, but for this blessed Prophet He did so wish: that to keep him alive forever He laid the foundation for continuing the benefit of his *Shariah* and his spiritual blessings to the day of Resurrection. And at long last, from the flow of his spiritual benefits for mankind, he sent the Promised Messiah to this world whose advent was indispensable for the completion of the structure of Islam. For it was necessary that this world should not come to an end before the Movement of Muhammad was given the colour of a spiritual Messiah, the same as was given to the Movement of Moses. This is what the following verse of the Holy Quran points to, namely:

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

Moses received the treasure which had been lost by the earlier ages, and Muhammad received the treasure which the Movement of Moses had been unfortunate enough to lose. Now the Movement of Muhammad stands in the place of the Movement of Moses, but such that in grandeur, the like of Moses, exceeds him a thousand times, while the like of the Messiah in the Movement of Muhammad excels Jesus by a thousand measures. And not only did the Promised Messiah of the Muhammadi Movement come, in terms of time, exactly in the fourteenth century after the Holy Prophet, as Jesus had appeared fourteen centuries after Moses, he also came at a time when the condition of the Muslims of the day was identical with the Jews of the time of Jesus. Therefore I am that Promised Messiah, and no one else. Whoever enters into sincere *bai'at* with me and becomes my follower from the bottom of his heart, as to be engrossed in his obedience to me as to forsake all his own personal aims and intentions, he alone is the one for whom in these days of great distress my soul shall desire to intercede.

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So all ye people, counted as members of my community!
In heaven you shall be counted members of my following only when in all truth you actually begin to advance on the paths of righteousness. Offer your five daily obligatory prayers with such concentration and awe of mind as though you were seeing God in front of you, with your physical eyes. Observe the days of fasting for the sake of God in full sincerity. All among you who are liable for Zakat should never fail to discharge this important obligation; and those on whom the pilgrimage to Mecca has become obligatory, without any obstacles standing in the way, should duly undertake that blessed journey. Do all good deeds with the proper care they deserve, forsaking evil from a real repulsion rising in the heart. Be very, very sure that no action, whatsoever, can take you to God if it is devoid of righteousness of the heart. The root of everything good is *Taqwah*, (fear of God) in whatever action this root is not lost, that action will never be devoid or futile. It is necessary too, that you be tried by being thrown into diverse griefs and distresses, even as those before you were tried. Be, therefore, forewarned lest you stumble when the time came. The earth, with everything in it, can inflict no injury on you, provided your contact with heaven is firm. Whenever any injury comes to you, it will come only from your own hands. If all your honour on this earth is lost to you, God will give you an honour in heaven that shall never wane. Therefore do not leave Him, whatever you may have to go through. You are bound to be persecuted in diverse ways, and many of your hopes will be denied to you, but in such cases you should not grieve, for the Lord your God shall put you through trials, to test whether or not you remain firm. If you desire that the angels in heaven should sing your praises, then take the beating many people shall give you, and rejoice; hear abuse and give thanks to the Lord; experience disappointments but do not break away from Him. You are the last people of God. Practise the good to an extent where it reaches its highest perfection. Everyone among you who relaxes and becomes lazy, shall be thrown out of the community, as a dirty thing is discarded and

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thrown out. He shall die with regret in his heart, and he will not be able to injure God in any way. Lo and behold! With great joy I convey to you the glad tidings that your God does indeed really exist. Although all are His creatures, but He selects only those who select Him. He Himself comes to whosoever goes to Him. He bestows honour upon those who honour Him. After you have straightened your hearts, and purified your tongues and eyes and ears, you come to Him, and He shall accept you.

In point of belief, all that God desires from you is just this that you hold God is One, and that Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, is His Prophet, *Khatam-al-Anbiya* the greatest of them all. After him there is to be no other Prophet except one who should be given the mantle of *Muhammadiyyat* as a *buurooz*, since the servant is not separate from his master, nor a branch different from its root. Be perfectly sure that Jesus, son of Mary, is dead, his grave being in Kashmir, Srinagar, mohallah Khanyar. God has spoken of his death in the Holy Quran. It should also be borne in mind that I in no way seek to deny the eminence of Jesus, peace be upon him. Though God has conveyed to me that the Muhammadi Messiah stands higher in rank than the Mosaic Messiah, I hold the Messiah, son of Mary, in great respect, since from the spiritual point of view I am the *Khatamal Khulafa* in Islam as Messiah, the son of Mary was *Khatamal Khulafa* in the Israelite chain. In the Mosaic dispensation the son of Mary was the Promised Messiah, while I am the Promised Messiah of the dispensation of Muhammad. I therefore hold him in great esteem whose name I bear: and whoever says that I do not respect him is a great liar and a mischief-maker.

Who belongs to my community and who does not

Having explained all these things, I repeat once more that you must not rest satisfied merely because in outward form you have taken *bai'at* at my hand. The outward form means nothing: God sees what lies inside your hearts, and He would deal with you on the basis of what He sees there. Lo and behold! I herein

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discharge my duty unto you, by making it plain that sin is a poison. Do not take it. Disobedience to God is a dirty death which you should avoid. Turn to prayer that you should get the strength. At the time of prayer, if a man does not firmly believe that Allah has power over everything, except what may be contained in a previous promise, such a one is not of my community. He who is caught in a tangle of worldly greed, and never even raises his eyes to things which pertain to the next life, is not of my community. Whosoever does not wholly and completely keep away from every sin and every evil action, like wine, gambling, looking lustfully at women, dishonesty, bribes, and from every kind of illegal gratification, he is not of my community. Whosoever is not constantly turning to prayer, and does not remember Him in absolute humility of spirit, he is not of my community. Whosoever does not give up association with a bad companion, who exercises an unhealthy influence over him, he is not of my community. Whosoever does not respect his parents, whosoever does not render obedience to them in things which do not run counter to the Holy Quran, and whosoever is neglectful in rendering to them the service to which, they are undoubtedly entitled, he is not of my community. Whosoever does not live with his wife and her relations with gentleness, goodness, and magnanimity, he is not of my community. Whosoever deprives his neighbour of the very least good in his power, he is not of my community. Whosoever has no wish to forgive the faults of those who may have transgressed against him, and desires to nurse malice, he is not of my community. Every man or woman who is dishonest towards his or her spouse is not of my community. Whosoever, in any way, violates the pledge he took at my hand at the time of *bai'at* he is not of my community. Whosoever does not really hold me to be the Promised Messiah, he is not of my community. Whosoever is not prepared to obey me in all things known to be good and accepted, he is not of my community. And whosoever, as a habit, sits among those who are hostile towards me, falling into tacit and silent agreement with them, he is not of my community. Every adulterer, debauch,

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drunkard, murderer, thief, gambler, dishonest person, bribe-taker, usurper, oppressor, tyrant, liar, forger, and the associate of these; and whosoever brings false accusations and scandal against his brothers and sisters, he is not of my community, unless he fully repents of his misdeeds and totally breaks away from bad associates, turning a new leaf.

Indeed, all these things are poisons: you cannot partake of them and live, for light and darkness cannot exist together. Whosoever has a crooked nature and is not open and above board with God, he cannot partake of the blessing which comes to those pure of heart. Indeed very fortunate are they who cleanse their hearts, washing away all impurities, and who make a pledge of loyalty with their God, for they shall never come to nought. It is not possible that God should disgrace them, they being of God, and God of them. They shall be saved from all tribulations. Extremely foolish, indeed, is he who should try to harm them, for verily they are in the lap of God, Who is ever ready to support them. Who has yielded belief to God? Verily only those who are such as described above. Similarly he also is foolish who is anxious about a bold sinner, evil and full of mischief inside his heart, for he would himself be destroyed. From the day God created this heaven and earth, it has never happened that He destroyed those who were good. On the contrary for the sake of such as these He has always shown great marvels, and will show even now.

Our God possesses great and wonderful powers

Our God is a very loyal God, and for those who remain loyal to Him He shows wonderful works. The world wishes to tear them to pieces and to eat them up; and every enemy grinds his teeth on them; but He Who is their friend saves them from every danger, and brings them out triumphant on every field. How fortunaté, then, is he who does not let go his hold of such a God? To Him we render our faith, and Him we have recognised. Of all the world He alone is the God Who has sent down His revelation on me; Who, for me, has shown powerful signs; Who

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has sent me down as the Promised Messiah for this age. There is no God whatsoever except He, in heaven, nor on earth. Whosoever does not yield faith to Him, he remains deprived of the good, deprived of blessings, and deprived of succour. From our God we have received Revelation that shines like the sun. We have seen that He alone is the God of the whole world, and there is no other God. How powerful indeed is the God we have found, and how sustaining! And how great, how wonderful are the qualities of the God we have seen! The truth is that for Him there is nothing impossible, except what runs counter to His own Book and His own promise. Therefore when you pray to Him, you should not be like those ignorant naturalists who have formed a natural law of their own which does not bear the stamp of God, for they are the rejected ones whose prayers will never be accepted. They are blind, not gifted with vision; they are dead, not alive. They put before God a law shaped by themselves, and they put limitations of their own on His powers, holding Him weak and helpless beyond those limitations. Naturally, they would be dealt with in the light of their own condition.

But when thou standest up for prayer, it is incumbent on thee to hold that thy God has power over all things. Only then shall thy prayer be accepted, and thou shalt witness those marvels of the power of thy God which we have witnessed. And remember, our witness is not on the basis of hearsay; it is on the basis of things we have seen ourselves. How can the prayers of one be accepted who does not hold that God has power over all things? And how can such a person in himself have the courage to pray to God over matter where the desired remedy or change would involve an infringement of the laws of nature as he understands them. But O thou good person, thy God is He, Who, without any pillars underneath, has hung up the countless stars in space; and Who created the earth and the heavens absolutely from nought. Dost thou hold that in regard to thy need He will prove to be helpless? The fact is that thy own misconception will keep thee deprived of blessing. There are innumerable wonderful things in Our God, but these are witnessed only by those who

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become His in all sincerity and faithfulness. He does not reveal those wonders to those who do not have faith in His powers, and who are not faithful and true.

How unfortunate, indeed, is the man who does not even know that he has a God with power over all things! Our Paradise, indeed, is our God: our highest enjoyment is in God, for we have seen Him and all beauty found in Him. This treasure is worth having, even if at the cost of one's life; and this is a jewel which should be purchased even if obtainable only by sacrificing one's entire being. O ye that are devoid, run to this spring, for it will slaken your thirst. It is the spring of life that shall save ye. What am I to do, and how am I to impress this glad tiding upon your mind, with what drum should I go crying through the streets that This is your God, so that all should hear! And with what unguent am I to treat the people so that their ears open to hear!

God is the central beam of all our plans

If you really become God's, then rest assured that God is your very own. Whilst you will sleep, He will keep watch over you; while you neglect your vigil against the enemy, He will keep an eye on him and disrupt his plans. Even now you have no idea what wondrous powers your God has. If you had known, then no day could have dawned on you for you to grieve over for lack of things of this world. A man who has a treasure in his possession, does he weep and cry over the loss of a penny, as though he were about to perish? Had you been aware of this treasure that God would suffice for all your needs, what reason was there for you to be so wholly absorbed in things of this world? God is a most precious treasure; realise its proper value. Without Him you are nothing; neither you nor your material means and plans. Do not follow in the footsteps of other nations which have come to depend wholly on material means. As a snake eats earth, they subsist on the basis of the lower and inferior material means. Like vultures and dogs eating carrion, they too have sunk their teeth in a carcase. Indeed, they have drifted very far from God, having taken to the worship of human

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beings, the eating of swine's flesh, and the free use of wine as if it were harmless like water. Since they depend too much on material means, and seek no help from God they are dead; and the heavenly spirit has flown out of them as a dove flies away from its nest. The leprosy of the worship of Mammon has taken a hold on the inside of their hearts and cut to pieces the organs of their inner spiritual life. Beware ye of this leprosy. I do not forbid you to think of material means within proper limits: what I forbid is that like other nations you become wholly the slaves of material means, altogether forgetting God Who controls material means as well. Only if you had the eyes to see, you would find there is only God and God alone, everything else being worthless. You can neither stretch out your arm nor fold it except with His permission. A person spiritually dead would laugh at this; but it would be better for him if he died before he indulged in this laughter.

Beware! do not ape other nations

Beware! Having seen other nations, how they have attained a considerable measure of success in their worldly plans, you should not begin to wish to follow in their footsteps. Listen carefully and take heed that they are aliens to and unmindful of that God Who calls you all to Himself. What is their god but a frail human being, this being the reason why they have been left in such a complacent error. I do not wish to stop you from striving for worldly good, but you should not follow the ways of those who think this present world is all in all. In everything you do, whether it pertains to things of this world or of the next, you should seek help and succour from God alone, and this should remain the guiding principle of your life for ever and ever. But this seeking of help should not be from your lips alone: it should be your conviction deep down to the bottom of your being that every blessing comes only from heaven. You shall be really righteous only when, at the time of every difficulty, before sitting down to make your plans, you close your door upon yourself, and fall down before the throne of God Almighty,

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crying for His grace and help and succour. Then the holy spirit will come to your help, and through unseen means a way shall be opened for you. Have mercy on your own souls and be not like those who have cut themselves wholly away from God and have fallen on material means to such an extent that to seek Divine help they do not even formally utter with their lips the words "If God be willing." May God open your eyes, so that you should begin to perceive that your God is the beam on which all plans rest. When the central beam of the roof falls down, can the minor supports maintain their position? Most certainly not. They would all come down in an instant, in all likelihood, with much loss of life. In the same way your plans cannot remain in position without help from God. If you will not cry for His help, if you will not make that soliciting the most fundamental principle of your life, you will have no success, and shall die at last with great regret.

Do not fall to wondering why other peoples are meeting with success although they have not the slightest idea of your Most Perfect and All-Powerful God. The answer is this, and this alone, that having forsaken God, they have been put to trial in the matter of material means. Oftentimes a trial from God takes the form that whoever forsakes Him, giving himself up to carnal pleasure, setting his mind wholly on material wealth, the doors of worldly advancement are opened upon him; though from the religious and spiritual point of view he is altogether destitute and naked. He dies at last engrossed in this world, to be thrown into an eternal hell.* And sometimes this trial takes the form that such a person remains unsuccessful even in the task of amassing wealth. But the latter trial is not so dangerous as the former, since the former breeds an inordinate measure of pride and a superiority complex. In any case, both these groups are of those on whom falls the wrath of God. The true fountainhead for all kinds of prosperity is God. Therefore, when these people

* As the Promised Messiah has explained in other places the expression "eternal" here means a very, very long period.

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are unaware of this Living and Sustaining Being, in fact careless in regard to Him, and turn their backs upon Him, how can real prosperity fall to their lot? Blessed are they who understand this secret, and in dire straits is he who fails to grasp it.

Similarly it is incumbent on you that you do not begin to follow the philosophers of this world; nor should you suffer yourself to be mentally overawed by them. All these constitute varying manifestations of a gross ignorance. The real and true philosophy is the only one which God has given to you in His Holy Book. In imminent danger of destruction are the people who have become enamoured of these material philosophies; and successful are they, who, for real knowledge and philosophy, go to the Holy Book. Why do you take to the paths of ignorance? Do you run after those who are blind, in the hope that they would show you the way? O you ignorant people! How can a person show you the way who is himself blind. The truth is that the true philosophy can be obtained only through the holy spirit. Through this spirit you will reach those sciences which are not accessible to others. If you ask for it with sincerity, you will get it at last, and then you will find that this is the only knowledge that imparts freshness and life to the heart, and places it on a firm tower of perfect certainty. How can a man bring forth for you clean and wholesome food who is himself subsisting on carrion? How can one show you the way who is himself blind? All pure and healthy wisdom comes from the heavens alone. What is this you seek from those who are of this earth? They alone inherit wisdom whose souls soar to the heavens. Those who are not satisfied in their own minds, how can they give you satisfaction? The foremost thing is purity of heart: sincerity and purity must come first; after that you shall get everything.

The door of revelation is open even now

Do not think that the Revelation from God is not possible in the future; that it was possible only in the past: do not think that the holy spirit cannot come down now. I tell you truly that every door can be closed but the door for the coming down of the holy

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spirit. Open all the doors of your heart to receive it. With your own hands you remove yourself to a distance from that sun when yourself you close the window through which light can enter. Therefore get up at once and throw this window open, so that the light of the sun should, of its own accord, enter your heart with the simplicity and inevitability of a natural process. When God has not closed the doors of His blessings upon the world, when in fact He has multiplied them even more than before, do you venture to presume that he has closed upon you the doors of His spiritual blessings, even at a time when they were needed most? No, no; not at all. Rather has that door been opened beyond any possible shadow of doubt. Now, in accordance with His teaching as given in the Surah *Fatihah*, when the door of all earlier blessings has been opened for you, why do you decline to receive them? Create a thirst for this spring, and then, of itself, the water will begin to gush out. For this milk cry like a child, so that it should well up in the breast. Begin to deserve mercy, so that you should be shown mercy. Show anxiety and deep concern, so that your minds should be set at rest. Cry out with pain, again and again, so that a hand should stretch itself and take hold of you. Indeed, how terribly difficult is the way which is the way of the Lord! But, verily, it is made easy for those who jump into the abyss, resolutely determined to face destruction and death. Blessed are they who for the sake of the Lord wage a war against their own selves; while truly ill-starred are they who for the sake of their baser-selves wage a war against the Lord, and refuse to mould themselves in obedience to His will. Whosoever, for the sake of his own self, evades a commandment of God, he will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Strive therefore to the utmost that not a jot or syllable of the Holy Quran should bear witness against you, and cause you to be apprehended on that account. For, indeed, even a single grain of evil is punishable. The time is very short, the mission of your life not yet fulfilled. Walk with speed, for the evening draws nigh. Whatever you have to put before the Lord, examine it well, and as often as you can, lest some defect remain to cause irreparable loss: or lest

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you take something with you which in fact should amount to no more than filthy and spurious goods, not worthy to be presented at a royal court.

Elevated position of the Holy Quran

I have been given to understand that some among you there are who altogether reject the *Hadith*. If this is so, then these people are in manifest error. I have never taught that they should hold such views. Quite to the contrary, I hold very firmly that for your guidance God has provided three things. The foremost among these is the Holy Quran, which sets forth the unity of God, His grandeur and greatness, and decides all points in dispute between the Jews and the Christians. Further, the Quran forbids that you worship anything other than God – neither man, nor beast, the sun nor the moon, nor any other heavenly body, nor material means, nor your own selves. Therefore beware. Do not take a single step in contravention of anything contained in the Holy Book. Verily, I tell you truly that whosoever evades even the least of the seven hundred commandments embodied in the Holy Quran, he slams the door of salvation upon himself. The real and perfect paths of salvation have been opened only by the Holy Quran; all others were only its shadows. Therefore you should study this holy scripture with the utmost attention and deepest thought; and you should love it as you have never loved anything else. For, indeed, as God has conveyed to me, *أَلْخَيْرُ كُلِّهِ فِي الْقُرْآنِ* i.e., all the good lies in the Quran. All kinds of good are to be found in it – and this is the truth. Unfortunate, indeed, are the people who to other things give preference over it. The Holy Quran, is the fountainhead for your salvation, for all betterment and success. There is not even a single spiritual need which has not been met for you in this Holy Book. The supporter or falsifier of your Faith on the Day of judgement would be the Holy Quran; and apart from this Book there is no other under the heavens which can provide you with direct guidance. It is indeed a great blessing of God upon you that He has bestowed on you a book like this. Verily, I tell

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you truly that the book which has been read upon you, had it been read upon the Christians, they would not have perished; and the blessing and guidance which has been vouchsafed to you, had it been extended to the Jews, in place of the Torah, many of their sects would not have ended by denying the Day of Judgement. Realise, therefore, the value of the blessing bestowed on you. It is a precious blessing, and a great treasure. Without the Holy Quran, the whole world would have been no better than a dirty clot of half formed flesh. Indeed it is a book as compared to which all other scriptures and sources of guidance amount to nothing at all.

The Holy Quran can purify a man within a week, provided there is no attempt to get away from it in form or spirit. The Quran can make you like the Prophets, provided you do not try yourself to run away from it. Apart from the Holy Quran what book is there at the very outset which has taught its readers a prayer like

إهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين أنعمت عليهم

i.e., Guide us to the right path, the path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings, and has thus held out to them a great hope, namely, the hope of the way being shown to them which would lead them to the attainment of those blessings which were bestowed on those who were of the Prophets, the *Siddeeqs*, the *Shohada*, and the *Saliheen*. Therefore elevate your resolve, and do not reject this invitation of the Quran when it calls you to work for attainment of the blessings given to the earlier peoples. God in fact is inclined to bestow on you even more. God has made you inherit all their spiritual and material substance, but until the Day of the *Qiyamah* these will not pass away from you to anyone else. God will not keep you deprived of the blessing of Revelation, and of the tangible forms of communion generally spoken of as *mokalamat* and *mokhatbat*. He will consummate all those blessings on you which He ever bestowed on others. But whosoever by way of insolence shall lie and shall claim to have received Revelation from Him, when in fact he had received no such Revelation, or claim that he had

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the honour of communion with God of the kind called *mokalamah* and *mokhatabah*, when in fact no such honour had been bestowed upon him, then, with God and all His angels as my witness I declare, that such a one shall perish and be destroyed for having lied about his Creator and for having perpetrated a fraud.

The explanatory position of the Sunnah

The second instrument for guidance vouchsafed to the Muslims is the Sunnah, i.e., the measures adopted by the Holy Prophet with a view to the exposition of the Holy Quran and its being put into actual tangible practice. For instance, looking at the surface only, there appears to be no specification in the Quran of *rak'aats* in the case of the five daily obligatory prayers, how many for what prayer, but the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet has made all these things very clear. No one should fall into the error that the Hadith and Sunnah are one and the same thing, for what is called the Hadith came to be collected a hundred and fifty years afterwards, while the Sunnah existed from the very outset side by side with the Holy Quran. After the Holy Quran, the greatest debt of gratitude the Muslims owe to anything is to the Sunnah. The obligation on God and His Apostle in regard to the guidance of mankind was only twofold, namely, that by sending down the Holy Book, God by means of His word indicated His will and pleasure, in fulfilment of the demand inherent in the Divine law: while the duty which devolved upon the Holy Prophet was this that by putting it into actual practice he should clearly demonstrate it in all its aspects in actual operation. Therefore he transformed into action what had been said in the form of words, and by his actual practice solved a number of difficulties. It is not proper to say that this duty devolved upon the Hadith, since Islam had established itself upon the earth long before the Hadith came to be collected. Did not the people offer their prayers at the time when the Hadith had not yet been collected? Did they not pay the *Zakat*. or perform the *Hajj*? Or, were they ignorant as to what was permissible, for them and what was not?

Supportive position of Hadith

Of course, the third means of guidance is the Hadith, because many points in regard to history, ethics and jurisprudence are to be found explained fully in it; and the great utility of the Hadith lies in the fact that it is a servant of the Quran and the Sunnah. Some people, who are ignorant as to the real position of the Holy Quran, here assign to Hadith the position of a judge on the Quran, as did the Jews in regard to some of their traditions. We on the other hand look upon the Hadith as a servant of the Quran and the Sunnah, the existence of servants being in no way derogatory to the master, being in fact a sign of his importance and grandeur. The Holy Book is the Word of God, while the Sunnah is the act of the Holy Prophet, the Hadith being a supporting witness for the Sunnah. It is wrong to say (God forbid) that the Hadith is a judge on the Holy Quran. If there is any judge on the Holy Quran, it is the Holy Book itself. The Hadith, which in any case has an element of speculation in it, cannot be given a superior position, being no more than a supporting argument. The Quran and the Sunnah have done all the real work, the Hadith doing no more than supplying some additional verification. How can the Hadith be in the position of a judge for the Holy Quran? The Holy Book and the Sunnah were extending guidance to mankind at a time when as yet there was no sign of the so-called judge. Therefore, never say that the Hadith is a judge on the Holy Quran: say rather that the Hadith supplies further supportive evidence for the Quran and the Sunnah. Of course the Sunnah, undoubtedly, is a thing which indicates the will of the Quran, and it signifies the path on which the Holy Prophet put his companions. The Sunnah is not a name for the things which came to be written and collected a hundred or a hundred and fifty years afterwards. These are called the Hadith. The Sunnah, on the other hand, is the practical example that has, from the very earliest beginning, existed, all along, in the practical actions of the Muslims, their number extending to thousands at the most conservative estimate. But even though in a great part of it the Hadith occupies the

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position of a speculation, still, where it does not run counter to the Holy Quran, it deserves to be accepted, serving as a supporter for the Holy Quran and the Sunnah, with a large store-house of material, bearing on many Islamic questions.

Failure to appreciate the Hadith, therefore, is tantamount to cutting away a large part of the body of Islam. But, of course, if a Hadith falls counter to the Holy Quran and the Sunnah, and counter to other Ahadith which are in accord with the Holy Book, or it stands in opposition to the *Sahee Bokharee*, it should not be acceptable; for acceptance thereof would imply rejection: of the Holy Quran, and of all those Ahadith which stand in accord with the Holy Book. I am satisfied that no righteous person would want to subscribe to such a belief. In any case give due recognition to Hadith and derive benefit from it to the fullest possible extent, for they come from the Holy Prophet and unless they are rejected by the Quran and the Sunnah, you should not reject them. You should adhere to the Hadith to such an extent that no action of yours, no pause, no performance, and no failure to perform any work, should be without basis in Hadith. But if there is a Hadith which stands in contradiction of what has been stated in the Quran, you should exercise your mind to reconcile it in interpretation: but where no such reconciliation is possible, the Hadith should be rejected and thrown aside, since it cannot be taken to have come from the Holy Prophet. But if there is a weak Hadith, which stands, nevertheless, in accord with the Holy Quran, it is to be accepted, for the Quran has confirmed it.

Criterion for judging Ahadith embracing prophecies

But if there is a Hadith embracing a prophecy which the *Mohadditheen* have adjudged as weak, while in your own time, or at some time earlier than yours, the prophecy contained in that Hadith has been fulfilled, then that Hadith has to be accepted as authentic, and all those who adjudged it weak and failed to accept it, thinking that it was a fabrication, will be held to have been in error. The number of Ahadith containing

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prophecies runs into hundreds, and most of these by the Mohadditheen have been held to be fabricated or defective. Therefore when one of these is fulfilled and you try to avoid the point, saying that you could not accept it since it was weak, or since this or that narrator in the link through which it had come was not a righteous man, then such a rejection on your part would be due to your faithlessness, for you would be rejecting a Hadith of which the reliability had been established by God, even to the extent of fulfilment of the prophecy contained in it. Now suppose there are one thousand Ahadith of this kind, held to be weak and unacceptable by the Mohadditheen, but suppose the prophecies contained in them come to be fulfilled, would you reject them, and also reject all the one thousand arguments in support of the veracity of Islam which the fulfilment of the prophecies in question stood for? If you do anything of the kind, you would become, thereby, enemies of Islam. Allah says:

فلا يظهر على غيبه احدا الا من ارتضى من رسول:

i.e., He does not reveal His *ghaib* (future) except when He chooses to do so to an Apostle. Therefore, to whom is a true prophecy to be attributed, if not to a true Prophet? Is it not more in an accord with one's righteousness of mind to say on such occasions that the Mohaddith in question had erred in so far as he had rejected as weak a Hadith which in fact was quite reliable? Or would it be more proper for us to say that in supporting a weak Hadith with the testimony of actual events God Himself had been guilty of an error? For you the guiding principle in any case should be that you follow even a weak Hadith, provided it is not counter to the Holy Quran and the Sunnah, or counter to other Ahadith in accord with the Holy Book.

However, great care is needed on this point, for it is a fact that there exist a large number of fabricated Ahadith which have caused a great deal of disruption in Islam. All the conflicting sects take their stand on this or that Hadith, as suits their needs, so that even such a clear and well established question as of the prescribed obligatory prayers has given rise to extreme differ-

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ences of view. Some cry amen in a loud voice, audible to others, while some hold this should be done in one's own mind. Some follow the recitation of the *Fatihah* by the *Imam* with similar simultaneous recitation of the same on the part of the congregation, each in his own mind, while others believe that such recitation spoils one's prayer and is, therefore, forbidden. Some hold their hands folded on the breast, while others hold them at the navel. The real cause of all these differences lies in the Ahadith:

كل حزب بما لديهم فرح

i.e., each group being pleased with what it has in its hand.

Deliverance from sin lies in perfect conviction

O ye who seek the Lord, open your ears and listen! Take heed that there is nothing like perfect conviction which delivers you from sin; conviction gives you the power to do good; and conviction alone can turn you into a lover of God. Can you turn away from evil without perfect conviction? Can you hold your base impulses in check without the help of a sure light? Without this perfect conviction, can anyone bring about any real change in himself? Can you attain to any state of satisfaction and peace of mind without this perfect certainty? Can you at all win any real prosperity without it? In the wide world, is there any Atonement which can give you the power to avoid sin which man so much stands in need of? Can the fictitious blood of Jesus, son of Mary, deliver you from sin? O ye Christians, refrain from uttering a monstrous falsehood, even such as would fain break this earth to pieces! For deliverance Jesus himself had to depend on perfect conviction. He believed with conviction, and was delivered. Woe, indeed, on those Christians who deceive the world by saying they have been delivered by the blood of Jesus Christ even when from head to foot they are drowned in evil. They do not even know who is their God. Their life is one of indulgence and ease; with the intoxication of wine in their head they remain unaware of the life with God; and for them there is no share in the fruits of life as lived in purity. Always remember, therefore, that you

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cannot come out of the darkness without firm conviction, nor can you get the holy spirit. Blessed are they who have this conviction, and blessed are they who have been delivered from uncertainties and doubts, for they alone shall be delivered of sin; and blessed will you be when this great treasure of firm conviction is given to you, since on that day sin for you will come to an end. Sin and conviction cannot exist together. Would you ever knowingly put your hand into a hole which you see is occupied by a poisonous snake? Or would you remain standing where a shower of red hot stones is coming down from some belching volcano? or which forms the target of a thunderbolt from the skies? or where a ferocious lion is likely to attack any moment? Or would you live in a place where a dangerous plague is destroying mankind? Then, if you believe in God with the same firmness of conviction as you believe in the danger from a snake, or a thunderbolt, or a lion, or from plague, it is not possible that you should defy Him by disobedience, to incur punishment thereby, or that you should want to break the bond of sincerity, and loyalty which binds you to Him.

O ye people who have been called to righteousness and truth, rest fully assured that Divine attraction will take its birth in you, and you will be washed clean of the ugly blot of sin, only when your hearts become brimful of firm conviction. Perhaps you will say that you have this conviction, but you should take care to remember that this feeling is not more than a delusion on your part. That firm conviction is most certainly not yet yours, for you do not display the conditions which necessarily must go with it always. You have not yet given up your sinful ways; you have not yet taken the first step which you ought to have taken the moment this firm conviction became yours. You do not yet fear sin as you should. You can very well think out the question in your own mind. A man never puts his hand into a hole which he knows to be occupied by a poisonous snake; nor does he ever knowingly partake of a food he has reason to believe has been poisoned. Nor will he thoughtlessly walk into a thicket of trees which harbours a lion. Then how can your hand and feet, your

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eyes and ears, dare to sin when you have the same degree of certainty in regard to the punishment and reward from God on your conduct in life? How in the name of reason can you throw yourself into a fire which you know will burn you to ashes? And always remember that the defensive ramparts built by firm conviction against sin are veritably as high as the heavens, so that Satan cannot scale them to get you, after you have once properly built them up.

Everyone who is purified, is purified through firmness of conviction. It is conviction which gives you the strength to bear hardships, even to the extent of persuading a king to abdicate his royal throne and take to the life of a mendicant. Conviction dissolves all difficulties. Conviction enables a man to see God. All ideas of any atoning sacrifice are false, for every kind of purity comes only from firm conviction. The only thing which delivers a man from sin, and advances him in sincerity and steadfastness, far ahead of the angels themselves, is conviction and conviction alone. All religions which fail to create this firmness of conviction are false. All religions which fail to show God by means beyond any shadow of doubt are false; and all those religions are false which contain nothing more than a handful of tales and fables about what happened in the past.

Do not be satisfied with fables

God exists even now, as He did in the days past; His powers too remain the same as they were in the past; and He is still as capable of showing signs as He was before. Then why should you be satisfied with stories and fables alone? The religion is dead and destroyed which contains nothing more than stories of miracles shown in the past; and the people are a dead people on whom God does not descend in grace and mercy, whom the Divine hand itself has not come down to purify. As a man is drawn towards the joys of this world when he sees its attractions with his own eyes; similarly is man drawn towards God when he comes to know with perfect certainty that the spiritual joys are even sweeter. The appeal of Divine beauty takes such a hold

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on his mind that everything else appears to him of no more value than mere trash. Man is freed from sin only when he comes to know of the power of God, and of Divine retribution, on the basis of a firm conviction. Ignorance is the root of every fearlessness, and no one will be found devoid of the fear of God even to the least extent who partakes of Divine knowledge. When a householder knows that a dangerous flood is advancing on his house or that it has been surrounded by a fire on all sides, he will at once flee from it. Then how can you dare to leave your ways of life unaltered after your belief in the existence of God, in Divine retribution and reward, has hardened into a firm unshakable conviction? Therefore, open your eyes and carefully study the Law of God operating in the universe. Do not be like rats which only go digging and descending down into the earth: be like a dove capable of flying into the heavens, which feels happy only when it is flying in the pure air of the loftier regions. After taking the *bai'at* of repentance at my hand, take care that you do not remain unaltered in your former sinful ways. Do not be like a snake that remains as much of a snake after it has shed its skin as ever it was before. Remember death, which approaches you every moment, though you remain unaware. Do your best to purify yourself, for a man can attain nearness to what is purity par excellence only when himself he becomes pure, as far as possible.

The way to attain purity is prayer offered in true humility of spirit

But the most important question is how to win the blessings. To this question God Himself has given the answer. He says: *واستعينوا بالصبر والصلوة* . i.e., Seek help from God with prayer and perseverance. What is *salat*? It is a prayer addressed to God in true humility of spirit and the fullest awareness of His purity, His praiseworthiness, His holiness, coupled with a burning desire on the part of the devotee for Divine forgiveness, and for blessing on the Holy Prophet. Therefore, when you stand up for prayer, do not, like ignorant people, confine yourself to the

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prescribed Arabic text, for the prayers and the *istighfar* of many people is only formal, with no reality in it. When you stand up for prayer, do not, like ignorant people, confine yourself to the prescribed Arabic text; over and above the prayers found in the Quran, which is the Word of God, and in the Hadith, which is the word of the Holy Prophet, address your petitions to the Lord in your own language, with heartfelt humility which should leave a lasting effect on the mind. In prayer lies the remedy for the coming tribulations. You have no idea what the coming day has in store for you. Therefore, ere the day dawn, pray every time that for you it should be a day of blessings and peace.

O ye rich and wealthy!

O ye who are rich, who are kings, who are millionaires: among you there are few who fear God and remain truthful and steadfast in all His ways. Most are such that they attach their hearts to the riches of this world, spending all their lives in this preoccupation, without giving any thought to death. Every rich man who does not address himself to God in prayer, whose attitude to God is one of heedlessness, will have on his head the sins of all those who are connected with him. Every rich man who drinks shall have on his head the sin of all those under him who drink with him. O ye wise! This world will not last for ever. Take a hold on yourself and be steady. Give up every excess. Leave all intoxicants. Wines, and beers, and whiskies, and the like, are not the only harmful drinks. Opium *ganja*, *charas*, *bhanga*, *taree*, and all other intoxicants, the use of which with you becomes a matter of habit, have all a deadly effect on the brain, and in the end prove fatal. You should keep away from all such things. In fact we cannot understand at all how and why you take to the use of things which, in front of your own eyes, every year prove to be undoing of thousands of people and bring about their death, while the punishment to come in the world hereafter is something quite apart, over and above the disadvantages which go with these things here. Become righteous and God-fearing, so that you should live longer lives, and be blessed by God. Too much

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indulgence in luxurious, easy, irresponsible living is a curse, as it is ill mannered, and heartless, to be indifferent to the sufferings of others.

Every rich man is as much answerable over the due discharge of his obligations to his Creator and his fellowmen, as a poor man is. In fact a rich man is even more answerable. Indeed how unfortunate is he, for the sake of this brief life in this world, who completely turns away from God; who uses forbidden things with such fearlessness as if they were quite lawful; when angry, who raves upon people like a madman, using abusive language, ready to wound and kill; and who, in the pursuit of his lust, becomes shameless in the extreme. Such a one will never know real prosperity. My dear people! You are in this world only for a few days, of which a large part is already past. Do not displease your Master. Even a temporal government, if displeased with you, can destroy you. Therefore how much more it behoves you not to displease your Creator. No one can destroy you if you are held righteous in the eyes of the Lord. He will Himself protect you, and no enemy thirsting for your blood shall be able to harm you. Otherwise there is no protection for you, and you shall have to live in constant fear of your enemies, uneasy and restless, full of forebodings; and the later days of your lives would pass in great anguish of mind. God Himself becomes the protection of those who stand with Him. Therefore come to God, and leave off all kinds of opposition to Him. Never be negligent in the discharge of the obligations He has laid on you. Never oppress His creatures, with hand or word of mouth, and always remain in fear of the wrath of heaven, for herein lies the only way to salvation.

O ye learned people of Islam!

O ye learned people among the Muslims! Do not be hasty in rejecting me as false. There are many profound secrets which man cannot comprehend in a hurry, all at once. You should not be ready to reject a thing the moment you hear it, for this is not the way of the righteous. Had there been no errors among you,

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and if you had not interpreted certain Ahadith in a manner contrary to their real sense, then the advent of the Messiah, as a judge and adjudicator among you, would have been a useless thing. The mission you assign to this advent, namely, that he would join force with the *Mahdi*, to make war on all in order forcibly to convert them to Islam, is a belief which brings disgrace to Islam. Where at all is it written in the Quran that war is permissible for the sake of spreading one's religion by force? On the contrary we find Allah saying in the Holy Book:

لا إكراه في الدين

i.e., There is no compulsion in matters connected with religion. Then wherefrom would the Messiah, son of Mary, get the right to use force for converting people to Islam? The entire Quran is replete to the effect that there can be no coercion in religion; and it is absolutely clear on the point that when the Holy Prophet took up the sword, he did not do so to spread Islam by this means, but (i) as a due punishment for these who had killed a large number of Muslims, and had driven out many others from their homes. We read in the Holy Book: "Permission has been given to those who fight because they had been oppressed, and Allah indeed has the power to help them (in spite of the odds against them)". (ii) Or these wars were defensive, fought against people who were leaving no stone unturned to extirpate Islam and to stop its propagation by force of arms. (iii) Or they were fought to assert legitimate freedoms. Apart from campaigns undertaken for these three aims, the Holy Prophet and his blessed Khalifas fought no war, whatsoever. In fact, before taking up arms in self defence Islam bore oppression with silent fortitude to an extent of which there is no example in the history, of other peoples. Then what kind of a Messiah and Mahdi would these be who would embark on their mission by putting their opponents to the sword right from the start.

Gaddi-Nashins and Pirzadahs of the country

Similarly the hereditary heads of the so-called spiritual orders and the *pirs* of this country, are so far cut off from Islam,

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engrossed day and night in their pernicious innovations, that they have no idea of the difficult times through which Islam is passing. If you attend their assemblies, instead of the Holy Quran and the Hadith, you will find them bending and swaying over musical instruments and *qawwalis* with numerous *bid'ats* in evidence. But in spite of all this they claim to be religious leaders and followers of the Holy Prophet.

Indeed anybody and everybody can claim that he loves God. But only he loves God, in reality, to whose love heaven itself should bear witness. Everybody claims that he is a follower of the true religion, but the religion of that man alone is true who obtains light in this very life itself. And everybody says that he will get salvation, but only he is justified in making this claim who is given light in this earthly life itself.

My dear people! This is the time for rendering services to the cause of religion

My dear people! This is the time for serving the cause of the religion you claim to profess. Realize the value of this rare opportunity, for if you let it slip, it will not offer itself to you a second time. Being the followers of such a great and exalted Prophet, why do you lose heart? Be firm of faith, and set an example that even the angels in heaven should wonder at your strength and steadfastness, and should pray for blessings on you.

With this I finish, and pray that this teaching of mine should be fruitful for you, working a change in your hearts which should make you like stars on this earth, filling the globe with the light and life you get from the Lord. Amen!

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Shariah: Islamic law embracing the entire religious and secular aspects of life. (Page 12)

إهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين أنعمت عليهم

A verse from Surah Fatiha. For meanings see page 33. (Page 12)

Bai'at: A pledge of fealty and obedience given by a disciple to his spiritual teacher. Literally act of selling oneself, (Page 12)

Taqwa: To go through life with care *i.e.* Righteousness. (Page 13)

Zakat: Levy on wealth according to a fixed schedule, to be spent for the benefit of the poor. It is one of the five fundamental pillars of Islam. (Page 14)

Khatam-ul-Anbiya: Seal of the Prophets, title of the Holy Prophet. (Page 16)

Muhammadiyah: State of belonging to or being absorbed in the Holy Prophet Muhammad. (Page 16)

Burooz: Reflection or appearance of the qualities of one person in another: a true image. (Page 16)

Khatamul Khulafa: Seal of Khulafa *i.e.* the most perfect among the successors (of the Prophet). (Page 17)

Surah Fatiha: The opening Chapter in the Holy Quran which embodies a most comprehensive prayer. (Page 34)

Hadith: What is reported by the Companions as to what the Holy Prophet did or said. The name is used collectively to stand for various collections of reports of this kind. Usually it is rendered in English as 'Tradition' because these reports, for a long time were reported orally from man to man; plural, *Ahadith*. (Page 36)

Siddeeqs: Shohada, Saliheen: Plural of Siddeeq, Shaheed and Salih, respectively. Terms used in the Holy Quran to denote three successive ranks in spiritual attainment, Salih is the first and Siddeeq last, this being immediately below the rank of Prophethood. (Page 39)

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Qiyamah: Resurrection or some stupendous change that takes place at its own ripe time; used about the last Day of Judgement. (Page 39)

Mokalmat, Mokhatabat: Revelations received from God as in direct speech. (Page 39)

Sunnah: Practice of the Holy Prophet. (Page 40)

Rak' aat: Parts of the Islamic ritual prayer each taken as one unit which consists of *Qiyam, Ruku* and *Sajdah*. (Page 40)

Hajj: Pilgrimage to Mecca. (Page 41)

Sahih Bokharee: The most reliable collection of Ahadith. (Page 44)

Mohaddith: One learned in the science of Hadith (plural Mohddithin). (Page 46).

Imam: The leader in the congregational prayer. (Page 48)

Istighfar: To seek forgiveness for sins. (Page 57)

Ganja, Charas, Bhang, Taree: Indian names of some of the intoxicants commonly used by addicts. (Page 58)

Gaddi-Nashin and Pirzada: Literally one who occupies the Gaddi (seat) and descendent of a *pir* i.e., a religious preceptor. Those who occupy the position of guardians of shrines of famous saints. (Page 63)

Qawwalis: Congregations held for singing hymns. (Page 64)

Bid'aat: Plural of *Bid'at*: heresy, heterodoxy. (Page 64)

Ahmadiyya Beliefs

(1) We believe that God exists and to assert His existence is to assert a most important truth.

(2) We believe that God is ONE without an equal in heaven or in earth. Everything else is His creation, dependent upon Him and His subsistence. He is without son or daughter or father or mother or wife or brother. He is one and unique.

(3) We believe that God is Holy; free from all imperfections and possessed of all perfections. There is no imperfection which may be found in Him and no perfection which may not be found in Him. His power and knowledge are unlimited. He encompasses everything and there is nothing which encompasses Him. He is the First, the Last, the Manifest, the Hidden, the Creator, the Master. He is the Loving, the Enduring. His actions are willed, not constrained or determined. He rules today as He ever ruled before. His attributes are eternal.

(4) We believe that angels are a part of God's creation. As the Quran has it, angels do what they are bidden to do. They have been created in His wisdom to carry out certain duties. Their existence is real and references to them in the Holy Book are not metaphorical. They depend on God as do all men and all other creatures.

(5) We believe that God speaks to His chosen servants and reveals to them His purpose. Revelation comes in words. Man lives by revelation and through it comes to have contact with God. The words in which revelation comes are unique in their

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power and wisdom. Their wisdom may not be revealed at once. A mine may be exhausted but not the wisdom of revelation. Revelation brings us divine ordinances, laws, and exhortations. It also brings us knowledge of the unseen and of important spiritual truths. It conveys to us the approval of God as well as His disapproval and displeasure, His love as well as His warnings. God communicates with man through revelation. The communications vary with circumstances and with the recipients. Of all divine communications the most perfect, the most complete, the most comprehensive is the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran is to last for ever. It cannot be superseded by any future revelation.

(6) We also believe that when darkness prevails in the world and man sinks deep in sin and evil, it becomes difficult for him to rise again without the help of God. Then out of His mercy and beneficence God chooses one of His own loving, loyal servants, charges him with the duty to lead and guide other men. As the Quran says, "Not a people but have had a warner sent to them." (35:25). God has sent Messengers to every people. Through them God has revealed His Will and His Purpose. Those who turn away from them ruin themselves, those who turn to them earn the love and pleasure of God.

(7) We also believe that divine messengers belong to different spiritual ranks and contribute in different degrees to the fulfilment of the ultimate Divine Design. The greatest of all messengers is the Holy Prophet MUHAMMAD (on whom be the peace and the blessings of God!). He is the chief of all men, messenger to them all. The revelation he received was addressed to all mankind. The whole of this earth was a mosque for him. Time came when his message spread to lands and climes beyond Arabia. People forsook gods of their own conception and began to believe in the ONE and only God that the Holy Prophet Muhammad taught them to believe. The coming of the Holy Prophet marked an unparalleled spiritual revolution. Justice began to reign instead of injustice, kindness instead of cruelty. If Moses and Jesus had existed in the time of the Holy Prophet

Ahmadiyya Belief

Muhammad they would have had to believe in him and to follow him.

(8) We also believe that God hears our prayers and helps us out of difficulties. He is a living God, His living character being evident in all things at all times. God continues His benevolent interest in His servants and His creatures. When they need His help He turns to them with His help. If they forget Him, He reminds them of Himself and of His concern for them. "I am near indeed; I answer the prayer of every supplicant when he supplicates to Me. Let them, therefore, hearken unto Me and believe in Me, so that they may go aright". (2:187).

(9) We also believe that from time to time God determines and designs the course of events in special ways. Events of this world are not determined entirely by unchanging laws called the Laws of Nature. For, besides these ordinary laws there are special laws through which God manifests Himself. It is these special laws which bring to us evidence of the Will, the Power and Love of God. Too many there are who deny this. They would believe in nothing besides the laws of nature. Yet laws of nature are not all the laws we have. Laws of nature are themselves governed by the wider Laws of God. Through these laws, God helps His chosen servants. Through them He destroys His enemies. Moses could not have triumphed over a cruel and mighty enemy, but for the special laws of God. The Holy prophet Muhammad could not have triumphed over Arabs determined to put an end to him and his mission except for the laws of God, which worked on his side. In everything that he encountered, God helped the Holy Prophet. At last with 10,000 followers he re-entered the valley of Mecca out of which 10 years before he had to flee for his life. Laws of nature cannot account for these events.

(10) We also believe that death is not the end of everything. Man survives death. He has to account for what he does in this life, in life hereafter. The Power of God guarantees human survival.

(11) We believe, that unless forgiven out of His infinite Mercy,

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nonbelievers go to Hell. The object of Hell is not to give pain to the inmates but only to reform them. In Hell nonbelievers and enemies of God spend their days in wail and woe and continue so until the Mercy of God encompasses the evil-doers and their evil. Truly did the Holy Prophet say, "A time will come when Hell will be emptied of all sinners". (Tafsir-ul-Maalam-ut-tanzil)

(12) Similarly we believe that those who believe in God and the Prophets, the angels and the books, who accept the guidance which comes from God, and walk in humility and abjure excesses of all kinds, will all go to a place called Heaven. Peace and pleasure will reign here and God will be present to all. Low desires will disappear. Men will have attained everlasting life and become an image of their Creator.

These being our beliefs, one may begin to wonder why the *Ulema* of Islam are so violently against us? Why should we be branded as *Kafirs*?

*(Excerpts from 'Dawat-ul-Ameer' by
Late Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din
Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II)*