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CANADA

Our Beloved Imām Hazrat Khalīfatul-Masīh V (may Allāh be his Helper!) said:

"Allāh and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! you also invoke blessings on him and salute him with the salutation of peace." (33:57)

This verse elucidates that God and His angels send blessings and salutations on the Holy Prophet[sa]. Thus, those who employ various tactics to impede or lessen the advancement of this Prophet will never succeed. Those who make wrong allegations against him and ridicule him presume they can succeed. Their conspiracies cannot harm this beloved of God in any way at all. With the grace of God attainment of the objective for which the Holy Prophet[sa] was sent will continue to come to pass. Indeed, in this age God sent the true and ardent devotee of the Holy Prophet[sa] for this attainment and opened new avenues to spread the beautiful teachings of Islām.

(Friday Sermon, January 16, 2015)

AḤMADIYYA GAZETTE CANADA
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ABBREVIATIONS OF SALUTATIONS

sa (Ṣallallāhu 'alaihī wa Sallam - May peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him!)
Usage: Salutation written after the name of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad[sa]

as (Alaīhis-Salām/ 'Alaihas-Salām - May peace be upon him/her!)
Usage: Salutation written after names of Prophets other than the Holy Prophet Muḥammad[sa], and pious women prior to the era of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad[sa]

ra (RaḍīAllāhū 'anhu / 'anhā/ 'anhum - May Allāh be pleased with him/her/them!)
Usage: Salutation written after names of Companions of the Holy Prophet[sa] and Companions of the Promised Messiah[as]

rh (Raḥimahullāh - May Allāh have mercy upon him!)
Usage: Salutation written after the names of deceased, pious Muslims who are not Companions

aa (Ayyadahullāhu Ta'ālā binaṣrihil-'Azīz - May Allāh be his Helper!)
Usage: Salutation written after the name of Hazrat Mirzā Masroor Aḥmad, Khalīfatul-Masīḥ V[aa]

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PEARLS OF WISDOM

بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ

THE HOLY QUR'ĀN

اِنَّ اللّٰہَ وَمَلٰٓئِکَتَہٗ یُصَلُّوۡنَ عَلَی النَّبِیِّ ؕ یٰۤاَیُّہَا الَّذِیۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا صَلُّوۡا عَلَیۡہِ وَسَلِّمُوۡا تَسۡلِیۡمًا ﴿۵۷﴾

Allāh and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! You *also* should invoke blessings on him and salute *him* with the salutation of peace. (33:57)

اَللّٰھُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰی مُحَمَّدٍ وَّعَلٰی اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَّبَارِكْ وَسَلِّمْ اِنَّكَ حَمِیْدٌ مَّجِیْدٌ

ḤADĪTH

عَنْ اَبِیْہِ عَنْ اَبِی ھُرَیْرَۃَ اَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰہِ صَلَّی اللّٰہُ عَلَیْہِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَنْ صَلّٰی عَلَیَّ وَاحِدَۃً صَلَّی اللّٰہُ عَلَیْہِ عَشْرًا۔

(صحیح مسلم۔کتاب الصلوٰۃ،باب الصلوٰۃ علی النبیؐ،جلد۲)

Hazrat Abū Huraira[ra] narrates that the Holy Prophet[sa] said, whoever invokes blessings upon me one time will be showered by ten times as many blessings by Allāh.

(*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Vol 2, Kitābus-Salāt)

عَنْ کَعْبِ بْنِ عُجْرَۃَ رَضِیَ اللّٰہُ عَنْہُ قَالَ: خَرَجَ عَلَیْنَا النَّبِیُّ صَلَّی اللّٰہُ عَلَیْہِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقُلْنَا یَا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰہِ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا کَیْفَ نُسَلِّمُ عَلَیْکَ فَکَیْفَ نُصَلِّیْ عَلَیْکَ؟ قَالَ: قُوْلُوْا:

اَللّٰھُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰی مُحَمَّدٍ وَّعَلٰی اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ کَمَا صَلَّیْتَ عَلٰی اِبْرَاھِیْمَ وَعَلٰی اٰلِ اِبْرَاھِیْمَ اِنَّكَ حَمِیْدٌ مَّجِیْدٌ۔

اَللّٰھُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلٰی مُحَمَّدٍ وَّعَلٰی اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ کَمَا بَارَکْتَ عَلٰی اِبْرَاھِیْمَ وَعَلٰی اٰلِ اِبْرَاھِیْمَ اِنَّكَ حَمِیْدٌ مَّجِیْدٌ۔

(صحیح مسلم،کتاب الصلوٰۃ بحوالہ حدیقۃ الصالحین،صفحہ۲۴۱)

Hazrat Ka'ab[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[sa] joined us. We asked him:

'O Prophet of Allāh! We know how to say *salām* to you, but we do not know how to invoke blessings upon you.' He replied, 'say:

O Allāh, bless Muḥammad and his people, as You did bless Ibrahīm; You are indeed the Praiseworthy, the Exalted. O Allāh, prosper Muḥammad and his people, as You did prosper Ibrahīm; you are indeed the Praiseworthy, the Exalted.'

(*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Vol 2, Kitābus-Salāt)

SO SAID THE PROMISED MESSIAH[AS]

Blessings of *Durūd Sharīf*

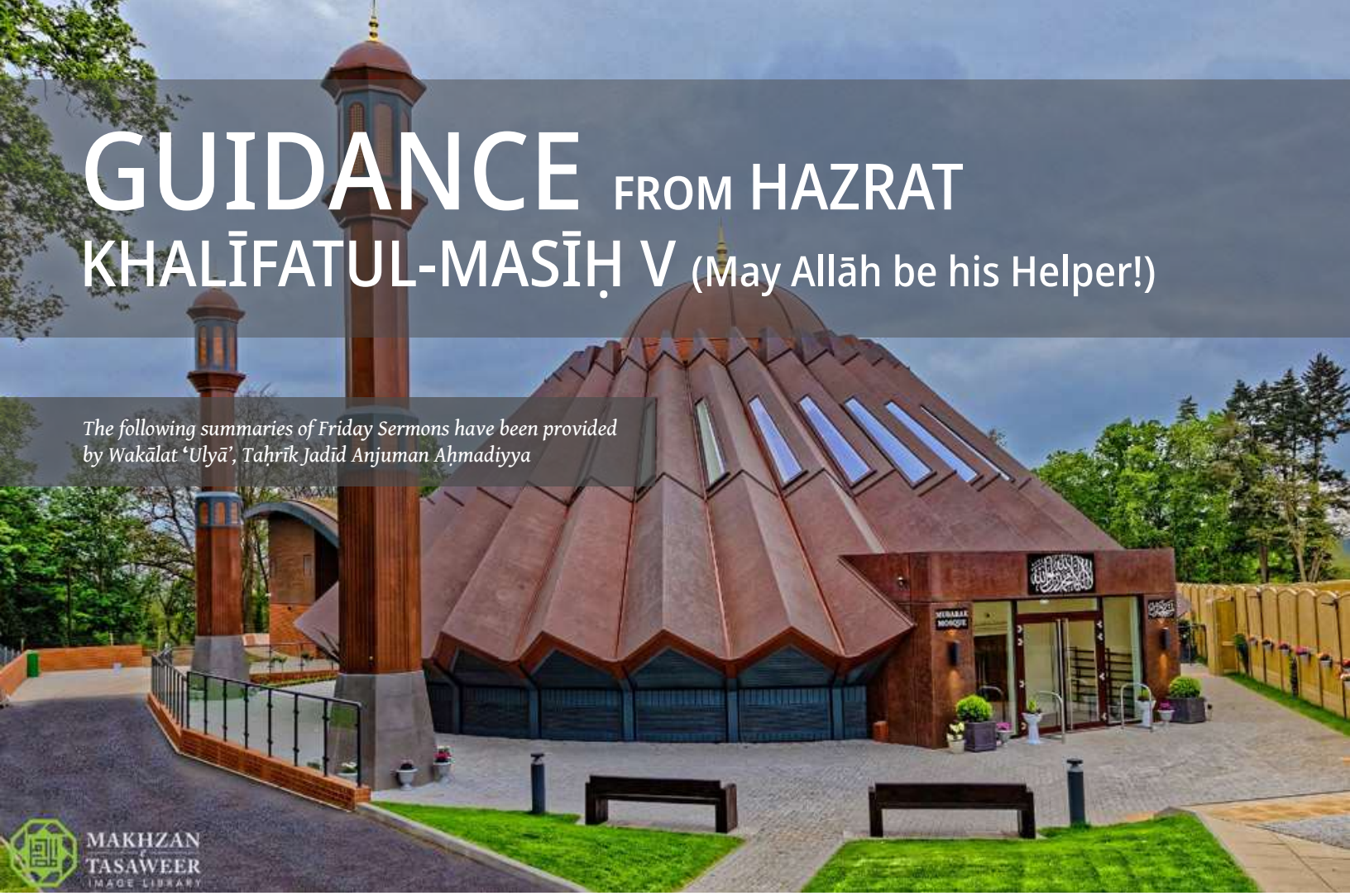
I say that even at this time, Allāh Almighty has not abandoned the world. He has established a community. Indeed with His own Hands, He has raised a person and he is the same who sits among you, speaking to you. Now is the time for the descent of Allāh's Mercy. Supplicate. Implore for steadfastness. Recite in abundance *Durūd Sharīf* (invoking blessings upon the Holy Prophet[sa]); it is a great means of attaining steadfastness; reciting not merely as a ritual, but keeping in full view the beauty and grace of the Holy Prophet[sa] for the elevation of his status, rank, and victories. As a result of this, you will be granted the sweet and succulent fruit of the acceptance of prayer. (*Malfūzāt* Vol 3, p. 38, translated from Urdu)

One night this humble one recited *Durūd Sharīf* in such abundance that my heart and soul were full of its fragrance. That same night, I saw in a dream that angels were carrying water skins full of light into my house and one of them said to me 'These are the same blessings you invoked upon Muḥammad[sa]'. (*Barāhīn Aḥmadīyya*, *Ruḥānī Khazā'in* Vol. 1, p. 598, sub-footnote 3, translated from Urdu)

Mināratul-Masīḥ
Qadian, India

GUIDANCE FROM HAZRAT KHALĪFATUL-MASĪḤ V (May Allāh be his Helper!)

The following summaries of Friday Sermons have been provided by Wakālat 'Ulyā', Taḥrīk Jadīd Anjuman Aḥmadiyya



MEN OF EXCELLENCE

SEPTEMBER 4, 2020

Huzoor[aa] began the Friday sermon with the recitation of verse 173 of Sūrah Āl-e-'Imrān, which is as follows:

اَلَّذِيْنَ اسْتَجَابُوْا لِلّٰهِ وَالرَّسُوْلِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَاۤ اَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ
لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقَوْا اَجْرٌ عَظِيْمٌ

> As to those who answered the call of Allāh and the Messenger after they had received an injury — such of them as do good and act righteously shall have a great reward (3:173).

Continuing with the accounts regarding Hazrat Zubaīr[ra], Huzoor[aa] said that with reference to verse 173 of Sūrah Āl-e-'Imrān, Hazrat 'Ā'īsha[ra] said to her nephew 'Urwah that your ancestors, i.e., Hazrat Zubaīr[ra] and Hazrat Abu Bakr[ra], were among the Companions mentioned in this verse. In the Battle of Uhud, they had pursued the enemy at the command of the Holy Prophet[sa] after he was wounded and the enemy was leaving, even though they were themselves injured.

Hazrat 'Ali[ra] narrates that the Holy Prophet[sa] said that Talha[ra] and Zubaīr[ra] would be among his companions in paradise.

Hazrat Zubaīr[ra] was among the ten Companions who had been promised Paradise by the Holy Prophet[sa] during their lifetime. He was among the eminent Companions who stood in front of the Holy Prophet[sa] in battle and behind him in prayers. Hazrat Musleh Mau'ūd[ra] counted him among the fifteen scribes of the Holy Qur'ān.

When Hazrat 'Uthmān[ra] fell seriously ill due to haemorrhage during his Khilāfat, people asked him to nominate a Khalīfa after him. When Hazrat Zubaīr's[ra] name came up on this occasion, Hazrat 'Uthmān[ra] swore that, as far as he knew, Zubaīr[ra] was the best of them all and that he was also most beloved of the Messenger of Allāh.

Hazrat Zubaīr[ra] once had a dispute with an Ansāri Badri Companion regarding irrigation of the fields. The Holy Prophet[sa] said, "O Zubaīr! Irrigate your land and then let the water pass to your neighbour." Upon this, the Ansāri got angry and said to the Prophet, "Is it because he (i.e. Zubaīr) is your aunt's son?" Hearing this, the colour of the face of the Holy Prophet[sa] changed and he said, "O Zubaīr! Irrigate your land and

then withhold the water till it reaches the edges of the fields." Hazrat Zubaīr[ra] said, by Allāh, I think that the following verse was revealed for this occasion: "But no, by thy Lord, they are not believers until they make thee judge in all that is in dispute between them and then find not in their hearts any demur concerning that which thou decidest and submit with full submission" (4:66).

Hazrat 'Umar[ra] said that Zubaīr is one of the pillars of religion.

On the day of the battle of Jamal, Hazrat Zubaīr[ra] told his son Hazrat 'Abdullāh bin Zubaīr[ra] that he would be killed in a state of oppression that day and gave instructions regarding payment of his debts. Hazrat Zubaīr[ra] had become indebted because whenever a person entrusted him with something, he would keep it as a loan, lest it got lost. After his death, when Hazrat 'Abdullāh bin Zubaīr[ra] calculated his debts which amounted to 220,000 dirhams. Hazrat Zubaīr[ra] had instructed Hazrat 'Abdullāh bin Zubaīr[ra] that "If you are unable to repay the loan, then seek help from my Master (God)" Hazrat 'Abdullāh bin Zubaīr[ra] relates that whenever he faced any difficulty in paying the debt, he would pray, "O Master of Zubaīr, pay his loan on his behalf," and somehow provisions would be made and the loan would be paid. Even after all the debt had been repaid, Hazrat 'Abdullāh bin Zubaīr[ra] kept announcing on the occasion of the Hajj for four years that whoever owed a debt to Hazrat Zubaīr[ra] should come forward and he would be paid. After that, Hazrat 'Abdullāh bin Zubaīr[ra] distributed his father's inheritance. According to various traditions, it amounted to between 35 and 52 million.

Explaining the selection of Hazrat 'Ali[ra] as Khalīfa, Hazrat Musleh Mau'ūd[ra] says that after the martyrdom of Hazrat 'Uthmān[ra] the mischief-makers quickly went to Hazrat 'Ali[ra] and forced him to take Bai'at by expressing strong fears for the collapse of the Islāmic state. Later, a group of the same mischiefmakers forced Hazrat Talha[ra] and Hazrat Zubaīr[ra] to swear allegiance to Hazrat 'Ali[ra], which they did on the condition that the blood of Hazrat 'Uthmān[ra] would be avenged immediately. But when this did not happen, they both broke their allegiance and left Madīnah. The same miscreants who took part in the assassination of Hazrat 'Uthmān[ra] later incited Hazrat 'Ā'īsha[ra] to stand up against Hazrat 'Ali[ra]. Both Hazrat Talha[ra] and Hazrat Zubaīr[ra] initially joined Hazrat 'Ā'īsha[ra], but Hazrat Zubaīr[ra], after hearing the Holy Prophet's prediction from Hazrat 'Ali[ra] (that you will fight 'Ali and you will be the aggressors), distanced himself from the battle before it started. Hazrat Talha[ra] also pledged allegiance to Hazrat 'Ali[ra] before he died.

Mubarak Mosque, Islamabad, Tilford UK.

Hazrat Zubaīr[ra] was martyred by Ibn-e-Jurmūz on his return from the battle of Jamal. When Ibn-e-Jurmūz brought Hazrat Zubaīr's[ra] head and sword to Hazrat 'Ali[ra], Hazrat 'Ali[ra] said that it was the sword that had removed uneasiness from the Holy Prophet's[sa] face. Then he gave the promise of Hell to Ibn-e-Jurmūz and said that the Holy Prophet[sa] said on one occasion; "Every Prophet has a disciple, and my disciple is Zubaīr." Hazrat Zubaīr[ra] was buried in the Sibā' valley. At the time of his martyrdom he was 64, 66 or 67 years old. He had several wives at different times and many offspring. Huzoor[aa] named the seven wives and eighteen children of Hazrat Zubaīr[ra].

In the second part of the sermon, Huzoor[aa] spoke about three deceased members of the Jamā'at. Huzoor[aa] led their funeral prayers *in absentia* after the Friday prayer.

1. Alhaj Ibrahim Mbowe Sāhib, Nā'ib Amīr of The Gambia. He passed away on 10th August 2020, at the age of 76. He accepted Aḥmadiyyat in 1961 or 1962. He served as the Deputy Amīr of The Gambia for many years. He was also the Officer of Jalsa Sālāna, National Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and President of the Majlis Ansārullāh Gambia. He was regular in worship, loved reciting the Holy Qur'ān, excelled in making financial sacrifices, and was a loyal servant of Khilāfat.

2. Naeem Ahmad Khan Sāhib, son of 'Abdul Jaleel Khan Sāhib, Nā'ib Amīr of Karachi. He passed away at the end of April. In addition to various other services, he also served as Qā'id Majlis Khuddām-ul-Aḥmadiyya Karachi, and as Nāẓim Ansārullāh Karachi. He was also a Director of Faḍl-e-'Umar Foundation. As an engineer, he helped with the instalment of Roti Plant for Jalsa Sālāna. He was regular in his prayers and in Tahajjud and was devoted to Khilāfat.

3. Bushra Begum Sāhiba, wife of the late Thekedar Wali Muhammad Sāhib of Germany. She passed away on 19th July at the age of 74. Her grandfather, Hazrat Mian Nizāmuddīn Sāhib of Nābha, was a Companion of the Promised Messiah[as]. She was regular in Tahajjud and very hospitable. She cared for the needy and loved the Holy Qur'ān. She left behind four sons and two daughters.

Huzoor[aa] prayed that may Allāh have mercy on the deceased and accept all prayers in favour of their progeny. Āmīn!

MEN OF EXCELLENCE: HAZRAT BILĀL[RA]

SEPTEMBER 11, 2020

Huzoor[aa] continued with the series of sermons regarding the Companions of the Holy Prophet[sa] who participated in the Battle of Badr.

Syednā Hazrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ V[aa]

Hazrat Bilāl bin Rabāh[ra]:

He was a slave of Umaīyyah bin Khalaf. Hazrat Bilāl's[ra] mother was from Abyssinia while his father was from Arabia. He was born at Makkah or, according to one account, at Sarāt. Hazrat Bilāl's[ra] complexion was wheatish and dark, his body was thin, his hair was thick, and there was very little flesh on his cheeks. Hazrat Bilāl[ra] contracted several marriages but had no children. The Holy Prophet[sa] said that Bilāl[ra] was the first believer among the people of Abyssinia.

Hazrat Bilāl[ra] was given the harshest punishment for converting to Islām, but he endured all kinds of hardship and kept proclaiming God's Oneness. According to one account, Hazrat Bilāl[ra] was thrown on the ground by his masters and they put stones and cow skins on him and said, "Your Lord is Lāt and Uzza." But Hazrat Bilāl[ra] kept saying "Ahad, Ahad." When Hazrat Abu Bakr[ra] saw this, he bought Hazrat Bilāl for seven Auqiya, or two hundred and eighty dirhams, and set him free. The people said, "We would have sold him to you even for one Auqiya." Hazrat Abu Bakr[ra] replied, "If you had sold him for one hundred Auqiya, I would still have bought him." According to one account, Hazrat 'Umar[ra] used to say, "Abu Bakr is our chief, and he freed our chief (Bilāl)."

Hazrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ II[ra], while referring to the hardships inflicted on Hazrat Bilāl, says that Hazrat Bilāl's masters would make him lie down on hot sand and place large hot stones on top of him, or appoint some youth to jump on his chest. Whenever Umaīyyah was angry at Bilāl's repeated denial of the divinity of Lāt and Uzza, he would put a rope around his neck and hand him over to mischievous people who would drag him over the rocks in the streets of Makkah. His body would be covered with blood, but he would still go on saying, "*Ahad, Ahad*."

Afterwards, when Allāh gave the Muslims refuge in Madīnah, the Holy Prophet[sa] appointed Hazrat Bilāl to give the call to prayer. He could not recite 'ش' well and used to say اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ and the ignorant people of Madīnah would laugh at this. On one occasion, the Holy Prophet[sa] said, "You laugh at Bilāl's Adhān, but God in Heaven smiles at it."

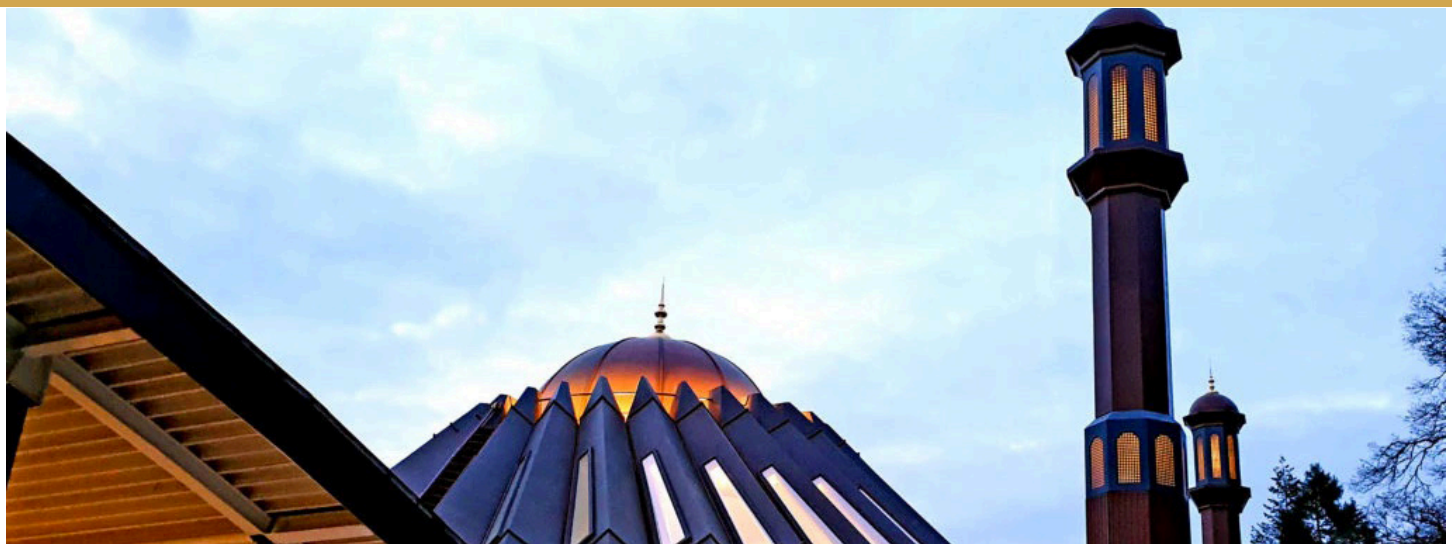
Hazrat Bilāl[ra] is counted among the first people to have accepted Islām. When he declared his belief in Islām, only seven people had preceded him.

On the occasion of the migration to Madīnah, Hazrat Bilāl[ra] stayed at the house of Hazrat Sa'ad bin Khaythama[ra]. The Holy Prophet[sa] established bond of brotherhood between him and Hazrat 'Ubaīdah bin Harith[ra] or Hazrat Abu Ruwaiha Khas'ami[ra].

Due to the different climate in Madīnah, many of the Companions became ill in the early days of the migration and started missing Makkah. Hazrat Bilāl[ra] used to say: "O Allāh! Curse be on Shu'bah bin Rabī'ah, 'Utbah bin Rabī'ah and Umaīyyah bin Khalaf who drove us out of our land towards the land of pestilence." Upon hearing this, the Holy Prophet[sa] prayed for the illness spreading in Madīnah to be removed, and for Madīnah to become as dear to them as Makkah was.

Advising the troubled Aḥmadīs on the occasion of migration from Qādiān, Hazrat Musleh Mau'ūd[ra] had said: Stop thinking that you have migrated and left everything behind. The Holy Prophet[sa] was displeased with the emigrants who lamented the loss of their homes and property. One day, Hazrat Bilāl[ra] developed a fever and started making up verses and reciting them aloud. When the Messenger of Allāh[sa] saw this, he was displeased and said, "Is this why you have come here?" I, too, say to you, be happy. Don't look at what you have lost, look at the fact that we have lost it for the sake of Allāh and for the progress of Islām. So, be happy.

Huzoor[aa] said that we Aḥmadīs were told by our then Khalīfa that our migration was for the sake of Allāh and for Islām. But today those who were themselves against



the creation of Pakistan are claiming to be its creators and are depriving Aḥmadīs of their basic civil rights through lies and deception. The Parliament has banned us from using the name of the religion for whose sake and in whose service we had migrated to Pakistan. We don't need their endorsement, but it is a pity that these so-called 'custodians' of the country have committed this atrocity not only on Aḥmadīs but on Pakistan itself. They are discrediting the country and hindering its progress. They are eating away its foundations like termites. May Allāh rid this country of such transgressors.

Huzoor[aa] said that Hazrat Bilāl[ra] took part in all the battles alongside the Holy Prophet[sa]. In the Battle of Badr, he, along with a group of Ansār, killed Umaīyyah bin Khalaf. Hazrat Bilāl[ra] was also the secretary or treasurer of the Holy Prophet[sa]. On one occasion, when the Holy Prophet[sa] made an appeal to women to give alms, the women took off their rings and put them in a cloth that Hazrat Bilāl[ra] was holding.

Hazrat Bilāl[ra] also had the honour of being the first Caller to prayer (mu'dhin). Throughout the life of the Holy Prophet[sa], whether he was at home or on a journey, Hazrat Bilāl[ra] served as his Caller to prayer (mu'dhin). Initially, on the advice of the Companions, the Holy Prophet[sa] had instructed that a horn be blown as the call for prayer. But later when Hazrat 'Abdullāh bin Zaīd[ra] was taught the words of Adhān in a dream, the Holy Prophet[sa] said that this dream was from God and he too had received a revelation to this effect. Then, according to the instructions of the Holy Prophet[sa], Hazrat 'Abdullāh bin Zaīd[ra] would recite the words of Adhān to Hazrat Bilāl[ra] and Hazrat Bilāl[ra] would repeat those words aloud. When Hazrat 'Umar[ra] heard these words, he said to the Holy Prophet[sa], "By God! I also saw in a dream what he saw."

After Hazrat Bilāl[ra] would finish the Adhān, he would stand at the door of the Holy Prophet[sa] in order to inform him that it was time for prayer and say, "Come for prayer, come for prayer, O Prophet of Allāh." In *Sunan ibn-e-Mājah*, it is narrated that one day when Hazrat Bilāl[ra] came to the Holy Prophet's[sa] door to announce Fajr prayer, he was told that the Messenger of Allāh[sa] was asleep. Hazrat Bilāl[ra] said aloud, "Prayer is better than sleep." According to another account, the Messenger of God said: "O Bilāl! These are wonderful words. Include them in your Fajr Adhān."

Huzoor[aa] said that there are some more accounts regarding Hazrat Bilāl[ra] which he would mention later, Inshā'Allāh!

In the second part of the sermon, Huzoor[aa] spoke about four members of the Jamā'at who passed away recently. Huzoor[aa] also led their funeral prayer in absentia after the Friday prayer.

1. Ra'ūf bin Maqsood Jr. of Belgium who was a student at Jāmi'a Aḥmadiyya UK. He passed away on 4th September due to a brain tumour. He joined Jāmi'a Aḥmadiyya in 2018. He was a good mannered, well-spoken young man who understood the spirit of Waqf and loved Khilāfat. He was very bright and possessed extraordinary abilities.

2. Zafar Iqbal Qureshi Sāhib, former Nā'ib Amīr of Islāmabad District, Pakistan. He passed away on 3rd September at the age of 87. His grandfather Hazrat 'Ubaidullāh Qureshi Sāhib[ra] was a Companion of the Promised Messiah[as]. The deceased was an engineer by profession and retired from government service in 1994 as Chief Engineer. From 1998 to 2019, he served as the Nā'ib Amīr of Islāmabad. Huzoor[aa] said that he served the Jamā'at humbly and selflessly.

3. Honourable Kabine Kabaja Kate Sāhib of Senegal who died on 24th August at the age of 85. He was a Member of Parliament for 18 years and also served as the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the Central Bureau of Investigation.

4. Mubashar Latif Sāhib, Advocate of the Supreme Court, Pakistan, who passed away on 5th May at the age of 85. He served as President of the Jamā'at of Faisal Town, Lahore, for 17 years. He was one of the three lawyers who had the honour of representing the Jamā'at in 1974. He taught at Punjab University Law College for 46 years. He is survived by his wife, six daughters and several grandchildren.

Huzoor[aa] prayed that may Allāh have mercy on the deceased and accept all prayers in favour of their progeny. Āmīn!

Huzoor[aa] continued with the account regarding Hazrat Bilāl[ra]. When camp was set up on the way back from the Khyber expedition, the Holy Prophet[sa] said to Hazrat Bilāl[ra], "Tonight, you will guard our prayer time." That meant that Bilāl[ra] would wake people up for Fajr prayer. Hazrat Bilāl[ra] continued to perform *Nawāfil* as long as he could, but a little before Fajr he fell asleep and so could not wake up the others. No one else woke up either until the sun came out. The Holy Prophet[sa] was the first to wake up and he summoned Bilāl[ra], who apologized for his lapse as sleep had overwhelmed him. The Holy Prophet[sa] then gave instructions to move on from that place. After traveling a short distance, he ordered the Companions to stop and prepare for the prayer. After the prayer, the Holy Prophet[sa] said, "Whoever forgets his prayer should offer it when he remembers it."

On the day of the conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet[sa] ordered Hazrat Bilāl[ra] to give Adhān from the roof of Ka'bah. Hazrat Bilāl[ra] also accompanied the Holy Prophet[sa] when he entered Ka'bah and offered prayers between its two pillars.

Hazrat Musleh Mau'ūd[ra] says with regard to the conquest of Makkah: Hazrat 'Abbās[ra] brought Abu Sufyān to the Holy Prophet[sa]. Abu Sufyān then pledged allegiance to the Holy Prophet[sa] and sought amnesty for the people of Makkah in the name of their ancestral relationship with the Holy Prophet[sa]. The Holy Prophet[sa] then announced an amnesty for anyone who entered Ka'bah or the house of Abu Sufyān, or surrendered his arms, or closed the doors of his own house. Abu Sufyān said that in this situation the homeless people on the streets might be killed. The Holy Prophet[sa] then had a flag prepared and said that this was the Banner of Bilāl, whoever stood under it would also be safe. Abu Sufyān was satisfied with this and he entered Makkah announcing these terms.

Mubarak Mosque, Islamabad, Tilford UK.

Hazrat Musleh Mau'ūd[ra] says that the greatest thing about this whole incident is the Banner of Bilāl. The Holy Prophet[sa] was himself a chief but he did not hoist a banner for himself or any of the other Companions. This was because Bilāl was the only person who had no relatives in Makkah, and the torment that he had suffered at the hands of the Makkahns had not been inflicted upon anyone else. On this day, when a ten-thousand strong Muslim army was entering Makkah, Bilāl might have thought that now was the time for the atrocities inflicted upon him to be avenged. But when the Holy Prophet[sa] announced a general amnesty, Bilāl might have felt disappointed. The Holy Prophet[sa], realizing that Bilāl was the only person who would be hurt by his general amnesty, so he found such a wonderful way to avenge Hazrat Bilāl[ra] that nothing like it had ever been witnessed before. The Holy Prophet[sa] commanded all the oppressors that, if they wanted to save their lives and the lives of their wives and children, they must come under Bilāl's[ra] banner. The heads of all those who used to stomp on his chest with their shoes, were now made to seek protection by standing under his banner. This was the revenge that was more glorious than the revenge of Hazrat Yūsuf[as], because Hazrat Yūsuf[as] only forgave his brothers for the sake of his father, whereas the Holy Prophet[sa] forgave his own uncles and brothers because of a slave.

After citing the above details from Sair-e-Ruhāni, Huzoor[aa] also gave a brief account of these events from Introduction to the Study of the Holy Qur'ān (Dibācha Tafsīr-ul-Qur'ān). Huzoor[aa] said that some people try to find discrepancies between the two accounts, but the only difference is that one is detailed and the other is concise.

Huzoor[aa] said that Najāshi, the King of Abyssinia, sent the Holy Prophet[sa] three spears as a gift, one of which he kept for himself. On the occasion of 'Idul-Fitr, Hazrat Bilāl[ra] would carry the spear in front of the Holy Prophet[sa] and then fix it at a certain place, and the Holy Prophet[sa] would pray facing it. After the Holy Prophet[sa], Hazrat Bilāl[ra] used to walk before Hazrat Abu Bakr[ra] in the same manner.

After the death of the Holy Prophet[sa], Hazrat Bilāl[ra] asked Hazrat Abu Bakr[ra] for permission to go on Jihād, but Hazrat Abu Bakr[ra] said, "I beseech you in the name of Allāh and remind you of my sanctity. I have grown old and weak and my death is near, so stay with me." Hazrat Bilāl[ra] agreed to stay in Makkah on the

condition that he would not call Adhān for anyone after the Holy Prophet[sa]. After the death of Hazrat Abu Bakr[ra], Hazrat 'Umar[ra] also tried to persuade Bilāl to stay in Makkah, but Bilāl insisted on going to Jihād. Hazrat 'Umar[ra], therefore, permitted him to go.

While Hazrat Bilāl[ra] was staying in Syria, he once saw the Holy Prophet[sa] in a dream. The Holy Prophet[sa] said to him: "O Bilāl! What callousness! Isn't it time for you to come and visit me?" Hazrat Bilāl[ra] woke up in great sorrow. When he reached Madīnah, he came to the tomb of the Holy Prophet[sa] and started to weep bitterly. Hazrat Ḥassan[ra] and Hazrat Ḥusain[ra] also came and Hazrat Bilāl[ra] kissed and hugged them. Hazrat Ḥassan[ra] and Hazrat Ḥusain[ra] said to Hazrat Bilāl[ra] that we want you to call the morning Adhān. The narrator says that upon hearing Hazrat Bilāl's[ra] Adhān that day, Madīnah trembled with emotion as people recalled the time of the Holy Prophet[sa].

Referring to Hazrat Bilāl's[ra] last days, Hazrat Musleh Mau'ūd[ra] says: In the latter part of his life, Bilāl had gone to live in Syria. There he asked for a woman's hand in marriage. He said, "I am an Abyssinian, and you can refuse me. On the other hand, if you accept my offer considering that I am a Companion of the Holy Prophet[sa], it would be very kind of you." She accepted his offer and he got married and he stayed in Syria.

When Hazrat 'Umar[ra] set up office to distribute stipends, he asked Bilāl who he would appoint on his behalf. Hazrat Bilāl[ra] replied that he would be represented by Hazrat Abu Ruwaiha[ra], whom he would never forget because of the brotherhood which the Holy Prophet[sa] had established between the two of them.

Huzoor[aa] cited the following example of Hazrat Bilāl's[ra] truthfulness. Hazrat Bilāl[ra] had a brother who portrayed himself as an Arab. He sent an offer of marriage to an Arab lady. The family of the lady replied that they would only agree if Hazrat Bilāl[ra] came to them in person. When Hazrat Bilāl[ra] came, he recited tashahhud and said that, "I am Bilāl bin Rabāh, and he is my brother. But he is not a good man in terms of morals and religion. If you like, you can marry him, or you can refuse." The family, however, agreed to the marriage because he was Hazrat Bilāl's[ra] brother.

One day some people came to the Holy Prophet[sa] and asked him to perform the Nikah of their sister with a certain man. The Holy Prophet[sa] asked, "What do you think about Bilāl?" They came to the Holy Prophet[sa] a second time and the Holy Prophet[sa] asked the same question. When they came the third time, he said, "What do you think of a man who is one of the dwellers of Paradise?" At this they agreed to marry their sister to Hazrat Bilāl[ra].

Huzoor[aa] said that it is only through sacrifices that one is exalted. It is the beautiful teaching of Islām that those who make sacrifices and show loyalty right from the beginning, even if they are Abyssinian slaves, receive high status.

Huzoor[aa] said he would continue next time with the accounts regarding Hazrat Bilāl[ra], Inshā'Allāh!

MEN OF EXCELLENCE: HAZRAT BILĀL[RA]

SEPTEMBER 25, 2020

Huzoor[aa] continued with the account regarding Hazrat Bilāl[ra].

One day the Holy Prophet[sa] asked Hazrat Bilāl[ra], "What is the reason of you always being ahead of me in Paradise? Last night, when I entered Paradise, I heard your footsteps in front of me." Hazrat Bilāl[ra] said, "Whenever I give the Adhān, I offer two rak'āt of nafal prayer. Whenever my ablution is broken, I perform ablution. I do not see anything in me that would give me hope other than that whenever I have performed ablution, whether during the day or the night, I have offered nafal prayer along with it."

Huzoor[aa] said that this means that, because of purity and his secret worship, Allāh gave him the same position in Paradise as he had in this world where he walked in front of the Holy Prophet[sa] holding a spear on the day of 'Īd.

According to another account, the Holy Prophet[sa] said: I heard someone's footsteps in Paradise, so I asked Gabriel whose footsteps they were and he replied that they were Bilāl's. Hazrat Abu Bakr[ra] said: "I wish I was born from the womb of Bilāl's mother and Bilāl's father was my father! What a high status is enjoyed by Bilāl who was once despised and dragged on stones."

Hazrat Mirza Bashīr Ahmad Sāhib[ra] says that after Syria had been conquered during the Khilāfat of Hazrat 'Umar, Hazrat Bilāl[ra] delivered the Adhān upon the insistence of Hazrat 'Umar[ra]. Hearing this Adhān, all the Companions, including Hazrat 'Umar[ra], cried profusely.

Hazrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II[ra] once said: A few days ago, an Arab came to meet me and said that he was a descendant of Hazrat Bilāl[ra]. Regardless of whether he was telling the truth or not, I wanted to embrace him eagerly because he was one of the descendants of the man who called the Adhān at the mosque of the Holy Prophet[sa]. Hazrat Bilāl's[ra] children and property are nowhere today, but the Adhān that he gave in the mosque of the Holy Prophet[sa] lives for all times to come. These are the virtues that last forever.

Huzoor[aa] said that forty-four Aḥādīth have been narrated by Hazrat Bilāl[ra], four of which are found in Sahīh Bukhāri and Sahīh Muslim. The Holy Prophet[sa] said, "Paradise is eager to meet three people; 'Ali, 'Ammar and Bilāl."

Hazrat Salmān[ra], Hazrat Sohaib[ra] and

Hazrat Bilāl[ra] were in a gathering when Abu Sufyān came. They said that the swords of Allāh did not fall on the necks of the enemies of Allāh. When Hazrat Abu Bakr[ra] heard this, he rebuked them. Later when Hazrat Abu Bakr[ra] told the Holy Prophet[sa] about this, the Holy Prophet[sa] said, "Perhaps you have angered them. If you have angered them, you have angered your Lord." Hazrat Abu Bakr[ra] immediately returned and apologized to the poor Companions.

According to a narration by Hazrat 'Ali[ra], the Holy Prophet[sa] counted Hazrat Bilāl[ra] among his 14 *naqībs*. Similarly, he said, "What a good man Bilāl is, the chief of martyrs and callers to prayer (mu'azzin). On the Day of Judgment, Bilāl will have the longest neck (he will be most honoured)." He also said, "Bilāl will be given a camel in Paradise and he will ride on it."

On another occasion, the Holy Prophet[sa] said, "Bilāl! Die in poverty and not in wealth, otherwise, the Fire will be your abode." That is to say, never turn away a person in need, and keep spending rather than hoarding. When Hazrat Bilāl[ra] used to pray before going to sleep: "O Allāh, forgive me my sins and consider me excused for my shortcomings."

Hazrat Bilāl[ra] passed away in Damascus or Aleppo in 20 A.H. He was over sixty years old at the time of his death.

Describing the status of Hazrat Bilāl[ra], Hazrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II[ra] says: The Holy Prophet[sa] was born at Makkah, among Quraīsh who considered themselves superior to other Arabs, and yet he never looked down upon people of other tribes and nations. He loved non-Arabs as much as he loved the Arabs. His wars with people of other nations led to the overthrow of their rulers, and yet the people loved him. There is no example of such love among the disciples of Jesus Christ as we see among the followers of the Holy Prophet[sa]. Having once believed in him, they gave themselves to him with all their heart and soul. When we look at Hazrat Bilāl[ra], who was an Abyssinian slave, we find that his love for the Holy Prophet[sa] was not an act of deference or gratitude but it was true love. Hazrat Bilāl[ra] was an Abyssinian and had served the Arabs and had no blood relations with the Arabs, but when he finished the call to prayer in Syria, he fainted and passed away a few minutes later. This was a testimony to the claim of the Holy Prophet[sa] that there is no difference between Arab and non-Arab. The love and affection shown for the Holy Prophet[sa] by people of other nations is the greatest practical testimony that the Holy Prophet[sa] loved them more than their own people.

> "... the Holy Prophet[sa] said, "Bilāl! Die in poverty and not in wealth, otherwise, the Fire will be your abode."

Huzoor[aa] said that this was Sayyidnā Bilāl who set for us the highest standards of love for the Holy Prophet[sa] and God's Oneness. Today our salvation depends on following these examples. May Allāh grant us the strength to do so.

In the second part of the sermon, Huzoor[aa] informed the Jamā'at about the sad demise of some devoted members of the Jamā'at and led their funeral prayers in absentia after the Friday prayer.

1. Maulana Talib Yaqoub Sāhib, son of Tayyab Yaqoub Sāhib, missionary, of Trinidad Tobago. He passed away on 8th September at the age of 63. He dedicated his life in 1979 and joined Jāmi'a Aḥmadiyya Rabwah from where he obtained Shahid degree in 1989. He had the honour of serving in different countries with great devotion. He left behind a son, two daughters, two brothers and three sisters.

2. Engineer Iftikhar Ali Qureshi Sāhib, former Wakīl-ul-Māl III, and Vice President of Majlis Tahrīk-i-Jadīd. He passed away on 3rd June at the age of 99. After retiring from government service in 1983, he dedicated his life for the Jamā'at and was able to serve in various capacities.

3. Razia Sultana Sāhiba, wife of Hakīm Khurshīd Ahmed Sāhib, former Sadr 'Umoomi, Rabwah, who passed at the age of 81. She is survived by a daughter.

4. Muhammad Tāhir Ahmad Sāhib, Nā'ib Nāzir Baitul Māl, Qādiān, who passed away on 28th May at Noor Hospital Qādiān due to liver cancer. From 1989 to the last day of his life, for 31 years, he served in various departments. He is survived by old parents, wife and two sons.

5. Aqeel Ahmed, son of Mirza Khalil Ahmed Baig Sāhib who is a lecturer at Jāmi'a Aḥmadiyya Ghana International. The deceased was visiting Pakistan where he passed away at the age of 13 after a short illness. Huzoor[aa] prayed that Allāh may elevate the spiritual status of the deceased and give strength to the parents and sisters to bear this loss. Amīn!

At the end of the sermon, Huzoor[aa] said that nowadays, a lot of people request him to offer funeral prayers for their deceased relatives. However, due to the lack of time, it is not possible to make a mention of all of them. Therefore, he wanted to make it clear that all those who have made this request are included in the funeral prayer, even if their names are not specifically mentioned. May Allāh forgive them all, and grant patience to all their families and help them to continue their good deeds! Amīn!

IRFĀN ILĀHĪ (Part 2)

(DEEPER KNOWLEDGE OF GOD)

The following is a translation of an address of Hazrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ II[ra] delivered on 16th March 1919 at the Jalsa Sālāna. It is the second part in a 2-part series.

Only when a person clears their past accounts can they make spiritual progress. A person might ask, "How do you possibly remove such a heavy burden to proceed in virtue?" Remember that spiritual matters can seem onerous and burdensome, but this burden is linked with success. For example, a poor, needy man approached the Holy Prophet[sa] and was told the solution to his poverty is marriage. The man married, but his financial situation did not improve and complained again to the Messenger of Allāh[sa]. The Holy Prophet[sa] advised him to contract another marriage. Following this, he approached the Holy Prophet[sa] and said, "I had no means to feed one wife. How do I feed two?"

The Prophet[sa] said, "Marry again." A few days after his third marriage, he visited the Messenger of Allāh[sa] and said, "Oh Messenger of Allāh! My condition has now approached death!" The Prophet[sa] repeated, "Marry again." After some time had elapsed, the Prophet[sa] inquired about his condition. The man said, "I now have immense wealth." These are mysteries concerning the Divine Law, and not everyone can understand them. But let me explain this a bit further. First, as I have already said, only when a person settles their past immoralities can they advance spiritually. Just as rotten food will always rotten, even if mixed with wholesome food, so too must a person, first, purge themselves of sins and vices, and break the effects of their past evils. Second, a person has the most ardour when they first embark on a goal; often, this passion abates with time. When a person first resolves not to sin, they are prepared to overcome the greatest of obstacles. This is the best time to take on this challenge—when one has remarkable courage. The best to repent is at the start of one's spiritual journey.

Al-Masjid an-Nabawi, Madīnah, Saudi Arabia

NECESSARY CONDITIONS TO CLEAR PAST ACCOUNTS AND PERFORM FUTURE VIRTUE

People can advance in virtue and spirituality once they clear their past sins. Thus, I will discuss the necessary means and conditions to attain this object and grow in virtue. The first and foremost requirement for attaining righteousness, and after that, *Irfān Ilāhī* is to purify one's thoughts and mind. I shall expound upon this and show that this is an excellent strategy to attain righteousness. That is not to say a person can always keep a pure mind. For that is impossible for most people. A person must, therefore, prevent an evil thought from fermenting when it does arise. For example, if a person entertains the idea of taking a bribe, they must not mull over it and start formulating a plan of action. Instead, they must immediately dissolve this corrupt thought from their mind. Doing so is tremendously beneficial. A person who continually tries to remove an impure thought, even if they end up committing an evil, has a thousand times great chance of succeeding in self-reformation than a person who relentlessly ponders upon an evil and then perpetrates it. The constant flow of thoughts has a penetrating effect upon one's heart.

Conversely, a person who persistently rids their mind of immoral ideas is able to stem their evils. Hence, whenever such thoughts arise, one must block them and stand on guard. Do not underestimate the power of thoughts. The longer an impure thought remains in mind, the deeper it affects a person. People can thus save themselves from perils by shunning sinful thoughts. It is not hard, but rather easy. Whenever you have such a thought, focus your attention away from it by doing something that occupies your mind and diverts your attention.

For example, have a conversation with someone; resolve an old dispute. In doing so, you will save yourself from sinning. But if you are still gripped by sin in a fit of passion, you must ensure it is never premeditated; evil thoughts must always be shunned. Eventually, you will gain self-control.

THE NATURE OF IMAGINATION

Imagination and thoughts are no ordinary things. Everything in the world happens through imagination. For example, a person who accepts Islām does so because they imagined and thought about accepting it. Similarly, a person commits vice because they had imagined and conceived it. Hence, imagination plays a significant role in the world. It holds tremendous influence and weight. One might have doubts about its importance, given it is an immaterial concept. Can a person glance at a seed and know it will become a giant tree without using imagination? Consider our birth. Human beings procreate because of a desire borne out of thoughts. If our birth is the result of imagination, can we disregard this powerful concept? Everything humans do is owing to power if thought. One may contend that other factors work in conjunction with imagination to steer a person to act; and thus the concept is insignificant. But the same argument will have to be applied to a seed; one might argue that various nourishments in the earth cause tree growth and thus a seed is unimportant. If a person is willing to admit a seed is insignificant because it is aided by other factors to grow into a tree, then sure they can claim the same about imagination; not otherwise. No doubt thoughts are the basis of all things, at the core of all our actions. Thus God Almighty declares, "And whether you disclose what is in your minds or keep it hidden, Allāh will call you to account for it."[1] This does not mean a person will be punished for every evil thought. God Almighty has told us that a person will not have to answer for things beyond their capacity. For example, if someone across some goods and for a moment imagines taking them, they will not be punished for this initial thought; but beyond that if they begin formulating a plan, they will be held accountable. When the verse mentioned above was revealed, the companions approached the Prophet[sa] and said, "Sometimes we also have evil thoughts; will we be punished for them?" The Prophet[sa] replied, "An evil thought upon which a person does not act is a good deed in itself."[2] Hence, the verse refers to those thoughts a person has in planning and acting upon. If one has the thought of stealing something but immediately shuns it, it would be deemed a virtue. If a person has thoughts of killing someone but then shuns these thoughts, they will have earned a good deed. Conversely, if a person starts dwelling on them and seriously considers implementing them, they will be accountable to God.

> "And whether you disclose what is in your minds or keep it hidden, Allāh will call you to account for it."

A MAJOR STEP FOR SELF-REFORMATION

Thus, you must remember this point. For it is a major step towards rectifying deeds. Indeed it is true that evil thoughts do naturally arise, but getting rid of them is also within one's control. One must cleanse the mind when such thoughts arise.

AN INTERESTING NARRATIVE

The Promised Messiah[as] would narrate the following anecdote: A man stole a basket of grapes from an orchard. As he was leaving, he was caught by the owner. The thief said, "Punish me if you like, but please listen to my explanation." The After the owner agreed, the man said, "At it happened, a whirlwind carried me into your garden, dropping me upon a bushel of grapes. I was holding on for dear life and swinging my arms. The next thing I knew, I was sitting beside a basket full of grapes. Tell me, was it my fault?" The owner replied, "Alright, I accept your explanation. Now tell me, did the basket also happen to land upon your hand and tell you to steal it?" The man said, "I was just wondering the same thing." The same is the case of a person who allows immoral thoughts to ferment in their heart; blameless for the initial thoughts, they are certainly guilty of acting upon them; they are not accountable for the original thought, but indeed for letting them harbour and grow. They will be punished for permitting such thoughts to permeate; removing them was well within his control.

THE FIRST MEANS TO PURIFY THE SOUL

Thus the first requirement for purifying the soul is to purge oneself of evil and impure thoughts.

THE SECOND MEANS

The second means identified by the Holy Qur'ān for purifying the soul and rather succeeding in all matters is: "And it is not righteousness that you come into houses by the backs thereof, but truly righteous is he who fears God. And you should come into houses by the doors thereof, and fear Allāh so that you may prosper."[3] Meaning that one should fear God and adopt the right path allocated for any object. The right means and ways Allāh has set forth for success must be used. And since self-purification is the way to attaining *Irfān Ilāhī*, one must forsake all previous vices and adopt virtue that leads to this purification. One must gain complete knowledge of what God likes and dislikes. The Promised Messiah made an index of all the commandments mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān and would recite them. It is evident he laid great emphasis on them. It is of utmost importance to know these matters for self-purification. Once a person has good understanding of what is ordained and forbidden, the matter becomes easy. A person can escape the darkness of ignorance and enter the light of knowledge. Having learned the injunctions and prohibitions, they must try to act upon them; for applying effort

in the right way is the only formula for success. Even if one partially errs in doing so, they must continue trying because it will pave the way for future success. Remember, you must act upon all the divine commandments; without it, your faith will remain incomplete.

THE THIRD MEANS TO ATTAIN DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

The third means to adopt Divine Attributes is to immerse oneself in deeds that purify the heart. Acting upon the commandments will, in turn, impress the attributes of God in your heart. Let me explain this with an example of a short-tempered person. They must mull over the matter at the opportune time: *I get angry very quickly. This is an evil deed. It is an obstruction to my spiritual progress. Hence, I shall never ever commit this deed*. Repeating such words will etch this thinking in his heart and protect them from this malady. Without self-reminders, a person cannot hope to succeed. Still, the goal might appear overwhelming at first. One way is to change behaviour, one day at a time, and commit to abstaining from a specific evil on one day; then the next day; and so on. Ultimately the person will overcome the vice altogether. This is how to fight oneself to forsake a bad habit. That is, change cannot be expected overnight. It must be made in small steps.

Similarly, you can resolve to perform a good deed once, then another time; and another; and so on. In this manner, virtue will become a habit. In reality, a person's ego is like a child and should be dealt with as a child; the same strategies used to teach children in schools should be used for teaching spirituality. Just as children are initially taught short lessons and gradually given more workload, so should be done in teaching oneself to overcome evil and adopt good.

Repetition is another strategy to purify the soul. The Holy Qur'ān refers to this as follows: "On those who believe and do good works, there shall be no sin for what they eat, provided they fear God and believe and do good work, and again fear God and believe, yet again fear God and do good. And Allāh loves those who do good."[4]

The injunction to fear God has been repeated three times in this verse. With each instance there is a different outcome. The first mention of the fear of God results in belief and good deeds necessary for sincere faith. The second mention is followed by belief only. Why would the first case have both belief and good works, and the second, only belief? Bear in mind that the first case indicates a level of belief that does not [naturally] translate into good deeds; the second does. In the first instance, belief is not so strong as to bring about action. Thus, Allāh specifically emphasizes good deeds alongside belief. In the second instance, belief is deep enough to result into good deeds [naturally]; hence there was no need to mention 'good deeds.' The third case is, "Fear God and become beneficent." It means consist good works enhance our belief. The word *Ihsān* mentioned here was also described by the Holy Prophet[sa] as follows: "Worship God as though you were seeing Him; and if you are unable to do so, at the very least, worship Him as if He watches you."[5] This is indeed *Irfān Ilāhī*. Thus, we understand the importance of consistency in virtue and the tremendous affect of each repetition. God says a person who does a good deed with righteousness in their heart is conferred belief and the ability to render virtue. The next time they carry out this good deed with righteousness, their belief is further enhanced so that virtues form a natural part of their belief. Still, when they act with taqwa again, their faith is even more elevated, raising them to a higher station; namely, *Muhsin*. Allāh Almighty explains that He loves such a person. Who would distance themselves from their beloved? The Holy Prophet[sa] plainly described that such people behold God. Meaning that, they have *Irfān Ilāhī*.

THE FOURTH MEANS

You must be consistent in doing virtue. Hence, Allāh Almighty commands: "And continue worshiping thy Lord, till death comes to thee."[6] People who maintain that they no longer require means to find Him because they have already seen God are absolute liars. Prayer, Fasting, Hajj, and Charity are all vehicles to reach God, but they must be used continually. False and dishonest people claim that these good deeds are only an instrument to find God; and once a person has found Him, these means do not serve any purpose. This is utterly wrong; God is infinite; our quest to God is endless. Once we have found God, we have touched an endless ocean and embarked upon a journey that never ends. Just as God is infinite, so must our good deeds be unceasing. Sure if God had been a confined being, our worship to reach him would also be finite. So with each passing day we must keep improving our spirituality. We must be constant in worshiping God; it cannot be temporary. Or it would be rendered vain. Allāh the Exalted has declared, "And be not like unto her who, after having made

it strong, breaks her yarn into pieces."[7]

THE FIFTH MEANS

There are a great many matters one cannot understand without a teacher. God Almighty says, "O yea who believe! Fear Allāh, and be with the truthful."[8] Keep righteous company to gain strength. Hence, it is paramount one benefits from an excellent teacher. The system of reformers, divine saints, and believers continues in every era. But then God raises a Prophet and people must benefit from him. Just as a student who has a textbook still needs a teacher, so does a person need a teacher for spiritual guidance. Thus God Almighty affirm in the Holy Qur'ān, "Allāh has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them Successors in the earth, as He made Successors from among those who were before them."[9] Meaning that, God will continue to send Successors in the ummah of the Holy Prophet[sa]. He does not however specify how exactly it will happen, except that it will be in the same way as earlier time; some were political successors, others were only spiritual; same will be the case among Muslims. Explaining the objective of these successors, God says, "He will surely establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that He will surely give them in exchange security and peace after their fear."[10] Through them, Islām will be established. They will reform people and act as their teachers. Thus, God Almighty affirms the necessity of a teacher and their critical need for the progress of Islām. A person is able rapidly learn from a teacher which would otherwise take years. For example, a person only uses a dictionary for education; they could not learn in years what a teacher could teach them in days. This speech I am delivering before you is another example. The knowledge I am imparting would take you years to investigate and write on your own. Yet you have gained knowledge of this subject in a matter of hours, instead of years. Still it is difficult to digest. Hence, teachers are paramount. God has promised to keep granting you teachers. You do not even need to seek them out; you are part of a divine community that

is promised teachers by God, Himself. You do not face issues that others do. Thus, you must benefit from them.

THE SIXTH MEANS

Another important means for spiritual purity is self-appraisal. A person can purify themselves very quickly if they use this point. But the self-appraisal I refer to is not what you might suppose. I will detail the meanings of self-appraisal, its challenges, its solutions, and what accountability really entails. It is mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān that humans will have to give an account: "On that day when Allāh will raise them all together. He will inform them of what they did. Allāh has kept account of it, while they forgot. And Allāh is Witness over all things."[11] Thus, people are supposed to remember their account for the reckoning, but they will forget. So Allāh will remind them. Hence, the verse demonstrates the importance of keeping an account of one's actions. They will be presented on the Day of Judgment. Essentially this means a person should constantly be mindful of their actions and deeds. Hazrat 'Umar[ra] is reported to have said: "Take account of your souls, lest an account is taken from you."[12]

TWO FORMS OF SELF-ACCOUNTABILITY

It must be remembered there are two ways to do self-accountability. Not understanding this difference has kept people from this undertaking. One way is to do it partially, the other in its entirety; the former relates to individual deeds, the latter to actions as a whole; the first corrects and reforms actions, the second refines them. And the proper way is to use both.

INDIVIDUAL DEEDS

The first form of self-accountability involves examining individual deeds. They can be further parsed into three phases: (1) Initial (2) Intermediate (3) Ultimate.

INITIAL

When a person is about to render a deed, they should monitor their conscience and ask: What is my motive behind it? For whom am I doing it? This will help them identify if an action is evil, for deeds are good or evil based on motives. One's conscience will give the answer. If the motive is wrong, pangs of shame and guilt will stop the urge. Shame and remorse extinguish evil urges. Take theft as an example. A person who is thinking of stealing will ask himself: "What is my motive in stealing?" Knowing that it is to

gain wealth, he will then ask, "Are there no others means to acquire wealth then to steal from an innocent person? How would I feel if someone stole from me?" In this manner, his conscience will steer them in the right direction and prevent them. This is the self-accountability a person does in the initial stage. But it should be borne in mind that asking oneself these questions superficially could delude a person into thinking an action is good, while it is not. Thus, one must have an objective dialogue with one's conscience; doing so will permit one to catch evil acts.

Consequently, many potential sins will vanish the first time a person questions oneself; others will disappear after two or three questions. Still others will emerge as possible virtues that can benefit others. At this stage, a person should ask themselves the second question: "For whom am I carrying out this action?" The answer will often reveal that many of the deeds a person thought were virtues turn out to be evils. For example, before offering prayer, giving charity, or doing good to others, a person asks themselves the first question and knows they are good acts. Still, upon asking the second question, perhaps their conscience tells them their motives are merely ostentatious. Having thus realized, they will set their motives to be the sole pleasure of Allāh and the benefit of humanity. Thus, a person would be able to transform evil into virtue.

INTERMEDIATE

The second form of self-appraisal is done as one begins to carry out the deed. This has great benefits. As a person does any deed, they should ask: "How am I doing this deed?" In other words, what means are they employing for the task. This type of accountability also reveals good deeds being done using unbecoming means. Reflection on the above question eliminates the possibility of such mistakes.

FINAL

The third and ultimate self-accountability is taken after a deed. In this case, a person should ask what effect is this act having on one's heart. This question helps protect a person from the perils of pride and arrogance after they have successfully done a good deed. It enables a person to detect any traces of arrogance that might arises out of a good act. If a person discovers arrogance, they can uproot it through self-reproach; and thus safeguard their good deeds from being wasted. Conversely, if a person observes that a good deed has effected humility and meekness upon their heart, it will steer them towards further virtue.

Hence, the first type of self-appraisal constitutes three phases: The initial phase in which a person examines their real intent for an action before it is carried out and asking, "why and for whom am I performing this deed?" The intermediate phase in which you ask yourself "what means am I using to carry out this action?" And the final phase in which you ask yourself succeeding an action, "How has this affected my heart?" If we begin to implement this three-phase method, will quickly develop the habit of self-assessment. This was self-accountability as it relates to individual deeds.

COLLECTIVE DEEDS

The second form of self-appraisal concerns all actions. It is a very difficult task to maintain an account of all action. Human beings are forgetful. This form of accountability is so vast it encompasses every type of conceivable action. Consequently, many actions are rendered undetected. God Almighty has verified the inadequacy of human perception. God says, "Thou wast heedless of this; now We removed from thee thy veil, and sharp is thy sight this day."[13] Meaning that, in the next world the veil will be lifted from people's eyes and their vision and mental perception will become clearer and sharper. [They will see the consequences of their actions in an embodied form which were hidden from their eyes in this world.] Hence, a person needs a structure to keep account of all actions. The first natural structure should be to classify one's actions. For example, virtues can be categorized by those that relate to God, those that relate to yourself, and those that relate to others. Evils can categorized in the same manner as virtues. Now, when a person keeps in mind this classification of virtue and evil, they can remember all actions.

FOUR TYPES OF VIRTUOUS DEEDS

Deeds can be categorized in multiple ways. For example, virtues can be classified into four types: 1. Virtues that benefit others as well as the doer; a person who is stubborn and refuses to do these must examine why they avoid them; 2. Virtues that benefits others but not the doer; 3. Virtues that harms others if not carried out; and the doer does not gain or lose anything; 4. Virtues that benefit others but harm the doer. If one were to keep these categories in mind when carrying out a virtue, they would find it much easier to do a self-appraisal of all good deeds. Similarly, they can apply this method of classification and self-accounting upon prohibited things.

AN EASY WAY TO HOLD ONESELF TO ACCOUNT

To organize all of one's actions in this manner has fabulous benefits. It helps a person realize and understand the roots and branches of all deeds. And whenever they detect deficiency or flaw in any action, they can rectify it. Still not everyone holds the strength to keep account in this manner. Hence, I shall explain easy way to do this. A person should not wait a year or six months or four months or even one month to do self-accountability. Rather, they should highlight and note all of the enjoinments and prohibitions described in the Holy Qur'ān; then they should commit to reading these commandments

"The answer will often reveal that many of the deeds a person thought were virtues turn out to be evils.

constantly. But this does not imply reading it mindlessly; rather a person should mull over each commandment. As they come across them in their daily reading, they should ask, "Am I acting upon this commandment?" While reading a prohibition, they should evaluate if they are abstaining from it. This will make self-accountability an easy task. Just as a person gets professional advise when constructing a house, so too should they take Qur'ānic advise when building their spiritual edifice. One must constantly defer to the Holy Book and ask, "What do I need to complete my faith?" That is, always reflect upon whether they are doing everything ordained and abstaining from everything prohibited. Anyone can succeed in this undertaking, provided they try. But a word of caution— a person must neglect any element of egotism.

THE ESSENCE OF BACKBITING

Let's take backbiting as an example. One must never let vanity delude oneself into thinking they have never done backbiting. Instead, one must examine and objectively analyze all of one's deeds. If they still believe they have never committed this vice, they must then evaluate if they understand what it means to backbite. Sometimes reflection will enable one to realize they had misunderstood the concept in the first place, and therefore, wrongly believed they were free of this vice. Others deny this habit, even though they backbite. They maintain, "we only utter the truth." Clearly they misunderstand the idea of backbiting. It is their view that backbiting is to say something against a person if it is false; not if it is true. In reality, that is defined as a lie. Backbiting can be defined as something that is true about a person, behind their back. A person who thinks only a lie told behind someone's back is backbiting will never realize they have wronged—even if they come across the prohibition in the Holy Qur'ān. Only knowing the true definition of backbiting and contrasting it with lying will help one realize their guilty. Still others who commit this vice contend that they would not be afraid of saying the same thing in front of the person; as if doing so somehow makes it acceptable. Rather, a person who reveals someone's weakness behind their back and then says it to their face is guilty of not one but two sins; backbiting against someone and injuring their feelings. Exposing someone's flaws—which God has Himself concealed—is a sin. The Holy Prophet[sa] said, "God conceals the sins of a person who conceals those of others."[14] Yet, most people commit this horrible vice without realizing its gravity.

HOW TO IDENTIFY SIN

Another relevant question is, how can one identify sin? As I have said one must seek out a teacher and learn from them. A teacher cannot impart knowledge of everything. It is in human nature to sin when alone and refrain before others. Hazrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ I[ra] would narrate, "I once asked a thief if they view stealing as a vice. He said, 'How is it evil? I earn it after many pains and struggles. Despite all my efforts I gain very little.' I proceeded to discuss other matters with him. After a while I asked, 'how do you divide the stolen wealth.' He said, 'A goldsmith assists me. I give him all of the jewelery, which he then melts into gold or silver. We divide it.' I asked, 'what if the goldsmith usurped everything?' He replied, 'I would chop off the thief's head! How dare he take away my wealth!'"

A person has a higher set of expectations from others. But to measure one's own state of sin, one ought to use others as a yard stick. This will enable one to perceive the minutest of sins in oneself. Meaning that, to identify and consider something a sin, one should observe how others conduct themselves. If one finds a person is sinning, one can self-evaluate to determine if they too are committing this vice; perhaps they are and thus in no position to judge. This is a simple but effective method to identify sin. A person can use it to shed one's sins and shortcomings.

THE SEVENTH MEANS

The seventh way to purify one's soul is to develop the habit of reflecting over the commandments and understanding them. Earlier I had said one should shun evil thoughts as they come with perils

if allowed to ferment. A person should ruminate over the divine commandments and let them permeate one's heart. For example, one should reflect upon the blessings and benefits of observing Prayer, Fasting, and other righteous deeds. In the same manner, one should reflect upon the reality and consequence of deceit, dishonesty, wickedness, and other vices. For after realizing the essence of anything a person will develop love or hatred for it. It is said in the Holy Qur'ān, "They have hearts but they understand not therewith, and they have eyes but they see not therewith, and they have ears but they hear not therewith."[15] This means, some people have hearts, eyes and ears, yet they do not use them. Thus, one cannot attain success without using their eyes, ears, and heart.

THE EIGHTH MEANS

The eighth way is to show a readiness to accept things. A person cannot fail to act upon matters after having learned them. Instead, if they are shown the right way, they must direct their all their energies toward fulfilling it. The verse above (7:180) hints at this point. Thus one cannot succeed if they continue to be ignorant after perceiving right from wrong.

THE NINTH MEANS

The ninth way is to accept an admonishment for committing a mistake. Many people are unable to reform themselves as they are offended when rebuked for a sin. If a person has committed a fault they should accept a reprimand. God Almighty declares, "And when it is said to him, 'Fear Allāh,' pride incites him to further sin. So Hell shall be his sufficient reward; and surely, it is an evil place of rest."[16] Some people become indignant when advised to fear Allāh. It wounds their pride and makes them angry. Instead of hearkening to the advice and being grateful to the well-wisher, they start disputing. The abode of such people is Hell. With that said, a person should not misconstrue this as a license for rebuking people in public. Such admonition should be given in private; but well-wisher must consider if is their place to admonish this person; will the advice have an opposite effect? So on the one hand, it is necessary a person who has faulted show patience and heed any admonition in a calm manner; on the other, it is equally critical for the admonisher to show sensitivity and not humiliate a person.

THE TENTH MEANS

The tenth way is to never despair. Rather, one must have trust in Allāh. Some people work tirelessly but despair just before seeing the fruit of their labour.

A TALE OF A WISE SAGE

A wise sage always awoke at night and offered supplication. One day a disciple visited him to stay in his company for three days. When the sage awoke for prayer, the disciple happened to be up and began worshiping. After the sage completed his prayer, a voice was heard, "No matter how much you weep, your prayer will not be accepted." Though it was a divine revelation, the disciple also heard it. He was startled but remained silent out of respect. The following night, after the sage completed his prayer the disciple overheard the same message by the voice. The man kept quiet. On the third night when the same thing happened the disciple could not help himself and blurted, "You have heard this voice not one, not two, but three consecutive nights; why do you keep supplicating?" The wise sage said, "It is silly that you are frustrated. I have been hearing this message for the past twenty years, but never once did I complain or become indolent. It is a servant's task to supplicate and worship, and God's prerogative, as the Master, to accept or reject them. He is carrying out His duty, and I mine. Who are you to interfere and be frustrated?" The disciple said no more. The following night, the sage received the following divine revelation, "All the supplications you offered over the past twenty years have been accepted. You have succeeded in your trial." The sage said to his disciple, "Had I listened to your advice, I would have suffered massive loss. I trusted God Almighty and was finally granted His nearness."

> "You have heard this voice not one, not two, but three consecutive nights; why do you keep supplicating?"

STEADFASTNESS IS NECESSARY IN PRAYER

Imagine if the sage had accepted the disciple's advice when all his prayers were nearly accepted, all his efforts would have been wasted. A believer must never despair. They must keep striving, even if they fail. At the same time, they can reflect upon the reasons for failure and try to overcome them. But never should they despair of the mercy of God. Some people complain that they never receive the fruits of their labor and hence quit. I say, no matter what they must keep striving; success will follow, sooner or later. God Almighty tells us that believers indeed attain success if they trust Him: "Those to whom men said, 'People have mustered against you, therefore fear them,' but this only increased their faith, and they said, 'Sufficient for us is Allāh, and an excellent Guardian is He."[17] That is, people tried to frighten Muslims; they said all your prophecies regarding success were in vain and now everyone is united against you; you should be afraid. This enhanced the Muslims in faith. For they had already heard the tidings of victory against the enemy's aggressive attacks. The faithful said we do not care who turns against us; Allāh is sufficient for us; He is an excellent Guardian. What does it matter given we have placed our trust in God. The verse shows that a believer must stand firm in the face of a strong enemy. A physically ill person does not stop receiving treatment if one type of remedy proves ineffective. Instead, they continue being treatment right to their recovery or death. The same must be done by the spiritually ill. The graver the illness, the more they must strive for remedy. If they succeed trying, they will have attained everything; but if they die trying, God would somewhat overlook their flaws making efforts. Conversely, if one abandons the effort and dies in this state, what else can they expect but punishment? Hence, one must keep striving and never fall into despair and forsake the struggle. This phenomenon can be observed in schools and colleges. Some students succeed only because of their tenacity. I heard the story of a Hindu who failed his exams for seven consecutive years. His own son also sat the same exam as him in this last attempt. But the man was not ashamed in the least. He not only took it but passed. Hence, one should not fret or degrade or devalue oneself. I am not suggesting pride and vanity, but rather resoluteness and persistence. One should not say "I cannot do such and such." Instead, one should say, "God Almighty has given me every capability." Allāh describes this excellence of a believer: "Among the believers are men who have been true to the covenant they made with Allāh. Some of them have fulfilled their vow, and some who still wait."[18] It is narrated in the Ahadith that a companion[ra] once stated, "I wish I had taken part in the Battle of Badr. I would have fought bravely."[19] Such words come straight from the heart and cannot be deemed arrogant. They are akin to the smoke that rises from a suppressed fire.

The same was the case of this companion. He partook in the Battle of Uhud. When it was rumored that the Holy Prophet[sa] has been martyred, the news reached Hazrat 'Umar[ra] who recoiled in shock. The same companion came to Hazrat 'Umar[ra] and asked what happened. Another companion who had been sitting beside Hazrat 'Umar[ra] with his head downcast responded, "The Holy Prophet[sa] has been martyred." The companion said, "If this is true, indeed, it is the best opportunity for us to become martyrs." He attacked the enemy and went down fighting. His body was found later with 70 wounds.[20]

THE DIFFERENCE IN CONCEIT AND DESPAIR

Thus it is critical for one to never have self-doubt. Just as it is bad to be skeptical of others, so it bad to be skeptical of oneself. It is a sin. Instead, a person must trust God Almighty and have confidence that they will overpower satan. The difference between despairing and conceit is that the former concerns the future; the latter is about the past. A selfish and arrogant person is easily distraught during their work, but once a task is complete, they show conceit. Conversely, a person who trusts God and abstains from self-doubt maintains high hopes until their work is accomplished; and they hardly mention it after [much less show arrogance].

THE ELEVENTH MEANS

People take certain sins to be minor, and, therefore, take no precautions to avoid them. Sins are not classified as such in the Holy Qur'ān. According to the Holy Qur'ān a minor sin is any sin a person contemplates but doesn't act upon; any sin a person acts upon is major. People have fabricated terminologies of *Saghīra* and *Kabīra*. But the Qur'ān has not classified them in this sense anywhere. Thus, no sin should be deemed trivial. For doing so leads people into neglect.

It is said that a self-proclaimed brave man went to have a lion tattooed on his arm. The moment he felt pain, he asked the tattooist, "What are you starting with?" "The right ear," replied the artist. He said, "Can you make a lion without that ear?" The tattooist said yes. So the man said, "Alright, then let's leave that and continue. As the tattooist proceeded, the man asked the same set of questions and asked him to skip making the left ear of this lion. In this way he prevented the tattooist until there was nothing of the lion left to tattoo. Thus, the man was turned out of the shop.

The same is the case of some people's evil deeds. When they start trivializing any commandment, they progressively ignore more and more of them. This is no good. First, as I had said earlier, no sin is minor. Second, it must also be remembered that one thing leads to another; just as one vice results in more vices, so also one virtue leads to others. Hazrat Anas[ra] narrates that once he addressed new converts to Islām after the Holy Prophet[sa] had passed. He said, "Today, you commit certain evils and consider them minor; during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet[sa], perpetrating them was inconceivable." Similarly, hadith substantiate that once the Holy Prophet[sa] was going somewhere and came across a cemetery. He said, "The people of these two graves are being punished for minor sins, which were in fact major. They were minor given they were easy to overcome and major because they became a source leading them into hellfire. One of the deceased was careless while urinating and would deliberately let droplets fall all over. The other was a backbiter."[21]

Hence, no sin should be considered trivial. Whether a deed is considered major or minor is relative to a person's situation. A deed is minor for a person who does it with ease. Similarly, a deed is major for someone who finds it hard to act upon. For example, a person who offers Prayers, observes Fasts, gives alms, performs Hajj, but does not refrain from cursing. For this person, abstaining from abusive language will be deemed a major good deed. So any evil a person struggles to overcome will be considered major for them; and any virtue a person cannot adopt will be considered major for them.

The Promised Messiah[as] writes that a person only receives spiritual reward for acts they carry out with great difficulty. In discarding evil, a person will only be the recipient of spiritual reward for discarding an evil—if they had the power to perpetrate it and still fought against their urges and overcome this evil. For example, an impotent person's who does not commit adultery cannot be deemed worthy of the reward of abstaining from this evil. Yet, if the same person

forsake backbiting, for example, it would be counted as a good deed for them. Similarly, success in being able to discard a vice a person was in the habit of doing would be a good deed; for this vice was a major sin for them.

THE STATIONS OF DIVINE LOVE

In this speech, I have briefly explained the ways to develop *Irfān Ilāhī*. If you act upon these strategies, God Willing, you will gain immense benefit. I shall now mention two or three signs of *Irfān Ilāhī*. There are two kinds: external and internal. An external sign of *Irfān Ilāhī* is as stated in a hadith. The narration records that through *Nawafil* [volunteer prayers], a person can become so close to God Almighty that He becomes their hands, feet, and tongue.[22] This shows that fulfilling the obligatory acts of worship are not enough to gain *Irfān Ilāhī*; a person must also offer *Nafawil*. In doing so, one attains such great *Irfān Ilāhī* that God becomes one's hands, feet, tongue. Meaning that, one's actions become [as it were] the actions of God; it means that just as divine works are definite and there is no stopping them, so is the case of such people's undertakings; if they seize someone there is no escape; if they hear a person's dilemmas, they ensure to resolve them; if they turn to a person with full attention, that person is sure to be reformed; and everything they say is the truth because they are the fulfillment of the verse, "And he speaks not of his own accord. It is nothing but pure revelation that has been revealed by God."[23] In short, having *Irfān Ilāhī* means a person has been immersed in the attributes of God, becoming an instrument of His works. So much so that people witness it as a divine manifestation. But some of them are silly enough to think *this person* is God.

To reach this state, a person undergoes some internal changes. First, they become mindful of virtue and evil. They can discern and forsake an evil that otherwise seems good at first. Or when they are about to forsake an action thinking it is evil, they are told [by God] that it is a good act. Hence, the first stage of *Irfān Ilāhī* is to be granted deeper understanding of good and evil, unlike ordinary people. Look, the Holy Prophet[sa] observed the same prayer, the same fast as others, yet no other person was given the same rank as he; the good deeds the Holy Prophet[sa] perceived and carried out were deeper virtues than those done by ordinary people. Similarly, the Holy Prophet[sa] perceived and abstained from evil deeds on a deeper level than ordinary people. It was for this reason he had a rank like no other. Thus, some virtues and evils are beyond the apparent, but they cannot be described. Only a person given capacity by God can understand it. And once a person is given this deeper understanding and starts acting upon it, their perception continues to enhance with each passing day. This is the first stage of *Irfān Ilāhī*. The second stage is reached when hidden vices are revealed to such a person. One kind of vice is simply hidden and remains hidden until exposed, but there is yet another that is in plain sight and still unknown. For example, a person sells swine meat, passing it off as goat meat; or sells goat meat that is inedible; the truth will be hidden. A person in this second stage might be given this knowledge. When such matters appear before people with *Irfān Ilāhī*, they are inspired with a kind of hunch or abhorrence, through which they perceive the truth. It is narrated that a saintly person had just sat to eat with a group of people. Suddenly, he left, and others soon followed him out. When asked the reason for leaving, he said, "I was especially anxious for the meal, and understood from this [unusual] feeling that something is wrong with the food. Thus, I left." In this way, the man became a source of protection for others who had some self-control but were not yet true Muslims. But those at a higher rank have purified soul and can immediately perceive evil, even if it is disguised. This is the final stage of *Irfan* wherein a person can truly recognize good and evil no matter how disguised it is. The world will naturally recognize such people. May God Almighty enable you to act on these matters and become enriched with the blessings of His *Irfān*! Amīn!

> "... through *Nawafil* [voluntary prayers], a person can become so close to God Almighty that God becomes their hands, feet, and tongue.

ENDNOTES

1. 2:185
2. *Sahih Bukhar*i, Kitab ur-Riqaq
3. 2:190
4.5:94
5. *Sahih Bukhar*i, Kitab Ul Iman
6. 15:100
7. 16:93
8. 9:119
9. 24:56
10. 24:56
11. 58:7
12. *Tirmidhi*, Abwaab Sifatul Qiyamah
13. 50:23
14. *Tirmidhi*, Abwwab ul-Birri was Sillah
15. 7:180
16. 2:207
17. 3:174
18. 33:24
19. Hazrat Anas bin Nadr (*Bukhari* Kitab ul-Maghazi Bab Ghazwa Uhud)
20. *Sirat Ibn Hisham* Arabic Volume 2, pg. 85
21. *Tirmidhi*, Abwaab ut-Taharah Bab ut-tashdid fil bowl
22. *Bukhari* Kitab ur-Riqaq Bab ut-Tawad-hu'
23. 53:4-5

TERRORISM WAS NEVER JUSTIFIED BY THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD[SA]

THE FOLLOWING IS A KEYNOTE ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE 13TH ANNUAL PEACE SYMPOSIUM ON MARCH 19, 2016

Hazrat Mirzā Masroor Aḥmad[aa], the Worldwide Head of the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community said:

"*Bismillāhir-Rahmānir-Rahīm*. In the Name of Allāh, the Gracious, Ever-Merciful.

Assalāmo Alaikum wa Raḥmatūllahī wa Barakātuhu – peace and blessings of Allāh be upon you all.

Syednā Hazrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ V[aa] speaking at the Annual Peace Symposium in 2016

First of all I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all of our distinguished guests who have accepted our invitation and joined us here this evening. Your attendance is particularly noteworthy given that this event is taking place at a time when widespread fear of Islām is on the increase due to the horrific and disgraceful acts of terrorist groups.

For example, last November, the world watched in horror when the terrorist attacks took place in Paris, and apart from this, there have been suicide bombings and attacks in various countries at regular intervals. In terms of the United Kingdom, very recently the Assistant Commissioner of Police warned that Daesh was planning "enormous and spectacular" terrorist attacks here in the UK, targeting high-profile and public places.

Furthermore, there has been a sudden influx of refugees into Europe during the past year and this is causing a degree of fear, uncertainty and even panic in the minds of many people. In light of all of this, your attendance and willingness as non-Muslims, to attend an event organised by a Muslim community, proves that you are courageous, tolerant and open-hearted people.

Nonetheless, the simple truth is that there is no need for anyone to fear true Islām. Whilst some people claim Islām to be a religion of extremism and one that promotes suicide attacks or other forms of terrorism, nothing could be further from the truth. Recently, a well-known English columnist wrote about the rise of 'Islāmophobia' in a national newspaper. He wrote that he had done extensive research on suicide bombings and found that the first such attack took place in the 1980s, despite the fact that Islām had existed for well over 1300 years.

He concluded that if Islām permitted or encouraged such attacks then they ought to have occurred from the outset of Islām and throughout its history. His point was valid and very well made and proved that such attacks were a modern-day evil, far removed from the true and peaceful teachings of Islām. Certainly, Islām has very clearly prohibited all forms of suicide and so there is no justification whatsoever for suicide attacks or any other forms of terrorism.

Such heinous acts lead to the murder and barbaric slaughter of innocent women, children and other members of the public. A recent research article by Dr. Considine of Rice University, in Houston, Texas, clearly says that the persecution of Christians in the so-called Islāmic state is not justified by Prophet Muhammad's[sa] writings. It further states that the Prophet's[sa] vision of a Muslim nation was one of religious pluralism and civil rights.

Thus let it be clear that such acts are

absolutely contrary to Islāmic teachings. If Islām has ever permitted warfare, it is only to the extent of a defensive war, where war has been forced upon you. For example, in chapter 22, verse 40, of the Holy Qur'ān, Allāh the Almighty has said that permission for warfare is given to those people upon whom war has been forcibly imposed.

In that same verse, Allāh the Almighty said that in the case of religious warfare He would help and support those who had been wronged. In early Islām, the wars that took place were genuine religious wars fought for the sake of upholding the fundamental principle of universal religious freedom. History proves that the wars fought with this intention made Muslims victorious, regardless of the fact that a handful of unequipped Muslims fought against huge, well-equipped armies.

However, as a Muslim, when I analyse the wars involving Muslims today, I am certain that they cannot be classed as religious wars. For one, most of the wars taking place in the Muslim world are either internal civil strife or with the neighbouring Muslim countries. Secondly if ever non-Muslim countries are involved, they have never declared the war as religious and rather helped both sides of Muslims. Thus present-day wars are not being fought for the sake of Islām or for the sake of religion, but are for economic or geopolitical gains and are proving only a means of defaming Islām's name.

And so based upon what I have just said, I hope it is now clear that there is no need to fear Islām and that it is not a religion of extremism or one that permits suicide attacks or indiscriminate violence. There is no need for 'Islāmophobia' because Islām's true teachings are of peace, tolerance and mutual respect. Islām's teachings are of upholding human values and protecting the honour, dignity and freedoms of all people.

However, of course, we are all well aware that there are some extremists and so-called Islāmic groups that are perpetrating the very worst forms of brutality in the name of Islām. Nevertheless, the verse of the Qur'ān I quoted earlier makes it clear that such acts are not permitted or justified in any shape or form by Islām. Another significant matter, which instead of leading me as a Muslim towards warfare and violence, leads me towards exhibiting love for all of humanity, is the fact that in the second verse of the very first chapter of the Holy Qur'ān, it is stated that Allāh the Almighty is the "Provider and Sustainer of all the worlds." And the third verse states that He is the "Gracious, Ever-Merciful."

Syednā Hazrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ V[aa] speaking at the Annual Peace Symposium in 2016

Thus, when Allāh the Almighty is the Provider and Sustainer of all people and Gracious, Ever-Merciful, how could it be that He desired for those who believed in Him to mercilessly murder, violently oppose or harm His Creation in any way? Of course the answer is that it is not possible. Nonetheless, Allāh the Almighty has certainly permitted for action to be taken to stop cruelty, inhumanity and injustice.

Islām states that a Muslim should seek to stop the hand of an oppressor and to end all forms of injustice and transgression. According to Islām there are two ways in which this can be achieved. Firstly, it is far better if peace can be attained through mutual dialogue, negotiations and diplomacy. However, where this is not possible, only then force may be used in order to stop wrongdoing with the intention of establishing sustainable peace.

Outside of the religious context, in every society and nation, there are rules and laws that exist and if they are violated then punitive action is normally taken. If it is possible to reform without punishment or with just a mild sanction or reprimand, that is better; however, if that is not possible then severe punishment is duly discharged for the benefit of the wider society and as a means of deterrent to others.

Moving to a religious context, according to Islām, punishment or sanction is permitted not as a means of revenge or retribution, but only as a means of ending cruelty or persecution and as a means of positive reformation. The Holy Qur'ān has said that if a person or group can be rehabilitated through forgiveness and mercy then this method should be adopted.

However, if clemency or forbearance does not prove effective then punishment should be administered as a means of reformation and improvement. Therefore the philosophy underpinning punishment in Islām is extremely far-sighted and quite unique. Its purpose is to reform, rehabilitate and improve. It is to develop the highest standards of human values amongst mankind so that, by adopting the Attributes of their Creator, all people come to respect and care for one another.

Therefore, where the rights of an individual or group are unjustly usurped, Islām permits punishments that are

proportionate to the crime, however it remains the case that if reformation can be achieved without sanction it is preferable. This is why Allāh the Almighty has said in chapter 24, verse 23, of the Holy Qur'ān that it is better to forgive and to manifest forbearance.

Similarly, in chapter 3, verse 135, Allāh the Almighty has said that those who suppress their anger and who forgive and forget are those whom Allāh loves and prefers. Furthermore, at many other places in the Holy Qur'ān, it is stated that a person should forgive wherever possible, because the ultimate purpose is always moral reformation, rather than vengeance. In terms of conflict between nations or groups, Allāh the Almighty has given a golden principle for the establishment of long-lasting peace in chapter 49, verse 10, of the Holy Qur'ān.

In the verse, it states that if there is a dispute between nations or groups, third parties should seek to mediate and to bring about a peaceful resolution to the conflict. In the event of an agreement, all parties should act equitably, but if either party contravenes the settlement and takes aggressive measures, then the other nations or groups should unite together and even use force if necessary to stop the aggressor. However, once the aggressive party withdraws and adopts peace they should not be unduly restricted but should be permitted to move forward as an independent nation and a free society.

Therefore, as the Provider and Sustainer of all of mankind, Allāh the Almighty desires for all people to live together in peace and to be free from all forms of persecution and injustice. In terms of belief, Islām enshrines the principles of universal religious freedom and freedom of conscience. According to Islām, every person not only has the right of freedom of belief, but also has the right to peacefully propagate their beliefs.

Faith is, and always will be, a matter of the heart and so there should never be any form of compulsion in religion. Whilst Allāh the Almighty has deemed Islām to be a complete teaching, no one has the right to forcefully convert others to it. Anyone, whether religious or not, is free to accept Islām, but the key point is that it should be accepted freely and entirely of one's own volition and choice. Similarly, if a Muslim decides that he wishes to leave Islām, then, according to the teachings of the Qur'ān, he or she has the right to do so.

> "... a true Muslim should love others, irrespective of their background or belief, in the same way that a mother loves her child.

Whilst we believe Islām to be a universal religion and a timeless teaching, if anyone chooses to leave it then that is their choice and prerogative. In chapter 5, verse 55, Allāh says that if anyone wants to leave, let them go. He will replace them with better and sincere ones. No government, group or individual has a right to punish them or sanction them in any way.

Thus, the allegation that Islām mandates punishment for apostasy is entirely unjust and without foundation. Therefore the teachings of Islām all revolve around Allāh and His Being and the fact that He is the Sustainer and Provider for the entire universe. Consequently, if a Muslim seeks to inflict merciless cruelties or to indulge in any forms of extremism then they will have to reject God's Attribute of being the Sustainer of all of mankind.

Alternatively, it may be that certain Muslims accept Allāh to be the Master of the Universe and the Sustainer of all the Worlds, but have not truly comprehended the meaning of this and have consequently moved far away from Islām's original teachings. Hence, it was to enlighten and educate mankind of the true Islām that we, Ahmadi Muslims, believe that Allāh the Almighty sent the Founder of our Community, as the Promised Messiah and Reformer of the Age.

He informed us that the era of religious warfare had come to an end and that God Almighty desired for mankind to live in peace and to fulfil the rights of their Creator and of one another. Addressing his followers about this, the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) of Qadian once said:

"According to the true spirit of the teachings of Islām there are only two parts of the religion, or it can be said that the religion is based upon two paramount objectives. First of all is to recognise the One God with absolute certainty and to sincerely love Him and to submerge yourself entirely in His obedience, as per the demands of love and submission. The second purpose is to serve His people and to utilise all of your capabilities and faculties in the loving service of others and to always show sincere gratitude to whoever is kind to you and to favour them in return, whether they be your monarch or ruler or whether they be the most simple and humble of people. And you should keep always keep a loving bond with them."

Furthermore, the Founder of the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community, has also explained the true meaning of chapter 16, verse 91, of the Holy Qur'ān, in which Allāh the Almighty states:

"Verily, Allāh enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others; and giving like kindred."

The Founder of the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community states that in this verse Muslims are commanded by Allāh to be just and fair towards all others. Therefore, Muslims are commanded to be kind and to extend favour to all other people, including those who have not been sympathetic to them or favoured them in any way. Finally, he explained that the verse required a Muslim to love

God's Creation to such an extent that they considered every person in the world to be like their own close family member.

In fact, he said that a true Muslim should love others, irrespective of their background or belief, in the same way that a mother loves her child. Certainly, this is the highest and purest form of love because in terms of the second stage, where a person exhibits kindness or favour, it is possible that an element of self-projection remains, whether covert or overt, and at some point, the individual may remind the person of their gesture and seek favour in return.

However, a mother's love is truly selfless and altruistic and her unique bond with her child is such that she is willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of her offspring. She desires nothing in return and nor does she require any form of praise or tribute. Therefore, this is the ultimate standard that Islām advocates, whereby Muslims are taught to love all of humanity as a mother loves her child. These are the true teachings of Islām.

Syednā Hazrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ V[aa] speaking at the Annual Peace Symposium in 2016

> . . . all those so-called Muslims who are engaged in violence, injustice and brutality are inviting God's wrath and anger to their doorstep.

Allāh the Almighty has said that those who believe in Him should adopt His Attributes and so it is impossible for a true Muslim to be cruel and it is similarly impossible for Islām to permit any form of injustice, violence or extremism. Over the years, I have made these points time and time again and have highlighted these core Islāmic teachings.

I have repeatedly quoted the Holy Qur'ān to prove that what I am saying is based on Islām's authentic teachings. However, it remains that our peaceful and inclusive message is not covered extensively in the media, whilst on the other hand those relatively few people involved in brutality and carnage are given non-stop worldwide media coverage and attention.

There is no doubt that the media plays a huge role in influencing public opinion and so the media should use this power responsibly – as a force for good and as a force for peace. It should show the world what true Islām represents, rather than focusing on the merciless acts of a minority.

Publicity is the oxygen sustaining most terrorist or extremist groups and so I have no doubt that if the media takes on board what I have said we will soon find that the terrorism and violence afflicting the world will begin to die away. Personally, I cannot comprehend how the extremists who have plagued Islām and violated its noble teachings can seek to justify their hateful acts in its name.

Islām's teachings of peace prohibit all forms of extremism, to the extent, that even in a state of legitimate war, Allāh has commanded that any action or punishment should remain proportionate to the crimes committed and that it is better if patience and forgiveness is manifest. Thus, all those so-called Muslims who are engaged in violence, injustice and brutality are inviting God's wrath and anger to their doorstep.

At a time when fear of Islām is ever increasing, let me stress again that the Holy Qur'ān has repeatedly enjoined love, compassion and benevolence. If in certain extreme circumstances the Qur'ān permitted defensive warfare, it was only in order to establish peace. Today, we observe that the majority of governments or groups, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, involved in warfare also claim that they are fighting for the sake of establishing peace.

In terms of perception, it seems that most people are willing to overlook the wars conducted by certain world powers or at least not affiliate their actions to any religion or belief. However, as we live in a climate in which Islām's teachings are being targeted, we see that all cruelties or wars carried out by Muslims are immediately linked to the teachings of Islām. Yet the voices of those people and those groups who are earnestly striving to spread Islām's true and peaceful teachings are not being heard and not being widely publicised.

In my opinion this is unjust and extremely counter-productive. At a time of worldwide conflict, we should remember this basic principle that it is

better for all forms of evil and cruelty to be suppressed and for all forms of goodness and humanity to be endorsed. In this way, evil will not spread far, whilst virtue and peace will spread far and wide and adorn our society.

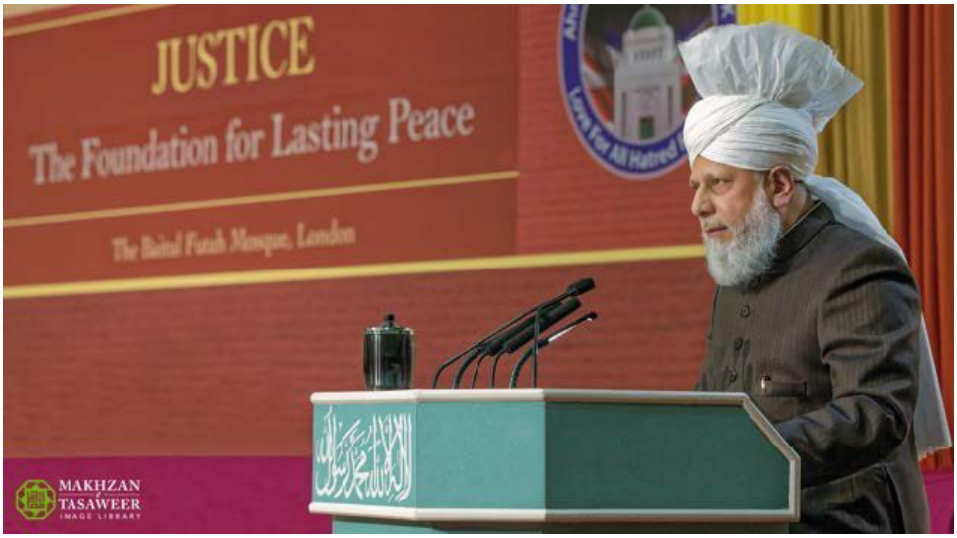
If we promote the good that is happening in the world, we can overcome those who seek to undermine our cherished values of mercy and humanity. Yet the world does not seem to have accepted or understood this principle and that is why the media continues to prioritise its circulation or viewing figures over and beyond the peace of the world. The media, which gladly focuses on the tiny minority involved in brutality, are feeding the propaganda machines of evil groups such as Daesh, yet they fail in their duty to highlight all that is good in the world.

This is an injustice that is sowing the seeds of further division and conflict. In terms of world politics and defeating terrorism, it is necessary to accept that establishing peace is our paramount objective and so compromise from all sides is required. In case you do not trust the words of a Muslim, let me present to you the views of eminent non-Muslims who are well-versed in political affairs and who desire peace in the world. For example, when speaking about how to defeat extremism and in particular the terrorist group Daesh, Austria's Foreign Minister recently said:

"We need a pragmatic approach, including the involvement of President Al-Assad in the fight against Islāmic State terror. In my opinion the priority is the fight against terrorism. This is not possible without powers such as Russia and Iran."

Further, Professor John Gray, a retired political philosopher who taught for many years at The London School of Economics, recently wrote about the importance of prioritising peace over the type of political system in place. He wrote:

"The form of government – democratic, despotic, monarchical or republican – is less important than the capacity to deliver peace."



Syednā Hazrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ V[aa] speaking at the Annual Peace Symposium in 2016

In my opinion, this was an extremely insightful comment, yet the world's major powers have continued to prioritise regime change in countries that were previously relatively stable.

For example, the West was determined to remove Saddam Hussein from Iraq and the painful consequences of that war 13 years ago continue to be felt to this day. Another prominent example is Libya, whereby President Gaddafi was forcibly removed from office in 2011 and ever since Libya has spiraled into a state of lawlessness and unbridled chaos.

A direct consequence of the political vacuum in Libya has been the fact that Daesh has now built a significant base and terror network in the country, which it is continuing to strengthen. The situation is now extremely dangerous, not only for the region, but also for Europe and this is something that I warned of some years ago. Therefore, the priority in such countries should not be regime change for the sake of it.

Rather, it should be to ensure that the members of the public are given their due rights and for long-term peace to be established. Going back to Syria, I agree with the Austrian Foreign Minister when he says that the overriding objective should be to establish peace. Hence, the major powers should be willing to open the channels of communication with Syria's Government and to seek the help of other neighboring countries that have influence in the region.

Remember, positive change is only possible if one is willing to set aside their personal interests for the greater good and is willing to act fairly at all times. As I have already said, Islām says that justice is the foundation upon which peace is built. And so we must pay heed to the urgent issues of our time. For many years I have warned that the world is moving rapidly towards another world war and now others are reaching the same conclusion.

In fact, some prominent people are now saying that they believe that a world war has already begun. Nonetheless, I believe that we still have the time to stop such a war in its tracks but the solution remains, as I have already said, to act with justice and to leave aside all vested interests. On a number of previous occasions, I have spoken about the critical importance of cutting the funding and supply lines of extremist groups.

Yet it cannot be said that full efforts are being made in this regard. For example, a recent special investigative report published by The Wall Street Journal stated that Daesh was acquiring huge quantities of U.S. dollars from auctions being held by Iraq's central bank.

Those same dollars were being provided to Iraq directly from the Federal Reserve in the United States. The article stated that the U.S. Government had known about this since at least June 2015, but personally I believe that world powers knew about such trading for much longer.

Furthermore, in terms of the sale of oil, it is well-known that different groups and even governments are purchasing oil from Daesh. Why has this trade not been stopped? Why have comprehensive sanctions not been imposed to prevent such deals? It seems that when it comes to acquiring oil, morality goes out of the window. This is a point that was also made by Professor Leif Wenar of King's College London in a recent article where he said:

"The world tolerates all forms of atrocities for the sake of gaining oil. Thus countries have bought oil from Daesh and from Sudan where a lot of human rights abuses have taken place. This is a violation of proper fundamental market economics – whereby violence should not create property rights."

Furthermore, in a recent article, the Director of the Iraq Energy Institute explained how Daesh was selling its oil. The author wrote:

"Crude oil is transported by tankers to Jordan via Anbar province, to Iran via Kurdistan, to Turkey via Mosul, to Syria's local market and to the Kurdistan region of Iraq, where most of it gets refined locally. It defies logic to say that state officials are not complicit in this trade."

Therefore, whilst it is claimed that all possible efforts are being made to eradicate terrorism and extremism, the evidence does not substantiate this claim. Given all of this, how can it be said that there is true justice in the world? How can it be claimed that honesty and integrity are considered paramount? Similarly, recently there has been widespread media coverage documenting the global arms trade.

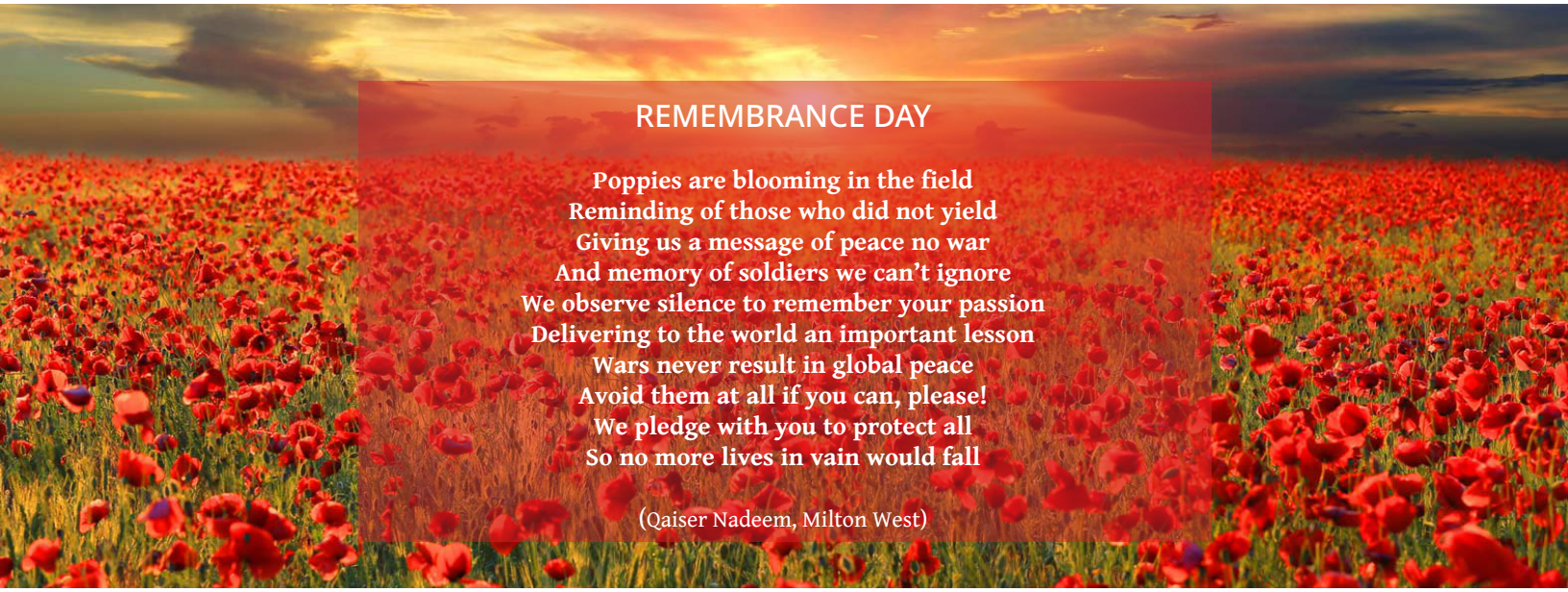
According to official reports last year the United States exported weapons worth $46.6 billion dollars, which was an increase of more than $12 billion dollars from the previous year. It was further reported that the majority of those weapons were sold to countries in the Middle East and in turn they were fueling the wars in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. I reiterate that if such trading is taking place, how is it possible for justice and peace to be established?

These few examples I have cited are all in the public domain and are the views of respected analysts and commentators. Until principles of justice are exhibited at all levels of society and between nations we will not see true peace in the world. Without justice it could take decades to defeat the evil that is Daesh and other extremist groups.

However, if the world heeds this message and comes to manifest justice and genuine efforts are made to restrict the funding and supply lines of terrorism then I believe – unlike a retired American military general who recently said the war against Daesh will last between 10 and 20 years – that the networks of terrorism tormenting the world can be destroyed imminently.

In conclusion, it is my belief that unless the world comes to recognise its Creator and accepts Him as the Sustainer of mankind, true justice cannot prevail. Not only will true justice not prevail, but we will also experience a lethal nuclear war whose catastrophic consequences will be faced by our future generations. I pray that the world comes to understand this reality. I pray that we all play our respective roles in furthering the cause of humanity. And I pray that true peace, based upon justice, is established in all parts of the world. With these words I would like to once again take the opportunity to thank all of our guests for joining us this evening.

May Allāh bless you all. Thank you very much."



REMEMBRANCE DAY

Poppies are blooming in the field
Reminding of those who did not yield
Giving us a message of peace no war
And memory of soldiers we can't ignore
We observe silence to remember your passion
Delivering to the world an important lesson
Wars never result in global peace
Avoid them at all if you can, please!
We pledge with you to protect all
So no more lives in vain would fall

(Qaiser Nadeem, Milton West)

VIRTUAL ABDUS SALAM SCIENCE FAIR

BRAMPTON WEST JAMĀ'AT

AUGUST 31 ,2020

Abdus Salam Science Fair is held every year at National level in memories of Dr. Abdus Salam and to encourage our youth to excel in different fields of science. Due to pandemic, this year Abdus Salam Science Fair was held virtually at Jamā'at levels as well.

On August 31, 2020 Brampton West Jamā'at held its 1st Virtual Abdus Salam Science Fair.

The opportunity was provided to boys from grade 5 to grade 12. Participants were divided in two groups: grades 5 to 8; and grade 9 to 12. By the Grace of Allāh Almighty, we received 20 projects from 19 participants. These participants submitted video recordings of their projects. The event was broadcast on *YouTube* where participants, parents and other members of Jamā'at watched.

Respected National Amīr, Lal Khan Malik Sāhib, graciously honored the event by joining live in the opening session. National Secretary Sāhib Ta'līm, Dr. Hameed Mirza Sāhib also sent a video message for the program. Video recording of all projects were sent to Markaz for review and ranking. Names of the winners from each group were read out at the end of the program.

Drive-through prize distribution

Drive-through prize distribution

Due to the pandemic, Jamā'at came up with a very innovative idea for the prize distribution and to encourage the participants. On September 26, 2020, a drive through prize distribution was arranged in the parking lot of Mubarak Mosque. 16 out of 20 participants attended and received their prizes and certificates from Local Amīr Sāhib and Local Missionary Sāhib.

Overall, it was a very unique event that well received by the members of Jamā'at.

We pray to Allāh Almighty for His mercy and blessings, and that, the world will soon return to a normal routine! Amīn!

AHMADIYYA MUSLIM JAMAAT
INTERNATIONAL

Aḥmadīyya Muslim Jamā'at Press Releases

NATIONAL MAJLIS ĀMILA & AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS IN MAURITIUS HAVE HONOUR OF VIRTUAL MEETING WITH WORLD HEAD OF AḤMADĪYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY

On October 25, 2020, the National Majlis 'Āmila (Executive) of the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community Mauritius was granted a virtual official meeting and audience with the World Head of the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community, the Fifth Khalīfa (Caliph), His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Aḥmad[aa].

Also present were the National Majlis 'Āmilas of the auxiliary organisations of Majlis Ansarullāh (Elders Association), Majlis Khuddāmul Aḥmadīyya (Youth Association) and Lajna Ima'illāh (Women's Association).

His Holiness[aa] presided the meeting from his office in Islamabad, Tilford, whilst the 'Āmila members joined from the Darus Salaam Mosque in Rose Hill, which serves as the National Headquarters of the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community in Mauritius.

During the 75-minute meeting, the National 'Āmila members had the

Syednā Hazrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ V[aa] presiding the National Majlis 'Amila meeting with Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community Mauritus

"Every Aḥmadī Muslim in Mauritius should prove to be an asset for our community, for their families and also for the society at large"

– Hazrat Mirza Masroor Aḥmad[aa]

Syednā Hazrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ V[aa] presiding the virtual meeting

opportunity to present a report about their respective departments and to receive the guidance and instructions of His Holiness on a range of issues.

As he addressed various ‘Āmila members, His Holiness[aa] spoke of the importance of keeping up-to-date data and having set targets and objectives.

Whilst addressing a member of the National ‘Āmila, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Aḥmad[aa] said: “Without any targets how can you succeed? How can you progress? It is necessary to have clear targets and to hold yourself accountable. Otherwise, if you do not have any objectives it leads to nothing but laziness.”

His Holiness[aa] spoke of the importance for young Aḥmadī Muslims to serve the mission of the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community with a sincere spirit of service for the sake of Allāh the Almighty.

Addressing the National Sadr (President) of Majlis Khuddāmul Aḥmadīyya, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Aḥmad[aa] said:

> Majlis Khuddāmul Aḥmadīyya should be at the forefront of spreading the teachings of Islam and conveying the message of the Promised Messiah[as] far and wide. In every sphere, the Aḥmadī Muslim youth should come to the forefront, as you are the people who are the future of the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community and upon whom ever greater responsibilities lie ahead.

His Holiness[aa] also spoke of the need for the National Umūr-e-‘Āmma department to assist and guide Aḥmadī Muslims who were struggling to gain employment.

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Aḥmad[aa] said

> A special plan should be made to help unemployed Aḥmadī Muslims. You should try to guide those who are struggling so that they may find gainful employment and be able to provide for their families. It should be your aim to ensure that every Aḥmadī Muslim in Mauritius should prove to be an asset for the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community, for their families and for the society at large

His Holiness[aa] stated it was the responsibility of the National Umūr-e-Khārija (External Affairs) department to develop relationships with external bodies and politicians for the sake of ensuring the spread of Islam’s true teachings amongst society and to help break down barriers between the peoples of different beliefs and backgrounds.

Furthermore, His Holiness[aa] said that every member of the Majlis ‘Āmila, at each level, should volunteer to dedicate two or three weeks each year for the sake of teaching the Holy Qur’ān or conveying the message of Islam to others.

As the meeting drew to a close, His Holiness prayed for the success of the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community in Mauritius and said he would hold separate meetings with the auxiliary organizations in future.

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Aḥmad[aa] said:

> Most of the time in today’s meeting has been spent in discussion with the National ‘Āmila of Mauritius. Thus, the auxiliary organizations of Lajna Ima’illāh, Khuddāmul Aḥmadīyya and Ansarullah can have separate meetings with me in the future if they require and the first right in this regard is of the members of Lajna Ima’illāh. Nonetheless, many of the points discussed today will be of benefit to the auxiliaries and so they should also seek to improve their work accordingly. It is essential that all members of Majlis ‘Āmila, at every level, know the objectives of their respective departments and seek to fulfil each objective in the very best fashion. May Allāh the Almighty help you and enable you to serve the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community in the best possible way. Amīn!

NATIONAL MAJLIS ʻĀMILA GERMANY HAVE HONOUR OF VIRTUAL MEETING WITH WORLD HEAD OF AḤMADĪYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY

On 18 October 2020, the National Majlis-e-ʻĀmila (Executive) of the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community Germany was granted a virtual official meeting and audience with the World Head of the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community, the Fifth Khalīfa (Caliph), His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Aḥmad[aa].

His Holiness[aa] presided the meeting from his office in Islamabad, Tilford, whilst the National ʻĀmila members joined from the Baitus Sabuh Mosque in Frankfurt, which serves as the National Headquarters of the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community in Germany.

During the 75- minute meeting, the ʻĀmila members had the opportunity to present a report about their respective departments and to receive the guidance and instructions of His Holiness[aa] on a range of issues. Whilst addressing the National Secretary Taʻlīm (Educational Affairs), His Holiness[aa] instructed the Taleem Department to guide Aḥmadī Muslim students throughout their secular education.

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Aḥmad[aa] said:

> The Taʻlīm department should pay attention to the educational needs of all Aḥmadī Muslim students in Germany. Keep a personal contact with them and guide them so that they know that you are always there to support them and have a sincere interest in their welfare. There are some Aḥmadī Muslim children in Germany whose parents are not particularly well educated and so if you show genuine interest in their schooling and education it will motivate and encourage them to work hard in their studies and it will also serve to guide their parents.

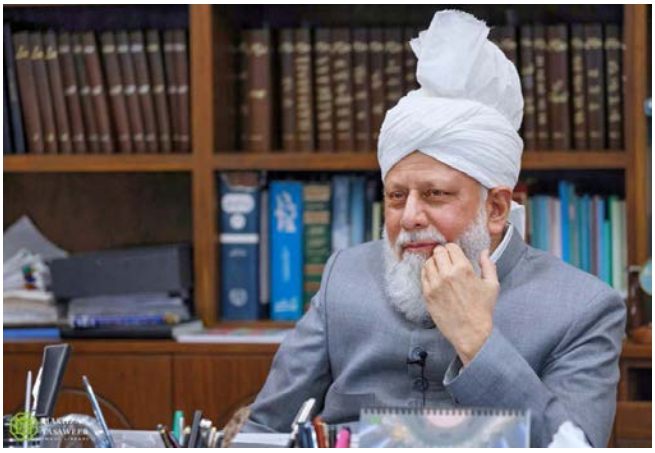
Hazrat Mirza Masroor Aḥmad[aa] continued:

> In addition, there are other parents who are consumed by their jobs and professional careers and so they are neglecting the education of their children. Thus, the Taʻlīm Department must work extremely diligently to help all Aḥmadī Muslim children as they progress through their education. You should guide and counsel them and always keep in mind that we do not want the potential and talent of a single Aḥmadī Muslim youth to ever be wasted.

His Holiness[aa] spoke about the need for the Tarbiyat Department in Germany, charged with the moral training of the members of the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community, to increase the scope of its activities.

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Aḥmad[aa] said:

> How many Aḥmadī Muslims in Germany are there that through your efforts are now regular in Tahajjud prayer? How many people are now offering the five daily prayers in congregation as a result of your efforts? How many more people are now reciting the Holy Qur'ān daily and reflecting upon its deeper meanings? Remember, as the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community continues to grow, and as we move further away from the era of the Prophethood of the Promised Messiah[as], and, especially at this particular time where direct contact of Aḥmadī Muslims with the Khalīfa of the Time is less (due to COVID-19 restrictions), it is imperative that those serving in the administration of the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community work even harder and develop better events and programs to ensure the moral training of our members.



Syednā Hazrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ V[aa] presiding the virtual National Majlis ʻAmila Meeting Germany

Always consider all success and progress of the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community to be a result of God's Grace and Mercy.

– Hazrat Mirza Masroor Aḥmad[aa]

Regarding how ʻĀmila members should strive to fulfil their duties, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Aḥmad[aa] said:

> Progress and success in any work requires a person to constantly self-analyze. A person who truly wants to fulfil his duties within the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community administration is he or she who continues to explore new avenues and find new and better ways to work. Successful people are those who reflect honestly upon their weaknesses and earnestly seek to correct them.

Speaking of the importance of humility at all times, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Aḥmad[aa] said:

> Never consider any success or progress of the Aḥmadīyya Muslim Community to be due to your individual efforts or your own personal success. Rather, always consider it to be due solely to the Grace and Mercy of Allāh the Almighty and consider that you must thereafter act with even greater levels of humility.

PRAYER

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

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

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

There is a third thing as well, which if absent from the Prayer, leaves it incomplete. What is it? It is the heart. For the Prayer, it is necessary that the heart 'stands' as it were. Allah the Exalted must see that one's heart not only praises Him in the true sense and remains in a standing position, but that the soul also stands and praises God; not only the body alone, but that the soul also stands before God.

When the heart proclaims: سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيْم (*Holy is my Lord the most Great*) God must see that it not only proclaims His greatness, but also bows before Him, and He must also see that the soul has bowed with the heart as well. Then, in the third place, God must see that the heart has fallen in prostration and that the soul has also fallen at the divine threshold in view of the lofty grandeur of God. In short, until one is able to develop such a condition, one must not rest, for this is the true meaning of: يُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ (*They establish the Prayer*).

(Malfūzāt [Trans.], Volume 2, pp. 148-149)

Humanity First
Serving Mankind

COVID-19 Fact Sheet

stay home • stay safe • help others
#HFCares

As COVID-19 continues to spread, there are things we can all do to keep each other and ourselves safe. Stay informed and take all necessary precautions to ensure we are doing our part to help the government and frontline workers combat the virus.

SOME ARE AT HIGH RISK

Anyone with pre-existing medical conditions and/ or a weakened immune system is at a higher risk.

This includes seniors and those with the following conditions:

- Heart disease
- Hypertension
- Lung disease
- Diabetes
- Cancer

HOW TO REDUCE YOUR RISK

STAY HOME

Stay home if possible and limit the number of visitors at your home

- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces in your home regularly

If you must step outside, please take the following measures:

- Avoid touching high touch surfaces
- Change your routine to avoid crowded places, such as going to the grocery store at off peak hours.
- Keep at least a 2 arms length (or 2m) distance from others
- Avoid all nonessential travel

HYGIENE MEASURES

- Wash your hands frequently according to the World Health Organization's guidelines and use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when not available.
- Avoid touching your face and food with your hands

BE PREPARED

PLAN AHEAD

- Stock up on necessary supplies in case you need to stay at home for a few weeks.
- Identify services that can deliver food and medications

COMMUNICATE

- Communicate with your healthcare provider. They will help ensure you have enough prescribed medication and medical supplies.
- put a system in place to regularly check on family and friends via phone or email.

STAY INFORMED

- Learn about the symptoms of Covid-19, how it spreads and preventative measures you can take
- Ensure your information is coming from reputable sources, such as Public Health Agency of Canada and the World Heath Organization.
- Monitor yourself for symptoms
- Give yourself a break from the news and find time to relax

Visit canada.ca/coronavirus for more info

Contact Humanity First: +1 416 440-0346 humanityfirst.ca info@humanityfirst.ca Twitter: @humanityfirst

PRAYERS FOR THE CURRENT PANDEMIC

In these days, we should pay special attention to the study of Kashti-e-Nooh (Noah's Arc) and arrange regular Dars of this book in our homes.

In the current situation, whereas Syedna Hazrat Khalīfatul-Masiḥ V (May Allah be his Helper!) has advised us to take other precautionary measures, Huzoor[aa] has also urged us to turn to Allah in repentance and pray.

Therefore, some prayers from the Holy Qur'an, Ahadith and prayers of the Promised Messiah[as] are given below:

Prayer of Hazrat Ayub[as]

Hazrat Ayub[as] supplicated to seek cure from his illness and presented his weak state for attracting Allah's mercy. This prayer was accepted and, miraculously, the affliction was removed.

اَنِّیْ مَسَّنِیَ الضُّرُّ وَاَنْتَ اَرْحَمُ الرّٰحِمِیْنَ

Affliction has touched me, and Thou art the Most Merciful of all who show mercy. (21:84)

Prayer of Hazrat Moses[as]

When an earthquake overtook Hazrat Moses[as] and the chiefs of his people , Hazrat Moses[as] considered it indication of Allah's displeasure and he supplicated as:

اَنْتَ وَلِیُّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَاَنْتَ خَیْرُ الْغٰفِرِیْنَ

Thou art our Protector; forgive us then and have mercy on us, for Thou art the Best of those who forgive. (7:156)

Prayer for Protection against All Harms

Uthman ibn Affan[ra] says: I heard the Holy Prophet[sa] say: "He who recites this prayer thrice in the morning and again in the evening every day, God will protect him from anything which is harmful."

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الَّذِیْ لَا یَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهٖ شَیْءٌ
فِی الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فِی السَّمَاءِ وَهُوَ السَّمِیْعُ الْعَلِیْمُ

In the name of Allah, with Whose name nothing can harm in the earth and in Heaven, and He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (Sunan Abi Dawood: 5088)

Prayer for Protection from Pandemics

During a pandemic, God Almighty conveyed it the Promised Messiah[as] that, as a remedy against it, Allah should be remembered through His following attributes:

یَا حَفِیْظُ۔ یَا عَزِیْزُ۔ یَا رَفِیْقُ

O Protector, O Almighty, O Companion (Tadhkirah, p,660)

یَا حَیُّ یَا قَیُّوْمُ بِرَحْمَتِکَ أَسْتَغِیْثُ

O Ever-Living and Self-Subsisting One, I supplicate for Your mercy. (Tadhkirah, p,439)

The Promised Messiah[as] has stated that it was conveyed to him that this is the Great Name (اسم اعظم) of God and that whoever supplicates with these words would be delivered from every affliction.

رَبِّ کُلُّ شَیْءٍ خَادِمُکَ رَبِّ فَاحْفَظْنِیْ وَانْصُرْنِیْ وَارْحَمْنِیْ

O my Lord everything serves You. So O my Lord, protect me and help me and have mercy on me. (Tadhkirah, p,601)

Prayer for Deliverance from Sufferings and Illness

سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَبِحَمْدِهٖ سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ الْعَظِیْمِ
اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰی مُحَمَّدٍ وَّاٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

Holy is Allah and worthy of all Praise; Holy is Allah, the Great. Allah, bestow Your blessings on Muhammad and the people of Muhammad. (Tiryaqul-Qulub, pp. 36–37, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 15, pp. 208–209)