

We will surely guide in Our ways  
those who strive after Us. (29:70)

# **WAY OF THE SEEKERS**

An exposition of the  
Islamic Theory of Morals  
and the way of its  
translation into daily life

based on lectures given by  
Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad  
Khalifatul Masih II

## WAY OF THE SEEKERS

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## A NOTE BY THE TRANSLATORS

Apart from the intrinsic difficulty of the subject matter of this unusual presentation of the ethical problem, the translators had to work from a very inadequately recorded version of the subject. The meaning of the text, therefore, is not always clear. Nevertheless, the fascination of the theoretical frame – set forth here in very slender outline – will attract many of those who combine a deep interest in ethical theory (theistic, Islamic) with a keen desire to see ethics made an authentic part of the everyday life of man. Especially modern man's search for a theoretical anchor is now combined with a passion for the improvement of man's relationship with God and his fellowmen, which makes the presentation attractive, worthwhile and worth presenting. Those who want to pursue the subject will obviously have to turn to the revered speaker's other works, at least the two mentioned by himself, namely, *Irfan-i-Ilahi* and *Najat* (unfortunately available only in Urdu)



This English translation is based on the speeches delivered by Hazrat Mirza Bashirud Din Mahmood Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II, on December 27 and 28, 1925, at the Annual Convention (Jalsa Salana) of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, held in Qadian, India. These speeches, delivered in Urdu, were published in a book form with the title *Minhajut Talibeen* in 1926, and reissued in 1956. This English translation was rendered by Qazi Muhammad Aslam, M.A., and Chaudhary Muhammad Ali, M.A.

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*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful*

## **THE WAY OF THE SEEKERS**

The revered speaker opened with Tasha'hud and Ta'awuz:

*I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, the One, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger.*

*I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the rejected.*

He then recited Surah Fateha:

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful. All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment. Thee do we worship, and Thee do we implore for help. Guide us to the straight path, the Path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy favors, not of those who earned Thy wrath nor of those who went astray. (1:1-7).*

After that, he opened his speech with the following verses of the Holy Quran:

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

*Fire, him hast Thou surely humiliated; and the wrongdoers shall have no helpers. Our Lord, we have heard a Crier calling us unto the faith; 'Believe ye in your Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord, forgive us, therefore, our errors and remove from us our ills, and in death number us with the righteous. Our Lord, bestow upon us that which Thou has promised us through Thy Messengers; and humiliate us not on the day of Resurrection. Surely Thou doest not contrary to Thy promise. Their Lord would answer their prayer; I will not suffer the work of any worker from among you, whether male or female, to be lost. You are spiritually akin one to another. Those, therefore, who have emigrated, and have been driven forth from their homes, and have been persecuted in My cause, and have fought and been slain, I will surely remove from them their ills and will admit them to Gardens through which streams flow-a reward from Allah, and with Allah is the best reward. (3.191-196).*

Then he proceeded:

I thank God Almighty for His grace and mercy in letting us once again fulfill the sign He has vouchsafed for the identification of His messenger, His emissary, in our time. We thank God for His grace and mercy in letting us gather once again, not for any worldly honor or purpose, nor for wealth or physical comfort, but for His cause, His name, His remembrance and for strengthening faith in His Being. I also pray to God that He make our motives pure and our deeds right and appropriate.

### **The Name *'Minhajut Talibeen'***

I turn now to the subject-matter of the speech that I have had in my mind for some time. The subject is so universally important that everyone seeks information about it. Many more than I can count have been questioning me on it. The



questions they want answered have to have clear-cut prescriptive answers. So it is prescriptions they expect to have. The question everyone wants answered is: "What methods, exercises, ways, can we adopt which can procure release for us from sin and prompt us to do only good." The readiest answer is: Adopt the right way, abjure all sin. But as everybody knows that is not enough. They say: We have read the Quran, we have read the Hadith as best as one can, and we have read the books of the Promised Messiah, and made the necessary effort to steer clear of sinful living, but we have not succeeded. Now, having done all that, what more can we do?

The question is quite legitimate. How to get over this weakness of man—that despite knowledge, despite effort and will, he does not always succeed in choosing and treading the right path. When I sat down to note some of the important points, I soon became aware that some topics comprised in this theme were bound to overlap topics discussed by me in an earlier speech delivered at an earlier Conference, published under the title, *Irfan Ilahi* (Deeper Knowledge of God). So I started re-reading that speech. I found that in the course of it I had made a promise that I would discuss this theme sometime in the future. This speech, therefore, is closely connected with the earlier speech. It is only by the grace of God that I have been reminded of my promise and I proceed to fulfill it.

As I began, I was reminded of yet another thing. It was a long forgotten vision that I saw soon after the death of the Promised Messiah (peace be on him). At the time I did not realize its significance. In the vision, I found myself sitting on a prayer mat after prayer. In my hand I am holding a book about which I am told is by Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani. The name of the book is *Minhaj al-Talibeen* (*Way of the Seekers*). I read the book and put it aside. I then recalled that the book was to be returned to Hazrat Khalifatul Masih I, and I begin to look for it. During the search I found another book.

Simultaneously I found myself repeating the words:

*No one knows about the hosts of Thy Lord, except He Himself.*

I thought there was a book bearing that title by Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, and I should find it. So I enquired from Hazrat Khalifatul Masih I, who told me that there was no book with just that title but that there was one with a somewhat similar title, namely *Ghaniyyat al-Talibeen*. I continued my search and found that there was no such book by Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani or anyone else. It then occurred to me that it might be that I myself would have the opportunity to write a book with that title. The name Abdul Qadir indicated that the book would be the result not of my own thinking so much as the result of special understanding bestowed upon me by God. Therefore, I decided to call this speech *Minhaj al-Talibeen*.

I have mentioned two of my earlier speeches, *Irfan Ilahi* and *Najat* (usually translated Salvation but the Islamic significance of which is best conveyed by Fulfillment). The three themes are related to each other. I will not discuss the relationship in detail, but shall touch cursorily on some aspects that would be helpful in understanding the main theme. The truth is that while the earlier speeches contain the theoretical framework of the whole subject-matter, the present speech shall dwell upon the practical application of the theoretical part.

The first question that occurs when we begin to investigate the subject systematically is: What is the object, the end of the creation of man? This question, as was but proper, has been answered by God Himself:

*And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they worship Me. (51:57)*

Man must become an image of God, if he is to achieve the

purpose of his creation. In Arabic *Abd* means slave. *Abudiyat* literally is humility or subordination of the utmost degree. This degree of subordination implies complete readiness to receive the impress of another. To become *Abd* is to receive and reproduce the total impression of another. It is to accept another as sovereign and model. Now mark the words:

*Man has not been created but for the one purpose of becoming an imitation, an image of God.*

This purpose to achieve fulfillment needs absorption by man of the attributes of God. The great spiritual teachers, prophets, messengers, were sent with this end in view. We read:

*Our Lord, raise up among them a Messenger from among themselves, who may recite to them Thy Signs and teach them the Book and Wisdom and may purify them, surely Thou Art the Mighty, the Wise. (2:130)*

This was Abraham's prayer at the time of the renovation of the *Kaaba*. Abraham implored God to send a Messenger who should show them His Signs, teach them the Law and the Wisdom behind the Law, also purify them and deliver them from sin. He indeed is the God of Power, the God of Wisdom.

A spiritual teacher (as we learn from holy books and from history) arises to strengthen faith by Signs, to teach men what is right and what is wrong, to give them a law and to point to the wisdom behind the law, and to train them to live in accordance with the Law and the Knowledge so imparted. Man should acquire faith, belief, knowledge of right and wrong and—this is important—make himself pure, a worthy image of God, so as to deserve to sit in His holy company.

For our community this is no ordinary question. It is indeed a life-and-death question for us. Amongst us has come a prophet, a divinely appointed teacher. We accepted him. To quicken our faith he has recited to us the Signs of God. Having

had the grace of knowing, recognizing, and accepting such a person, should we still remain as unclean as before? What have we achieved by believing in him? Once the Promised Messiah (a.s.) happened to dilate on the spiritual stages a believer should successively pass through one by one. Hazrat Maulvi Burhanuddin of Jhelum, one of the most zealous companions of the Messiah, was also present. What the Messiah said went straight to his heart. While the Messiah spoke, he listened, in a state of deep self-examination. As soon as the Messiah finished, Maulvi Sahib lost self-control and broke down completely. His sobs of remorse shook him. Addressing the Messiah he said: At first I joined the *Wahabbis* and tried to propagate the sayings of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace. For this I suffered and was often beaten up and ill-treated. Then God sent you and you I accepted. This let loose another wave of fury against me. Once again I am being beaten up, stoned and subjected to persecution. Having toiled and suffered so much, I am still the ignoramus that I was.

Thus what do we gain by believing in a prophet if we remain the same old bunglers? We are a community who have seen a prophet and who have lived with him. We ought to change and change to a marked degree. We ought to feel we really have surrendered our hand of allegiance to a living model of spirituality; nay, to God Himself. If Ahmadis do not achieve this quality of spiritual achievement, then what have they achieved? The Promised Messiah has warned us; he has told us what he expects of us. Reflect, how serious and Important is the goal set for us. On the need to purify ourselves, the Promised Messiah is reported to have said in the clearest possible words: (I quote from *Badr*, the leading journal of those days):

“Only he has purified himself who has set right his relationship with both God and man, his Creator and his fellow creatures. We must discharge our obligations to both. God requires that we must live in practice

every word we utter in affirmation of God. God is One, without associate. What we affirm with our tongues we must illustrate by our deeds, not ever reducing God to the status of man. We owe to our fellow creatures that we harbor no malice, hatred, prejudice, rancor, desire to harm, or intent against them to injure. It is not easy to attain these negative virtues. You are still very distant from this spiritual station. Have you set right your personal relations with your brethren? I am afraid not. You have not given up complaints and counter complaints nor backbiting. You trample over other people's rights. God wants you to live like brothers and to function as parts of one organic whole. Thus alone can you attain spiritual bliss. If human beings cannot deal honestly with their own brothers, how can they with God? True, God's claim on our obedience is very great. But the measure of how pure your account is with God is how pure it is with His creatures. One who is not straight and sincere with men cannot be straight and sincere with God. To be straight and sincere is no small matter. It is something big and difficult. Sincere love is one thing, insincere and hypocritical love, quite another. When a believer falls ill, another believer goes and visits him to express his concern. If a believer dies, fellow believers join his funeral. No questions should be raised over small matters. It is best if such things are ignored. God does not approve of your living at a distance from one another. Without true love, there is no Jamaat – it is the end of the Jamaat. (Badr; 1908)

I ask forgiveness of Allah, my Lord, for all sins and I turn wholly to Him.

This is the quality of *Taqwa* (fear of God) the Promised Messiah inculcates in his counsels to the Jamaat. So it behoves us to cultivate *Taqwa* (fear of God in its true spirit). Only then shall we be able to fulfill the purpose of our lives,

the purpose which underlines the coming of the Holy Prophet, the coming of the Promised Messiah, on both be peace.

### **Perfect Man**

I now turn to the question, what do we mean by a perfect man? Every field of study has its central object. In medicine we seek a description and definition of the physically normal, healthy man. In the spiritual field we seek a description and definition of the spiritually perfect man.

As I said just now, the first essential quality of a spiritually perfect man is that his relationship should be correct and right both with God, his Creator, and man, his fellow creatures. Both relationships should be right and correct. This is the definition of a perfect man laid down by the Promised Messiah (on him be peace). Relationship with fellow men bifurcates into two: (1) relationship with one's own self. As the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) clearly said: Thine own self has claims on thee. (2) Relationship with fellow creatures.

Relationship with one's own self further bifurcates into two aspects: (a) negative: safeguarding oneself against corrupt action and corrupt influences; and (b) positive: righteous conduct and seeking good influences.

Relationship with fellow beings –both positive and negative –is of two types: (a) With other individuals; (b) With groups of individuals, classes, nations. Then there is also relationship with creatures other than human. All of these have positive and negative expressions.

Relationship with God also has two sides, positive and negative. Negative means safeguarding oneself against the conduct which is likely to harm this relationship; and positive means pursuit of conduct which is likely to help promote this relationship.

I now pass on to the important question: What is religious faith or a life of religious faith? This is a much misunderstood

question. The division of 'morals' is to be found also in religious faith and in religious life. It is important, therefore, to be clear about religious faith and religious life. There are people who equate religious life with moral life and think they are the same. To them to be religious is to be moral and to be moral is to be religious. This is incorrect and confusing.

Religious life according to me has two parts: (I) Morality; (ii) Spirituality. A man of good moral character may be just moral and be not necessarily religious. He may be a good man but not a perfect man. His moral part is all right, but not his spiritual part.

### **Morals Defined**

Of human actions, those that relate to human beings and are inter-human in character are called moral. The same actions, when they relate to God, are called spiritual and form part of the spiritual life of man. A man who lies to other men is a liar; he commits the immorality of lying. If he lies to God, it means he is dead spiritually. To be pious and religious, a man has to be right on both counts. Moral actions which obey the Law of *Shariah* become spiritual actions and a part of religious faith and life. The same actions without reference to the spiritual part, when carried out as part of social tradition or culture are called moral. A person who is mindful in respect of such actions is called a moral human being.

Thus the moral and spiritual states are closely connected. The only difference between the two is that when our activities are directed towards man, they are called moral activities; when they are directed towards God, they become spiritual. Hence when I speak about morals, I should also be understood to be speaking about the spiritual side of man. The difference is obvious. One kind relates to man, the other to God. I shall observe this difference wherever necessary.

### What is *Khulq*

To deal with morals as a subject, we first need to have some kind of definition of the terms moral, *moral* or *Khulq* as they say in Arabic. On this apparently very simple subject, all religious teachings and philosophies, excepting those of Islam, have made mistakes. They have defined this term in a variety of ways. (1) According to some, *Khulq* is a deep rooted instinct or faculty which enables a person to choose and adopt a course of action instantly, without having to weigh or consider and judge; or to reject immediately a course of action, without any rational consideration. (2) According to a second way of thinking *Khulq* is a kind of sensitivity implanted in man, as evidence of the existence of a Being like God. (3) According to a third way of thinking, *Khulq* is a capacity which has evolved slowly and is now inherited from generation to generation. It consists of making and appreciating moral distinctions. Western philosophers seem to have arrived at this view.

To my mind, a moral state or moral activity comes into play when a person's natural disposition begins to function in collaboration with his reason, and he or she becomes capable of choosing or rejecting the natural play of this disposition. If this play proceeds from a being devoid of reason, then the play is natural, not moral as in the case of animals or children. Animals love or behave in a friendly manner. But nobody calls them moral. Sometimes activities resembling human activities appear even in plants or metals or stones. We call such activities natural.

This part of the subject is difficult. But it is an essential link between what I have said so far and what I am going to say further.

I define moral action as action proceeding from a person who is capable of thinking and reasoning, also of choosing or rejecting a course of action. Such action could be good or bad.



A good moral action has been variously defined. Some say good moral actions are the exercise of natural capabilities under the direction of reason and understanding. Others say good moral actions are actions productive of real happiness. Still others think good moral actions are actions which entail self-sacrifice and secure others' good at the cost of one's own.

Some say good moral actions are actions directed and regulated by reason involving self-sacrifice with a view to serving one's own self-interest.

According to Muslim Sufis, good moral actions are actions guided by reason and the laws of *Shariah*.

This, by the way, is Imam Ghazali's definition. But there is room for improvement in this definition. Reason and *Shariah* are, of course, essential elements in good moral actions. But there are other conditions they must fulfill. They should be chosen and willed by the agent whose action they are supposed to be and be within his capability. If these conditions are not fulfilled, the actions will not be moral in our sense of the term. For instance, if a person, who is half-asleep, gives a coin to another person, but when he awakes, shirks ordinary charitable deeds, his gift of the coin when half-asleep will not count as a moral action. This is because the act of apparent charity, performed in semi-sleep is not a chosen and willed action.

Another requirement of a good moral action is that it should be consistent with the attributes of God. Moral action to be 'good' must be free from all defects and this is possible only if the action can be fitted into the divine profile. Nothing that seems error-free or evil-free to us is really so, unless it can be shown to be consistent with divine wisdom and divine character. God is the Ultimate Norm. Only He is Perfect in attributes, free from all defects.

I now turn to the important subject of the Origin of Morality. Where do morals spring from? Wherein are they rooted?

Again we confront a variety of answers. According to some, morality springs from control by human reason of aggression and sex. Aggression and sex are like two wild horses. Reason is the rider controlling both. When he does it well, controlling each, he displays moral activity. If the rider makes a mistake of one kind or another, he deviates from the moral path.

This power to think—to weigh and consider and judge—is called *Nafs-i-Natiqa*, or the rational self, by Mohyuddin Ibn Arabi. According to him all morals spring from a mixture of these three dispositions, a mixture, say, of reason and sex, or of reason and aggression, or of all the three viz., reason, sex and aggression. Elaborating the metaphor, he regards reason as the male partner and aggression and sex as his two wives. The union of man and woman gives birth to a child; in the same way, reason and aggression or reason and sex give birth to morals.

Still others think that man's strongest desire is to seek pleasure or happiness. When desire for happiness combines with reason, it gives rise to morals.

In my view the question of the origin of morality—moral qualities, moral actions—has not been adequately understood. It has to be spread over a wide enough context. Muslim philosophers should have considered the question in the light of the Holy Quran, but they have not done so. I have applied the principle of the Quran to the question and have found that the origin of morals or morality is very deep and goes far back into the origin of things. If morals were the prerogative only of man, descriptions and definitions by ordinary men would have been adequate, at least relevant. But morals or pseudo-morals are to be found in beings lower in the scale of life. For instance, it is said that reason, sex, and aggression, give rise to moral qualities like love, but love is found in animals also. Then it is said that reason and sex, or reason and aggression mixed together give rise to morals. Animals do not have reason. But they do display the quality of love which counts as a moral

quality in human beings. Thus it seems that the matter is not so simple. Reason, sex and aggression, among them, fail to account for all moral qualities. Animals also display something which is similar to morals, yet they do not have reason.

I believe I have come across something which has illumined for me the whole subject of morals. It is all due to the grace of God. My thinking proceeds along the following lines.

Morals or near-morals are rooted in certain faculties or dispositions. They are to be found not in human beings only, but are found also in animals, plants and even stones. They are to be found not only in units but even in particles of which units are composed. Thus, as you move down from man to animals you can see in animal behavior something similar to human behavior. You can see pugnacious behavior in both men and animals. You can see loving behavior in men and in animals. Going still further down, we find in plants behavior similar to the behavior of man and animals.

There are obvious differences, of course. Plant behavior is subtle. But its similarity to the behavior of man and animal is unmistakable. The tendency to give and take so obvious in man and animals is present also in plants. It is now accepted on all hands that there is sex in all or nearly all plants. The Holy Quran announced this long ago. It is when the male and the female plants unite that they yield fruit. This has been known about the date-palm for thousands of years, which shows there is sex in plants. The Indian scientist, Sir J. C. Bose, demonstrated this by means of sensitive instruments.

Plants also display other responses and emotions like displeasure, disapproval, etc. The well-known plant called 'Touch me not' shrinks and dies at the slightest touch. If you touch its flower or fruit, it throws its seed, itself shrinking into a small size. An American tree loves meat. Take a meaty substance near it, it tends to burst with pleasure. If it is allowed to touch the substance, it shrinks away, then sucks

the blood of the substance before throwing it away. These examples show that plants, like men and animals, can be stimulated. They respond to stimuli in characteristic ways.

Let us look lower down still at the minerals. Love is said to be a typically human moral quality. But what is love? It is to draw something to oneself. Does not a magnet draw a piece of iron to itself? One could say the magnet loves in a rudimentary manner. On the other hand, if two substances are charged with electricity of the same kind they begin to repel each other, as though they hate each other. This shows that minerals in their way, at their level, display responses similar to those of men, animals and plants.

These responses are demonstrated by the tiniest particles. Without mutual attraction, there would have been no conglomeration of particles, no world. If particles did not have the disposition and faculty to attract each other and form bodies, it would have been impossible for anything to exist and survive in the world. It is this faculty of attraction which unites the particles into bodies. From all of which it follows that morals have their roots deep down into the last particles of matter. The deeper we go, the more and more examples, albeit of a rudimentary kind, of morals we find. At least their roots can be identified.

These examples should make it clear that the elements which make up moral qualities are to be found in their rudimentary form, at lower levels of existence, in animals, plants, minerals and down to the most elementary particles. I will now give some account of the elementary qualities which grow and eventually acquire the character of moral qualities. Briefly, let me say that all forms of matter, including the most elementary forms, are spread out in six directions. These are the physical directions of up-down, right-left and front-back. Spiritual directions too are found in pairs. The same direction is up relatively to some things and down relatively to others, right relatively to some, and left relatively to others, in front

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relatively to some things, and at the back relatively of others.

That is how we have the physical and the spiritual worlds spread out in three pairs, or a total of six directions. The pairs are active-passive or masculine-feminine or those capable of activating and those capable of being activated. It is obvious that anything incapable of being activated will not be activated. A good example is baker's dough. Thrust your fist into it, the dough will make way, but not the hard top which does not accept the hand thrust. It follows that nothing can take place unless there is an efficient agent, on the one hand and a passive and ready to receive recipient, on the other. Every particle that exists is capable of both attracting and being attracted by something else.

The first spiritual direction or faculty we call attraction, the power to draw. Paired with it is the faculty to Incline, to be drawn. As soon as conditions permit, a particle will either begin to draw another particle to itself or would be ready to be drawn towards some other particle. The same is the case with the faculty to repel and the correlated faculty to turn away or to be repelled.

The third spiritual direction is to destroy, which is the correlate of creation. Everything that comes into existence does so by sending out of existence many other things. Take as simple an act as the movement of my hand from one place to another. The earlier position of the hand disappears and dies and in its place a new position is created. So is the case with the particle of matter. When particles accept influence from outside and acquire a new shape, their earlier shape is gone. Similarly, its correlate, destruction, has the faculty to destroy others and at the same time to destroy itself.

The fourth direction is the faculty to survive. Drop a thing; it will be stopped by a wall or a floor. This is the faculty to survive.

The fifth direction or pair of faculties is manifestation.

Every particle has the faculty to enlarge other particles and make them manifest. Its correlate is self-manifestation. Every particle has the capacity to become manifest and prominent.

The sixth direction or pair of faculties is screening. Every particle has the faculty to screen another particle. The correlate of screening is the passive faculty of being screened, to accept another particle's shadow, as it were.

These pairs of faculties, present in the tiniest of material particles, provide the ultimate theoretical basis of human morals. A steady process of growth and composition takes place which in the case of man assumes the most amazing forms. As matter becomes compounded, more and more elements conglomerate and the resulting behavior becomes more variegated, more precise. Progressive change in the basis results in progressive change in behavior. As we look inversely at this change we find its manifestation becoming lower and lower and more and more limited. While these properties operate under mechanical natural laws, we can call their results good or bad—good or bad in relation to their functions.

We cannot describe them as if they were moral qualities. Everything is either good or bad, in terms of its functional nature or efficiency and this grading applies in terms of the six pairs of basic faculties. Can the inter-behavioral modes of the six faculties be called moral? Let this stick drop on someone and hurt him. The person hurt will feel pain but will not blame the stick as ill-mannered or immoral. Similarly if a person chances to find a coin lying on the road, he would welcome the sight and be pleased. But he will not praise the coin for thus presenting itself to him. No credit attaches to the coin. In short, as long as the behavior of things is in accordance with natural laws, we can call it good or bad only in a limited sense, but we cannot treat it as moral. They are good or bad for our purpose, in terms of our needs.

Often goodness or badness is just relative, from a particu-

lar point of view only. A bullet is fired, a man dies or is hurt. His friends will call it bad or unfortunate. But his enemies will have a different view altogether. The good or evil involved here is relative to a point of view. It is not moral in its own right. A natural process or the manifestation of a faculty takes place under natural laws. No will or intention is involved; therefore, it is not moral, though good from one point of view, bad from another.

However, when through progressive change, matter emerges in the shape of man, the six paired faculties begin to manifest themselves in a thousand and one different ways. Man is fashioned out of matter but through an infinite number of changes, each more complicated than the last. The resulting behavior also becomes more and more complicated at every stage. Color and color perception provide an excellent example. Basic colors are only a few, six or seven, or even three or four but by mutual adjustment, an infinite variety of colors can be produced.

In case of man the basic pairs of faculties begin to express themselves in ever new combinations and compositions. Because these expressions are new, we can call them *Khalq*. In fact even human behavior is compounded out of the six pairs of faculties which are to be found in the most elementary forms of matter. When we see them at work in minerals we call them powers or forces. In plants, we call them sensations. When found in animals we call them passions. In man, when they are unaccompanied by will and thought, we call them natural dispositions and expressions of natural instinct. When accompanied by will and thought, we call them *Khulq* which is the peak of this progressive change from matter to man. We have this very picture set out in the Holy Quran:

*Verily, We created man from an extract of clay. We then placed him as a drop of sperm in a safe depository. Then We fashioned the sperm into a clot, then We fashioned the clot into a shapeless lump, then We fashioned bones*

*out of this shapeless lump. then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We developed it into a new creation. So blessed be Allah the Best of Creators. (23:13-15)*

Man is the acme of creation. All other creation is below him, under him. He is the top.

Having comprehended the key to the picture, we can see very well how human morality may have emerged by progressive change from the six paired faculties of primitive matter, through a number of emergent changes. Human behavior and its manifestations cannot be evil in themselves. If they become evil, it is because of their consequences. Otherwise they are just examples of natural dispositions. They will be evil if they are contrary to reason and if the probable consequences are evil.

Take cowardice as an example. Cowardice is evil according to everybody. Yet what is cowardice but withdrawal from a situation which inspires fear. Withdrawing in itself is not evil; even withdrawing from fear is not an Intrinsic evil. It is only a natural disposition which is neither good nor bad. We call it evil, only in terms of our reason and in terms of its probable consequences.

Take another example: a pious man's withdrawal to his cloister. But somehow withdrawal to the cloister is generally credited with merit. It can be good only if it satisfies our reason and if its probable consequences are good. Call it piety or what you will, names do not matter. Patience or fortitude is another case in point. This too displays the disposition to withdraw. We will call it good only when it is in keeping with the dictates of reason and demands of the situation.

Take the example of loving and being loved. This brings the lover-beloved relationship into existence. A disciple loves his mentor or spiritual teacher. The teacher possesses beauty, of learning, of character. This attracts the disciple who, in consequence, inclines towards him. A relationship of love



develops. But what does it depend on? If it depends on reason and the requirements of the moment, it is good; It is a moral response to beauty. Otherwise it is just wayward and mean. The two states, however, have the same inner content. One attracts, the other is attracted. The process is reminiscent of what happens at the lower forms of life and matter.

Repulsion is a natural disposition. When it assumes a moral form, it is called courage or bravery. What is courage? The same natural disposition to repel which is present in elementary particles. At the human level, it manifests itself as courage. But it has to be appropriated in terms of reason and circumstances, before it can be called moral and admired. Without these qualifications, it is evil or at best only natural. Similar is the case of people who keep calling names or abusing others. This act too is an expression of repulsion but without endorsement by reason or justification by probable consequences. The motive in both cases is to repel; to repel an accusation, an attack, or an act of supposed cruelty.

Attraction has its own expressions. It draws things to itself. When it appears as greed it expresses itself as scramble for power and financial gain. If it is evil in intent and consequences, it becomes an evil. Pleasant manners, good humor, open countenance, praise, love, loveliness, piety, eagerness in propagation of truth, all fall under loveliness whose manifestations they are.

Manliness, aggressiveness, etc., spring from the disposition to destroy. This disposition (*Tahawwur* in Arabic) means that man's own destruction is admitted and accepted by him. He declares his own life is of no consequence to him. This emotion can be both rational and irrational. Rationally motivated it is an emotion of a high order. As did Nemat Ullah Shaheed (at Kabul, 1924). He made a firm decision to sacrifice his life, but not his faith. Thus when manliness is conjoined with reason, it becomes sacrifice. A man sees a light, a fire in front of him and jumps into it to immolate himself. It displays a kind of

manliness and courage. But it is not moral but evil as it is not controlled by reason.

Another example of self-immolation is grace, giving up something for the sake of another. In a manner of speaking, a person destroys himself to some extent. That which would promote his own survival, he makes over to others.

Self-immolation is exemplified in murder, arson, viciousness, because the motives of these actions—crimes—have the built-in desire to die.

The desire for survival is illustrated in charity, hope, magnanimity, and other similar morals. Grace has been mentioned before as rooted in immolation. This is because morals do not have single roots. Sometimes they have more roots than one; or, they assume a different quality at different times.

Pride, the desire to outstrip others, courage, self-approbation, all branch out of the desire to manifest oneself. Their ultimate motive is to manifest.

Disclosing a secret, hypocrisy, shamelessness, sincerity, are the mental manifestations of the desire to manifest. Trusting God, chastity, modesty, spring from the desire for secrecy.

Laughter, humor, false witness, keeping a secret, lying, are the mental manifestations of the desire for secrecy.

Some morals are complex, made up of more than one; for instance, jealousy. Jealousy is a complex moral quality made up of attraction and immolation; promising results out of withdrawal and immolation.

Under different conditions some morals assume different qualities; for instance, ostentation or self-display or readiness to fight which means quarrelsomeness may be motivated by sheer withdrawal or hatred. To disprove and challenge what others claim, or to claim and acquire one's own right are

examples. In short the large field of human morals. shows on examination that human morals are a progressive. advanced and complicated manifestation of the preliminary. the primitive pattern of properties which manifest themselves at the lower levels. Their non-material and spiritual profile they owe to the progressive change they undergo. In some cases they become compounds, in other cases compounds of compounds.

Human morals, therefore, are rooted deep in human nature; the physical, biological substratum of full-grown human beings. To demonstrate this is to demonstrate the important fact that morals by themselves are nothing. They are only a species of behavior which is neither intrinsically good nor intrinsically bad. It is the use made of them, the shape, the good style they assume, the total which they produce and in which they live and move which make them moral.

All this demonstrates that the world is not without a Being like God. The powers and propensities of man are neither good nor evil. Without a Being like God, there can be no morals or dispositions so deeply rooted and designed and guided at every turn of the evolutionary process. Only a Being like God could have taken care of the roots aeons earlier, which eventually were to assume in man the form of a well established moral consciousness. It is impossible for man to release himself from such deep moorings. This could only have been the act of a Supreme Power with a Will. He alone could have created man with an innate moral consciousness in exact consonance with the purpose of his creation. That is why man is able to react to moral situations in all conditions and at all ages and has a built-in capability so to react.

### **Motives to High Morals**

Having said something about the primitive roots of morals in general, I would turn to the question: Why go for and aspire

after high morals? Correspondingly, why turn away from low morals?

Western thinkers having had more to do with the ultimate nature of things, have given this question special importance. What is the moral purpose? Moral purpose is Moral Achievement of the highest order. This would have been impossible but for the roots of man's nature being imbued with moral potentialities. Only a Being like God could have provided for this. The moral potentialities of man are at work at all ages and in all circumstances. With the given potentialities man became ready to respond wherever and whenever moral stimuli were present. Some of the Western scholars believe that high morals are intrinsically good, good in themselves. They believe that we should strive for high morals for their own sake. No ulterior purpose is needed. To them high morals are their own justification.

Muslim moralists have returned a different answer. There should be one preponderant motive to all moral actions, high and low. This would be *thawab* or divinely determined merit. Imam Ghazali is quite explicit on the point. He goes so far as to say that if a man keeps away from adultery not for *thawab* but for the sake of his health, he is not truly pious.

Against the doctrine of *thawab*, West oriented writers raise two objections. According to them, when a physician treats a patient not for health's sake but for the sake of *thawab*, he is not fully moral. He is instead a kind of tradesman. He is as good a believer in give and take as is the latter. Then why should the one be considered superior and the other inferior? Their second objection is: if a man keep away from adultery for the sake of his health, or good reputation, he has as much title to being chaste as anyone else. After all, has not *Shariah* prohibited adultery? You say because no concern is shown for spiritual merit as such, therefore, such abstention is expedient, not moral.

But the question is why should *thawab* or merit be the essential condition for an action being moral? Obviously because the divine scheme is that the commands should be obeyed and prohibitions should be eschewed. The next question is why does the divine scheme contain commands and prohibitions? If there is no wisdom in commands and prohibitions of the divine scheme; if they are arbitrary, so to say, then the divine scheme is meaningless. But if the divine scheme is not meaningless, but full of wisdom, then to act in accord with this wisdom cannot but be moral. And why not? If a person while acting out of respect for God's command, also keeps in view the wisdom contained in the command, why should the merit or value of the action be any the less? If on the other hand, a prohibition has no meaning, it would mean God as law-giver is just arbitrary.

The objection which reduces morality to a simple give and take affair is easily answered when we remember that a business transaction and a moral action are very different matters. In the divine scheme the value of good and evil actions is declared beforehand. Good actions will be rewarded and evil actions penalized. In business, the seller himself fixes the price of his wares. The merits and penalties of the divine scheme were defined and determined long ago, long before the birth of man. They are determined by nature and reflect the value of the act. We may or may not be thinking of God while we perform an action, but merit or *thawab* is being dealt out to us. This is not give and take. This is not business.

In give and take, a person has a quantity of butter and another person has an amount of money. The latter can buy the butter with his money. But the man with butter may or may not agree to sell. In morals it is different. The value of actions and their reward has already been laid down; what action will have what reward. There has been no business transaction, no claim to a price and so on. Another difference is that our Arbiter is one Whom we are going to need in any

case. Our actions, whether we have any return for them in view or not; our life, every breath of it, depend on Him. Such a Being to Whom we owe our very being, is not to be dismissed as the other party in business. Business relations are voluntary; we are free to enter into them or not.

The second objection is quite valid; provided it is understood that an action not motivated by the hope of divine reward is not moral. The real point is that those who cannot be reconciled to the use of words like *thawab* do not understand the real content and meaning of this word. If *thawab* meant cash in some sense, the difficulty in using it in a moral discourse would be understandable. But *Thawab* does not mean cash; it does not mean pounds and shillings. It means the end, the ultimate end, for which life exists. *Thawab* has almost the same sense as the term *summum bonum*.

*Summum bonum* for man is to become a perfect profile of God which indeed is the purpose of his creation. Morally and spiritually, we should become as holy and as perfect imitations of God as possible. Pure spirituality should be within our grasp. The rewards described in physical language and metaphors are to be interpreted like all metaphors. They are not the end we aim at, but adjuncts to the end. Adjuncts are adjuncts, not the end. A friend entertains a friend. The extra attention, the little things he provides and presents to the friend, are not the real purpose. The real purpose is the meeting of hearts and the meeting itself. So, here, *thawab* does not mean the eating and drinking which is done on the occasion, but getting close to the end which is to be as like God attributively as possible, to be as much of an *abd* as one can be. Says the Holy Quran:

*I have not created the Jinn and men but that they may worship Me. (51:57)*

When actions are thus motivated, only then can they acquire the status of true morals. Without their motivation our

actions are materialistic exercises. There is no doubt that even these exercises are of some use. But if men do not aspire to be good and perfect, and if the approval of God is not their aim, how will they attain the fulfillment for which they are made and after which they ought naturally to aspire? Mental and spiritual action and effort depend so much on good motives. Even physical actions depend on the motives which buttress them. All experts on physical culture will tell you this. When taking exercise, if you keep an eye on the result, the end of the exercise, it will make a great difference. Without this extra attention, the result is not as good as it can be.

The second answer to the difficulty is that we practice morals to win the approval of God. This does not mean we expect to have something in return for our moral effort but only that we return our thanks to Him, for what He has already done for us. Thus the discharge of this moral obligation, the expression of our gratitude should enable us to acquit ourselves well in a manner of speaking.

Lastly, the critic fails to understand himself. If reward makes an action selfish, the critic too is not any the less selfish. Let him ponder the question. Why does he tend a sick person, look to his needs and so on? If the answer is—his heart compels him to do so, then tending the sick no longer is his virtue. It is his heart which should have the credit, but for whose compulsiveness the tending of the sick would not have taken place. Alternatively, the answer could be that it is a matter of give and take. Tend a sick man for maybe when you happen to be sick, you will have someone tending you in return. The element of return is unavoidable. But look at us. When we perform a good action, we do not expect to have our return in cash or in some other form. By the present action we thank God for the opportunities we have had in the past for doing good things.

### **Good Man Defined**

Let me now turn to the important question: What is the definition of the good man? The Christian view is that a man has to possess all the virtues and to be free from all the vices, all defects, to be called a good man. Other religions have more or less followed the same line. But the Holy Quran says explicitly:

*Then, as for him whose scales are heavy, he will have a pleasant life. But as for him whose scales are light, hell will be his resort. (101:7-10).*

For instance, if an examinee answers nine questions correctly but his answer to the tenth is not correct he will not be penalized for it. Similarly doctors too commit occasional mistakes but if by and large their patients get well, they are considered good doctors.

This means that a moral person is one the quantum of whose virtues is overwhelming by greater than that of his vices, or alternatively an immoral person would be one whose vices outweigh his virtues. This is unlike what other religions say. From their point of view, a person may live a clean, full and virtuous life; but let him commit one mistake and this would be enough to condemn him as immoral. The Islamic approach is different. In Islam a moral person is one who honestly and sincerely exerts himself to do the right, so much so that his virtues cover and score out his faults.

The truth is that other religious teachings regard the *Shariah* as arbitrary. To them it is nothing more than commands which must be obeyed to please the law-giver's fancy. The slightest breach brings down a penalty. There is no forgiveness, no exception, no leniency. The *Shariah*, according to them, is nothing more than a manual of penalties.

The Islamic view of *Shariah* is quite different. The *Shariah* rituals are not ends in themselves. They are exercises to help promote the really good life, the life of the heart. Therefore, if you fail to perform a prescribed ritual, you do not at once



attract punishment, unless the omission or the error violates the purpose of the exercise itself. This does not mean, however, that occasional wrong-doing is permitted in Islam. No. That is not so. Deliberate wrong-doing is a kind of holiday from moral life. It is rebellion; and certainly rebellion is not permitted. If in a school examination a scholar refuses to answer one question and says he will not answer, because he has so willed, his act will be treated as a kind of indiscipline. He is just asking for punishment. It amounts to insulting the institution. But if he is unable to answer one or two questions, that is quite another matter. That would not entail any punishment. But deliberate refusal would be quite a different story.

### **Can Morality Be Taught?**

The question arises, can morality be learned and taught? The answer is why not? But this is a general answer. when the question is faced directly and a person is asked: Have you done all you could to improve your moral life? Have you met with the desired change? The reply generally is: No, I have tried but it is very difficult. Ask any one in a group if morals can be improved?, the answer would be: Yes. But when you ask if the person concerned has succeeded in actually improving his morals, he would say: I have done my best but I have not succeeded.

The position is paradoxical. We have in most matters, a poor opinion about others but a good opinion about ourselves. But in the matter of moral change and improvement by effort and exercise, human behavior is the other way around. Somehow others seem to be able to do something to improve their morals, but not we. We have some special difficulties or circumstances which do not let us. However, the Holy Quran is quite explicit on the point. According to the Holy Quran, moral life is capable of improvement. Says the Holy Quran:

*Continue to admonish, for admonition always helps.*  
(87-10)

A Prophet is never to tire of giving good advice to his people. Good counsel never goes unrewarded. The Holy Quran is definitely optimistic in this respect and it is a thing worth noting. No wonder the Promised Messiah (on him be peace) who drew for everything he taught on the Holy Quran, held fast to this teaching of the Holy Book. what he said to his followers again and again and in different ways, inspired hope. Once he said:

Think not you are sinners. Will your prayers be heard? Do not think like this. Man makes mistakes, but a time comes when he is able to overpower his sinning self. This power to overpower the sinning self is also built into the nature of man. Water puts out fire. This is part of its nature. Howsoever you may heat it, when water drops on fire it must put it out. That is natural. So is man a purifier by nature. Every man has this purifying property. Do not feel defeated because you have been involved in sin. Sin is like a stain on the surface of a piece of cloth. It can be washed away. Your habits, your dispositions may be dominated ever so much by your passions. Pray to God weeping, crying. He will not let your prayers go waste. He is full of compassion. (Badr 1907)

The Promised Messiah's message is full of hope. It is the message of the Holy Quran, amplified in his style by the Promised Messiah. The optimism which permeates the Holy Quran is unequalled in any other Holy Book. The way it is amplified by the Promised Messiah is indeed unequalled by any similar writer on the subject.

It becomes crystal clear from the Promised Messiah's words quoted above that human nature has a built-in something which when put to use washes away all sin and the sought-for resulting improvement is there for all to see.

### **Is Natural Man Good or Bad?**

The question maybe asked: If man is so capable of counter-acting evil, why is there so much evil in the world? Or, why is there more evil than good in the world?

I answered this question before on another occasion. But during the last few days, about half a dozen different people from different places have put this question to me again. It is quite strange that the same question should be raised by so many people at once and the same time. But let me proceed to answer the question.

The question is: Can we say that natural man is good? We must remember that God has endowed man with all sorts of capabilities and has also endowed him with the freedom and the discretion to use them in a good or bad way. The parting of the ways is shown to him and then he is left free to act. Says the Holy Quran:

*We have shown him the Way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful. (75:4)*

### **More Good or Evil**

The fact is that owing mainly to errors of observation, it is often forgotten that the world is more good than evil. Take a thief. True, he commits theft. But against each theft, he does so many things which are good. Perhaps he meets people in a pleasant manner. He is generous and charitable. He serves his parents, and takes good care of them. If you count up in this way, you will find the good in each person preponderating over evil.

So also men taken individually do more good things than evil. The quantum of good or evil in the world would certainly give good an edge over evil. Possibly more than an edge. why do people generally think the number of evil actions to be greater? This wrong impression is the product of two circumstances. One is the too patent a fact that in terms of formal, professed belief and unbelief, certainly unbelievers would

be found in a much larger number. The other circumstance is that most men suffer from one moral defect or another. Because of this, the quantum of evil seems larger. But it is an illusion. These circumstances are not adequate proof that there is more evil than good in the world.

Certainly, there may be more unbelievers. But the number of enlightened and convinced unbelievers is much less than appears on the surface. The so-called unbelievers are often such as have not really analyzed or tested their beliefs. Many so-called Kafirs are not Kafirs in the eyes of God. They will yet have the chance to decide. Or, if this does not happen, their actions which they have performed freely and responsibly will be taken into account in determining their moral merit. Thus weighed can we say how many will turn out to be good men and how many evil? Altogether it seems there is more belief in the world than disbelief. Proportionately, therefore, it would be safe to say that there is more good in the world than evil.

The other circumstance too that all or most people suffer from some moral defect or other is open to question. In fact, this is not the way to judge the matter. The question is: Are most men good or bad? If most men are good, the quantum of good in the world is greater. If most men possess most of the good moral qualities, the good predominates. Keeping in view the total good of men in the world as a whole the evidence on the side of good will be found to be more incontrovertible.

Some people at this point interject and say that if most people are in for punishment of one kind or another, then what does it prove except that Satan has won and God has lost. But I would say: No, still God is the winner and Satan the loser. For, does not Islam say that ultimately, that is, after all accounts have been settled, all human beings will enter the Divine Garden:

*And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me. (51:57)*

This eventuality fulfilled—as it must be—who will think that any human beings who have, by trial and error, become images of their Creator, should still remain in Hell and not go to the Garden, which is the destiny of all good men and women? From other evidence also we know that a time will come when hell would be emptied of all its inmates, also that they will all have been admitted to the Garden. All will have become good servants of Allah. When this happens, where will Satan be? Do you think he will be sitting by himself alone, unlike the rest of the creatures? He also will join the others in the Garden after he has been cleansed of all evil. So he will after all be defeated in his personal aim to mislead human beings and will himself stand desatanized. Those who consider Satan as the winning party shall stand corrected when they find Satan in the Garden, Satan who has ceased to be Satan.

To turn to the question of the definition of the perfect man. The perfect man is free from sin to the extent that in after-death he finds himself equal to the requirements of the good life. "Requirements of good life" means to deserve the pleasure of God and to be safe from His displeasure. The good soul has enough good deeds to its credit to enable it to enter the Garden of Divine pleasure at once. The emphasis is on at once. The perfect man is ready to enter the Garden at once to which sooner or later, every soul will be admitted. The perfect man's only distinction is that he will be among the first to enter.

### **What is Sin?**

I now turn to the definition of sin. Sin is an activity which renders the human soul sick and incapable of viewing the face of God. Difficulties have to be encountered in the journey which the soul undertakes as it moves towards the purpose of its creation. Activities which amount to sinning are either physical whose dangers are visible to oneself as well as to others; or, they are spiritual. Of the physical activities many are such that the dangers and disabilities they entail are obvious

What are good deeds? Good deeds are deeds which bring a person enough strength to join the onward march in the hereafter and which makes the soul capable of viewing the face of the Lord. Normally, a healthy person means one who is capable of going about life's activities in a normal way. One does not have to be extra-capable. One has to be just capable. Otherwise, small defects exist in everyone. Doctors cannot point to a single perfectly healthy body. A good man is one who has done enough good deeds both physical and spiritual to be capable of viewing the face of God.

### **Kinds of Virtues and Vices**

We cannot give an adequate account of the different kinds of sin, unless we can also describe different kinds of virtue. So, let us remember, there are three kinds of virtues and correspondingly three different kinds of vices or sins. They are as follows:

1. Virtues and vices which pertain to the heart. These indeed are the real virtues or vices.
2. Virtues and vices of the tongue or expression.
3. Virtues and vices which entail the use of the other physical organs like hands, feet, eyes, etc., etc.

### **Where Does Sin Come From?**

Here an important question arises. It may be asked with so many encouragements towards a life of virtue and so many discouragements towards a life of vice, and so much room for improvement, how does vice manage to enter the life of man?

I can only briefly indicate the answers to this important question. The main causes of sin are the following. (1) Ignorance. Sometimes a person allows himself no time for reflection while trying to satisfy his natural impulses and allows a passing interest or pleasure to determine his action. The excitement of the moment removes from his view the more permanent and the more solidly happy ends of life.

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Why should this happen? Why are the more permanent ends of life ignored?

First, because of ignorance which may be permanent or passing. Permanent ignorance is a thing apart. Temporary ignorance is ignorance despite knowledge. This sort of ignorance can have many causes:

- a. Greed. Too much greed blinds a person to many important matters;
- b. Pugnacity;
- c. Intense need;
- d. Bad health;
- e. Excessive fear;
- f. Excessive love;
- g. Excessive optimism;
- h. Excessive pessimism;
- i. Excessive insistence on anything;
- j. Excessive desire;
- k. Excessive lack of desire;
- l. Hereditary tendencies.

These are the twelve sources or circumstances which produce or promote ignorance.

Besides ignorance, the second big source of sin is social contacts and companions. Man is a born imitator. He tends to do as others do, without weighing and considering the consequences of what he is doing. These social influences include the influence of parents and other relations, playmates, teachers, social Institutions and customs.

One source of sin and sinning we have said is ignorance. But ignorance can be just ignorance or it can be wrong knowledge which makes it different from sheer ignorance. Wrong knowledge is sometimes accepted as knowledge and spurious generalizations as authentic principles.

Another source of sinning is bad habits. Knowing very well what truth is and that merit attaches to telling the truth, when the crucial moment arrives a person tends not to tell the truth. An addict makes up his mind not to drink any more. He knows all about drinking and not drinking. But when the party sits down to drink he allows himself to join and cannot resist the temptation. At the slightest call, his resolve not to drink is broken.

Sinning is also caused by habits of laziness and lack of organized hours of daily life. A person tends to take things easy. He is carefree. He has no inclination to work. When the time comes, he tends to make light of what he has to do. Time passes and he suddenly finds himself drinking. Once a sincere companion of the Holy Prophet (on him be peace and blessings) was all but ready to go to the battlefield but he made no preparation for it. He had persuaded himself that when the time came he would be able to join the party with ease. He continued to leave his preparations to the end. The result was he was left behind and could not join the army. Laziness, therefore, is often the cause of sin. Man is lazy and easy-going and is incapable of commanding himself to get up and go.

One source of sinning is lack of comparative judgment. Out of two alternative courses of action, a person cannot decide which is the better of the two. It also becomes a question for such people how different emotions are to be applied to different situations and is made by two parties, but how far does one go with one party and how far with the other? A man loves his wife but also his mother. Both have a similar title to love. This gives rise to difficult situations which are largely self-created. Similarly many people become convinced of the truth of the Promised Messiah but hesitate to join the fold. They say they owe allegiance to another saint whom they do not want to leave. These difficulties are due to an incapacity to judge.

Another source of sin are the many invisible influences



which criss-cross one another in our lives. They exert a kind of hypnotic influence, unknown to the person affected. No argument is given nor is any appeal made, but the presence of influences which ideas generate is undeniable. This needs some explanation. Let a decent person live in close proximity to nine others not so decent, who nurse evil thought without any overt communication. He will soon begin to feel the evil influence.

This reminds me of a Sikh student who had great affection for the Promised Messiah. On one occasion he sent a message to him, through Hazrat Maulvi Nooruddin Sahib, that his mind was being affected by agnostic thinking. The Promised Messiah suggested that this young man should change his seat in the classroom and sit away from his classmates who sat close to him. The change proved the cure for his agnosticism. No argument had passed between them, but unexpressed thoughts were being communicated in some mysterious way.

Thoughts are like waves and have a power of their own. The Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet (on him be peace and blessings) endorse this. Animal life also bears out this point. For example, two cats confront each other in an imminent fight. After an exchange of the usual mutual threats and noises, one of them is found to lower its tail and leave as if worsted. There is no visible fight; yet there was some kind of a contact.

Animals communicate without words or signs. Let four or five lions be brought together. Before long, only the strongest of them will be left standing as the master of the scene. Others will have lowered their tails and slipped away. If meat is thrown up at them, none will dare eat except the strongest; the rest will just stand by and watch as if paralyzed with some secret fear.

Hypnosis: Under hypnosis too we can observe similar phenomena. I was once experimenting with hypnotic influences. I had some questions raised by agnostics which I

wanted to answer experimentally. Our grandmother who was an amused spectator and was standing nearby, poohpoohed the whole idea. She thought animals could not be influenced. She said: Here is a sparrow. Catch it if you can. I took her at her word. As I gazed into the eyes of the sparrow, I went close to her. She did not move. But when I proceeded to catch her, my hand intervened between her eyes and mine. This broke the spell and she flew out of my hand.

One traveler writes. I saw a squirrel running mad. Round and round she went gravitating to the same spot from which she had started. when I went near the spot I saw a snake protruding out his neck. The two were eventually very close to each other. The snake was about to make a morsel of her. I too went closer. The snake was still intent on eating her up. I hit the snake and scared it away. It is obvious, the squirrel was aware of the presence of the snake and wanted him to run away, before she did.

Another traveler writes: In an African jungle I saw a bird fluttering for life. I looked closer and saw a snake looking intently into the eyes of the bird. I killed the snake but later I found the bird too had died, possibly out of the fear of being caught.

In England they performed another kind of experiment. Two insects of the same species were placed apart at a distance of five miles from each other. In course of time, they both found each other. Something intangible must have exerted its pull to join them together.

An American biologist built an ant-house and sealed it carefully from the outside. After a while, whole colonies of ants were found sticking to the outside of a wall of the ant-house. On closer examination, it was discovered that the ants were sticking on the outside of the wall exactly on the spot where another colony of ants had collected inside. The experiment was repeated in another house, with the same result.

From these examples it is obvious that even at the animal level waves of some kind shoot out which are more mental than physical. Their impact on intercommunication and mutual relations is undeniable. They do affect our modes of behavior. It is said that whenever the Holy Prophet (on him be peace) mixed with groups of people, he would invoke God's forgiveness and protection seventy times. Not that he was afraid of physical contagion, though it is true Prophets love to be clean and that was one reason why he sought God's protection. But the other and the more important reason was that he cared for people who were clean in their own right but were likely to be affected by unclean thoughts and their evil influence.

### **Sin-Infected Conditions**

To combat sin it is necessary to be able to identify sin infected conditions. I would, therefore, give an account of such conditions so that their identification should become easy. Among them are the following:

1. A person looks upon sin with horror but now and then finds himself inclined towards it.
2. He still hates sin but is unable always to resist the temptation and falls for sin.
3. He does not hate sin but no more does he relish a life of sin. The result is that he commits a sinful action occasionally, without really liking or disliking sin.
4. He relishes sin but not without shame. If he sins, he sins in secret. If he refrains from sin, he does so because of past habit or because of social custom.
5. At this stage, he sinks much lower. Past habit and social custom cease to be adequate restraints. He is now ready to indulge in and enjoy a sinful life.
6. At this stage, he is not only sinful and evil, but also encourages others to be evil and sinful like him.

7. At this last and lowest stage, he becomes a profile of Satan, propagation of evil becomes his daily concern.

In comparison with sin-infected conditions we have the following good conditions which are listed below in an ascending order:

1. To do good for the sake of reward.
2. To choose good as a commandment of God.
3. To do good for the sake of good and to consider virtue to be its own reward.
4. To do good as a natural habit.
5. To enjoy doing good.
6. To propagate good in the world.
7. To become an embodiment of good and to treat its dissemination as one's single unalloyed aim in life like the angels. There are higher grades of goodness like prophethood; but they are a gift of God and cannot be attained by mere effort.

I have explained above that human actions may be good both morally and spiritually. when human actions pertain to other human beings, they are called moral. when they pertain to God, they are called spiritual. This means that from the practical point of view, they are subject to the same practices and rules, the same exercises and the same general principles. Moral and spiritual ailments, therefore, can be classed and treated together. I do not feel the necessity of elaborating this treatment any further. Others have already done this, including Sufis. So I would not like to add to whatever little I have said on the subject. The practical side of sin, however, remains important. This has to be studied in the light of the teachings of Islam.

Islamic treatment of sin is unique. It is part of its perfect teaching. Islam does not start treating sin after It has been

committed. It turns more to prevention than cure. It raises the question: what can be done to prevent sin? There is no doubt that this is the rational approach, which contains the key to the treatment of sin. when a piece of cloth has become dirty, it needs more effort to clean it. It is best to see that we do not let it become dirty. This indeed is the main difference between Islamic and other teachings. Unlike other religions, Islam does not merely tell us what to do after a person has become sin-infected, it also tells us what is to be done when sin has not yet appeared and what may be done to prevent it appearing.

It is to be regretted that despite the fact the Holy Quran has Invited our attention to this subject and many Muslim saints have done the same, Muslims as a people have not given as much attention to this aspect as they should have. They have ignored the important fact that the foundations of sin are laid long before a person becomes an adult. Sin is not a sudden phenomenon. when a person suddenly takes to a life of sin, It is usually forgotten that it is not a sudden change from good to evil. It is not now that the adult has become bad. The seeds of badness were sown long ago. Only, the seed that was sown when he was a child has sprouted forth and become a tree. If the potentiality of sin was not there, where did sin come from when the erstwhile child attained puberty? Seeds of sin are indeed sown long before puberty. Muslim scholars have also pointed this out. The fact of the matter is that the seed of sin is sown soon after birth and sometimes even before birth.

When doctors of religion start worrying about the bad morals of an adult, the adult is already in the firm grip of Satan. I am not so pessimistic as to think that when a man becomes adult, he has already acquired every possible evil that he can. what I mean is that the inclination and the power to do evil have taken root. I have already said that the basic dispositions of matter out of which morals are born, are limited. If these dispositions somehow go wrong in childhood, outwardly the child would seem to be sinless and harmless, but in reality he would have acquired all the power and all the

means to commit sinful actions.

Now ponder a little. where does sin come from? Does it come from parents? No, certainly not. But we know that sometimes certain dispositions run in the family from generation to generation. The same habits, the same dispositions, the same skills keep emerging. You cannot make a people courageous overnight whose courage has been dead over many generations. when such people go to the battlefield they are certain to let you down. In any case, they will fall to show the degree and quality of courage which a seasoned force of fighting experience extending over many generations is able to do. True, there are remedies for defects and deviations, but hereditary traits acquired through generations of habit and training are hard to correct.

Similarly, sin is also rooted in greed, aggression, fear, love and excess of desire. Now ponder a little. These desires and inclinations are planted in childhood. The child is a great learner. He begins to learn as soon as he is born. His first acquisitions seem harmless enough. Sometimes he shows streaks which could become sins later on. But the parents ignore them saying he is but a child. They forget that it is in childhood that the seed is sown and impressions become deep. A person who begins to steal as an adult could have been saved from this nefarious practice if he had been checked and taught self-control when he was a child. He need not have become a thief as an adult. Similarly, a person goes to the battlefield as a soldier, but on facing the enemy, he recoils and runs away. How cowardly, exclaim the people around him. But the fault is not his. As a child he had been told tales of cowardice. It is these tales which have made him afraid of the sight of the enemy.

The same is the case with aggression and pugnacity. Parental control is lax and these emotions are allowed an unbridled play. The result is that when the child grows up, he becomes the quarreling type who would fight on the slightest

pretext.

Sin is invariably rooted in lack of will-power. Lack of will-power is not a natural defect. It has its causes. How is it that a person continues throughout life making and breaking resolutions? He keeps doing this because of lack of will-power. Remember, it is in childhood and in childhood alone that this emotional sickness takes hold. Nobody notices it at the time. But a habit is being built then which it will not be easy to break later on. Otherwise, there is no reason why an understanding adult should wish to give up something and not be able to do it. It means he has been trained badly as a child. Otherwise it should be quite enough to tell him that such and such a thing is good and ought to be chosen and pursued and such and such a thing is bad and is not worthy of pursuit. On just being told, one should be able to choose the right course.

How can the young child be protected from this early sickness? The first thing is to keep pure the thoughts and emotions which sway the parents, for parental thoughts and emotions also play their part in shaping the character of the child even at the pre-natal stage. The door to evil thoughts must be closed particularly while we are preparing to receive the child. What can we do except, as far as possible, to keep our thoughts always pure and clean? If you desire to do your unborn children any good, then your own thoughts must also be pure. Islam has a recipe for situations like this. This recipe is that when husband and wife consort together, they should supplicate:

*Shield us, O Allah, against Satan. and keep Satan away from whatever Thou might bestow upon us.*

This supplication is not a magic incantation, nor is it a charm. It is not necessary either that its Arabic version must be employed. The substance of the prayer is that we say to God: O Allah, sin is a filthy thing, save us from it; and also safeguard our children against it. This prayer and this thought will act as a wall between the unborn child and the influences

of Satan. The Holy Prophet, on whom be peace and blessings, has assured that the child born after this prayer will be free from Satanic influences.

Many people say that they have used this prayer but the result has not been as expected. Let me tell them that addressing the prayer like a magic formula or a charm is not enough. I am quite sure that many who complain use the prayer only as a charm. Secondly, this prayer does not cover all the subsequent delinquencies of which man is capable. Many learn evil habits after birth. Only the inheritable delinquencies are covered by this prayer.

After acquiring the disposition to sin at the parental stage, a child begins to develop sinful dispositions in his early childhood. Islam has expounded this great truth and has laid down that the training of the child should begin not only at birth, but long before birth. I almost think that the Holy Prophet (on him be peace and blessing) would have gone even further back. He would have laid down that the training of the child should begin while the child is still in his mother's womb. But not many people would have been prepared to undertake the care of the unborn child during this delicate period. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (on him be peace) laid down that the training should begin at birth.

The first thing is to recite the *Azan* in the child's ear at its birth. Nobody should think that this is just a piece of magic incantation. Both the words and the meaning of *Azan* find their way to the mind of the child. Moreover, it is a reminder to the parents that they are responsible for the life of the newly born. The training of that life is now their responsibility. It begins from its birth. Besides the *Azan*, the Holy Prophet (on him be peace and blessings) has laid down that children should be taught good manners from their childhood. He is reported to have given the following advice to Hazrat Imam Hasan, his own grandchild, when he was having his meal. The Holy Prophet said to him:



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*Eat with your right hand and from that which is in front of you.*

Hazrat Imam Hasan was only about 2 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> years at the time. In our country if a child begins to manipulate the whole dish and starts taking big mouthfuls, not minding the clean clothes of his neighbor on either side, the parents only enjoy the scene and say nothing to the child. At the most they administer a mild rebuke or two. Their aim is not really to teach the child or to prevent him or her from wrongdoing. The casual rebuke is not seriously meant. There is another episode from the life of the Holy Prophet (on him be peace and blessings). A basket of dates had arrived to be distributed among the poor. Imam Hasan was very young at the time. He picked up a date and put it in his mouth. As soon as the Holy Prophet (on him be peace) noticed this, he put his finger in the child's mouth and pulled out the date. what he meant was that a Prophet's grandchild was not to eat what belonged to others, that he was supposed to make his own living when he grew up and not be a burden on others.

In short, childhood training is very important. what he becomes as a child, he will become as an adult. No wonder the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace and blessings, has said:

*Every child is born true to nature. It is his parents who make of him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian.*

It is true also that it is his parents who turn him into a Muslim or a Hindu. The Hadith does not mean that when the child has grown up, his parents take him to a church to have him baptized as a Christian. The meaning of the Hadith is that a child as a child is at the mercy of his parents. He absorbs what he hears them say and does what he sees them do. The child is a great imitator. If the parents do not set before him a proper model to copy, he will go elsewhere to find a model which he can copy.

Some liberals think that it is best to leave the children

alone. Even Ahmadis say it and say that when they grow up, they will discover Ahmadiyyat themselves. But what I say is that this may be true if no other sound reaches the ears of the child nor any sight his eyes. But this is not true. All sorts of sounds are impinging on the ears of the child. All the time the child is learning. If angels do not communicate with the child, then it is certain that Satan will become his friend and given him his company. If good things do not reach the child's ears, bad things certainly will.

Let Ahmadi parents take note. If you want your children to grow into good adults, then use your home as a kind of segregation camp. Keep children away from everything except good influences. This is the only way to safeguard the future generations.

### **Moral Training of the Child**

Now a few hints on the moral education and training of the child:

1. As soon as a child is born, the first step towards its education is to proclaim *Azaan* into its ears. I need not elaborate this point further as I have already dealt with it in the course of this speech.
2. A child should be kept neat and tidy and, should be properly cleaned after stools. Some of you might say that this particular chore belongs to the mother. This is true. But it is equally true that the mother will perform it properly only if the father is properly orientated in this regard. It is men's duty to bring home to women the fact that an unclean child will not have a clean mind. Unfortunately not much attention is paid to this matter. Women are sometimes guilty of grave negligence in this regard. During parties, they would let the child defecate over a rag which they do not even care to throw away. In the environs of Qadian, rustic women sometimes let a shoe perform this office and did not hesitate to foul the area by

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throwing away the excrement indiscriminately. How can you look after the inner cleanliness of the child if you do not look after its external cleanliness? Let the child have a clean body. Its impact on his mind will be great. As a consequence, the child will come to have a clean mind and will become immune to sins which are caused by uncleanliness. Medical research bears out that a child commits its first sin because it is dirty. Dirt irritates the anal passages which the child rubs and manipulates. It finds pleasure in the process and becomes conscious of sex. It can be safeguarded against sexual eros to a very large extent if it is kept clean. This training must begin the very day it is born.

3. A child should be fed at fixed hours. This will breed the habit of self-control and save it from a number of evils. Lack of self-control occasions evils like stealing, etc. Such a child does not learn to resist temptation. The fault lies with the mother who is ever ready to feed the child anytime it cries. It is a great mistake not to inculcate regular food habits in the infant and in the grown-up child. Regular food habits will further lead to the following good habits:
  - a. Punctuality.
  - b. Self-control.
  - c. Good health.
  - d. Cooperation. Such children will not be egocentric and selfish for they will have learnt to eat with others.
  - e. Frugality. Such child will not suffer from the bad habit of wastefulness and extravagance. The child who is given to eating at odd hours will eat less and waste more. But if it is fed to a fixed measure and at fixed hours, it will make the best of what it gets and remain content with it without a tendency towards waste.
  - f. It will develop the inner strength to resist temptation.

It wants to have something which catches his passing fancy in the street. If you do not get it for it, it will learn the habit of fighting temptation later in life. Similarly If the child wants to have an eatable which is lying about in the house, like sugar cane, radishes, carrots or homemade sugar in farming families, tell him to wait till it is time for meals. This will fortify his self-control and enable him to exercise restraint.

4. A child should be helped to form the habit of relieving nature at regular hours. This is very helpful for its health. But a greater benefit is that its limbs come to acquire a sense of punctuality. Bowels become conditioned to move at fixed hours and evacuation takes place at the proper time. Some Europeans can even tell the time by the movement of their bowels for they learn to evacuate with clock-work punctuality. Regular bowels, therefore, are a must for a child. The child who learns to perform its natural functions regularly, readily forms the habits of praying and fasting. Also, he learns not to delay performing national duties. It curbs displays of ill-temper and petulance. The main cause of such tantrums is irregularity, particularly irregularity in food habits. For instance, the child is busy playing. Mother summons it to come and eat. It fails to turn up but when it does, mother wants the food to be heated for it. The child is hungry. It fumes and frets, for it is late for its meal. It is hard to stand the pangs of hunger. Hence its outburst of rage.
5. Food should be served according to a prescribed measure. This will teach the child contentment and discourage gluttony.
6. A child should be given a variety of foods. It should have meat, vegetables and fruit, for dietary habits affect morals and a variety of food is necessary for a variety of morals. It should have more vegetables than meat as meat excites and in childhood there should be as little excitement as

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possible.

7. As the child grows, it should be asked to do small tasks under the guise of play-acting. It should be asked to fetch a utensil, to replace or carry an object and do sundry other small tasks. But it should also have the time to play on its own.
8. A child should be allowed to acquire self-confidence as a matter of habit. For instance, if it wants to have an object which it has just seen, it should be told that it would get it at a certain time. Hiding the object is no solution, for it will imitate and try to hide things which will breed the habit of stealing.
9. A child should not be over-indulged. Too much petting or caressing leads to many vices. when such a child sits in society, it expect to be fondled. This results in a number of moral evils.
- 10 Parents should be capable of self-sacrifice. Foods which are prohibited for an ailing child should neither be brought into the house nor should they be eaten by the parents. The child should be told that they are abstaining on his account. The child will thus learn the habit of self-sacrifice.
- 11 Extreme vigilance is required when a child is suffering from a chronic illness. Vices like cowardice, selfishness, peevishness, lack of emotional control, etc., are the result of illness. Even grown-ups become irritable during illness. Some ask others to sit with them. Others shout at passers-by and say: Can you not see? Are you blind? In illness, the patient is allowed complete rest and full comfort which he slowly comes to regard as a right and wants to rest all the time.
- 12 Children should not be told tales of horror. This would make them cowards. when they grow up, they would do nothing brave. If a child exhibits a tendency towards cowardice, it should be told stories of courage and made to

play with children who are brave.

- 13 A child should not be allowed to choose his own friends. This choice should be made by the parents. They should choose well behaved children as associates for their children. The parents too will benefit from this arrangement. They will come to know the parents of other children whom they have chosen as associates for their child. It will lead to a kind of inter-parent cooperation. Also when they choose playmates for their child, they will watch over their behavior.
- 14 A child should be assigned responsible jobs suited to its age. This will help create a sense of responsibility in the child. It is said that a father had two sons. He gave one of them an apple and asked him to divide it with his brother. The father asked if he knew how to divide the apple. The child replied that he did not. The father said: He who divides should take the smaller half and give his brother the bigger half. At this the boy said that in that case the apple had better be divided by his brother. This shows that this boy had already acquired the habit of selfishness, but knew that if the responsibility fell upon him, he would have to accord priority to his brother. Game like football, etc., are a useful exercise for this purpose. But in sports too we should be ever watchful lest the child picks up bad habits. In the event of a difference of opinion in games, parents usually support their child and force the other child to accept what their child says. This leads their child to be obstinate and it always wants to have its own way.
- 15 Tell the child that it is nice and good. The Holy Prophet (on him be peace) said: Do not curse a child for when you curse, angels add: Let it be like that; and like that he becomes.

Incidentally, this also means that angels are responsible for the consequences of actions. when you tell a child it is bad, it draws an imaginary picture in which it figures itself out as bad and does in fact become bad. Therefore, do not abuse a

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child. Praise it and teach it to be good.

This morning, my little girl came to me to ask me for a coin. when I wanted to give her the coin, she extended her left hand to receive it. I told her this was not right. She admitted she was wrong and promised not to repeat her mistake. She at once became conscious of her mistake when it was pointed out to her.

16 A child should not be allowed to become obstinate. If it persists in being stubborn, Its attention should be diverted to something else. Later, the cause of its obstinate behavior should be traced and removed.

17 Address a child politely and courteously, for a child is a great mimic. If you address it rudely, it will return the compliment in kind.

18 Do not lie to a child nor be peevish or arrogant with it. It will certainly imitate you. It is the parents who teach a child lying. The mother does something in the child's presence but denies having done it when asked by the father. Thus the child learns to lie. I certainly do not mean that parents are permitted to misbehave in the absence of the child. what I mean is that if they cannot help doing such things, they should try to be circumspect, at least, in the presence of children to save the younger generation from such evils.

19 Safeguard the child against all intoxicants. Intoxicants damage the nerves of the child. Consequently it becomes a liar. An addict becomes a blind imitator also and ceases to have a will of his own. One of the relatives of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih I was a chronic addict to intoxicants and was not even remotely interested in the duties of religion. Once he brought a young companion whom, he claimed, he would shape after his own pattern. Hazrat remonstrated with him and asked him to desist from this nefarious design. But he would not listen. Hazrat summoned the boy

and persuaded him to drop his company, learn some vocation and not be foolish. This made him think and he left. But after a little while, the relative brought another young man and challenged Hazrat to try to "spoil" him. To his warped mind, spoiling a young man meant his being separated from him. Hazrat did all the counseling he could. He even offered cash to him to start him in some business. But he would not listen. This surprised Hazrat who asked his relative what had he done to hold him. He said: "It is simple. I supply intoxicants to him. Now he does not have any will to leave me." In short, addiction to drugs kills initiative.

Of all moral evils, lying is the worst. A child should be especially guarded against it. Lying has a variety of causes, some of them very abstruse. Given the causes, or some of them, a child is bound to contract this vice as a matter of course. A child is highly imaginative. whatever it hears, it turns it into a kind of reality. A sister of mine when she was a child used to relate a long dream every day. We would wonder how she could manage to have a dream every day. Later, the truth came out. what happened was that to her mind, dreams meant the ideas and pictures that crossed her mind just before falling asleep. To a child every image is real. Thus gradually it picks up this habit. A child should be helped to realize the difference between fact and fiction. A child can be saved from this habit, if the nature and meaning of thinking can be brought home to it.

- 20 Stop children from playing in privacy.
- 21 Do not let them remain naked.
- 22 Teach them to admit their mistakes, as a matter of habit. For this the following methods would be found helpful:
  - a. Do not try to hide your own mistakes before a child.
  - b. Be sympathetic when it commits a mistake. Let it feel that the mistake is a kind of loss it has suffered. Hence



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so much sympathy. Also let it feel that a particular mistake has resulted in a certain loss.

- c. To guard against the repetition of a mistake, talk to the child in a manner that brings home to it the trouble its mistake has occasioned to the parents. They could, for instance, pay for the loss its mistake is supposed to have caused. This will make it realize that the result of damaging things is not good. The doctrine of atonement is not valid but the method is useful for the training of a child.
  - d. If you want to reprimand a child, do not do it before others; do it in privacy.
23. A child should be given a little money. This will teach it three virtues:
- a. Charitableness.
  - b. Frugality.
  - c. Helping relatives.

For instance, if it has three coins, let it purchase some eatable with one coin and share it with other children. With the second coin, let it buy a toy and the third it should be asked to give in charity.

24. Children should also be given common ownership of some property. For instance, they should be given a toy and they should be told that it belongs to all of them, that all should play with it and that no one should try to damage it. This would teach them to safeguard common property.
25. A child should be given constant guidance in matters of etiquette.
26. Due heed should be paid to physical exercise and stamina of a child. This would be helpful towards its moral education and progress in the world.

In light of the foregoing exposition of virtue and morality, only a child who possesses the following characteristics will be considered to be morally educated:

1. It should be moral itself and be able to make others moral.
2. It should be able to behave as required by the mores of the community – Jamaat.
3. It should have genuine love for God and this love should reign supreme over other kinds of love.

How can it be determined whether a child sizes up to the right standard in each of these characteristics:

1. The test of the first characteristic is:
  - a. that when it grows up, it should obey and practice the Law, the *Sharia*, In word, deed and thought.
  - b. Its will should be strong enough to make it immune against future mischief.
  - c. It should be able to earn its living and protect its life.
  - d. It should try and be able to protect its property.
2. The test of the second characteristic is that:
  - a. It should set a good example in morals.
  - b. It should participate in the moral training and spiritual education of others.
  - c. It should not waste but should utilize its resources to the greatest advantage of Ahmadiyyat and Islam, the Jamaat in particular and Muslims in general.
3. The third characteristic can be judged by the following:
  - a. It should take good care of its health.
  - b. It should be a defender of the property and rights of the community.

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- c. It should do nothing which harms others.
  - d. It should be ready to accept cheerfully all rewards and punishments bestowed and imposed by the community.
4. The criteria of the fourth characteristic are as follows:
- a. It should have due eagerness and respect for the word of God – the Holy Quran.
  - b. The mere mention of the name of God should halt it in its stride and make it assume a respectful posture.
  - c. It should be in the world but not of the world.
  - d. It should exhibit its person the signs of its love for God.

### **Safeguarding Against Sin**

After the moral education of a child, the question arises: How can it be safeguarded against sin?

Before turning to the main theme, I would like to impress upon you the importance of *Zikr-Ilahi* – Remembrance of God. Remember, you are not here to witness a show or attend a carnival. You are here to listen to and meditate on things divine. Therefore, do not forget to observe the proprieties. I am afraid some of us fail to maintain the sanctity of the occasion. They keep coming and going or indulge in small talk.

I know all those who are attending this session are not Ahmadis. At a guess, some eight hundred to one thousand non Ahmadies are also present. They are not accustomed to listening to long speeches with sustained attention; nor for that matter, can they exercise as much self-control as the members of the Movement can. Little wonder, therefore, if they are restless and keep moving. But they are not the only ones who move. In all innocence, Ahmadis too do so possibly to convey on their own, the message of Ahmadiyyat to their non-Ahmadi brethren. But remember, your primary duty is to your own selves.

Hazrat Abu Bakr has related that the Holy Prophet (on him be peace and blessings) said: When you are struggling for salvation and light, you are not supposed to give up your struggle and perish under the mistaken notion of saving others. How willingly should you sacrifice life and property for the faith! A believer would not think of bartering faith with wealth, were it the wealth of the entire world.

Therefore, if you have to leave the session on account of some urgent need, do so by all means but come back as soon as you are able to. You never can tell when that fateful moment might arrive for which one waits a lifetime. A word on such an occasion could turn disbelievers into believers, the satanic into the sublime. Look at Hazrat Omar's episode. His opposition to the Holy Prophet was extreme. But he was transformed by a single statement he happened to hear. He had set out to assassinate the Holy Prophet when he found to his chagrin that his own sister had embraced Islam. He went straight to her house in a huff and found his sister and his brother-in-law listening to the recitation of the Holy Quran. Enraged, he rushed in and started beating his brother-in-law whom his wife tried to protect. In the process, she received some injuries.

When Omar perceived this, he was penitent. The sister exclaimed: Omar, are you furious at us because we have come to believe in one God? Omar was shaken and asked his sister to let him hear what was being recited. The sister replied: Not as you are. First clean yourself. After he had washed, the Holy Quran was recited to him. The recitation moved him to such an extent that he burst into tears. He went straight to the Holy Prophet (on him be peace and blessings) and announcing himself knocked at the door.

Some of those who were inside felt that Omar being a hard man might be bent on creating trouble. The door, they thought, should not be opened. But Hazrat Hamza declared that if Omar had come with ill intent, they too had swords. The Holy Prophet (on him be peace), however, permitted Omar

to enter. When the Holy Prophet saw him, he asked: Omar, how long will you continue to oppose me? Omar replied: My master, I have come to submit and offer allegiance.

Ponder, therefore, how Hazrat Omar was guided to the truth. If he had not visited his sister at that particular moment, he might well have remained unguided and without faith throughout his life. You have a full year at your disposal to relax. Try, therefore, to listen to the word of God for a few days at least and allow not a moment to go waste.

One thing more. As I told you yesterday, I have started translating the Holy Quran. Through Allah's grace, the translation of *Surah Al-Baqarah*, the Second Chapter, was finished on December 20, 1925. It is hoped that the first volume comprising the first seven chapters and a half will be published during the coming year. It is my wish and prayer and I request you also to pray for me that if nothing untoward happens, I may be able to discharge this sacred duty and prepare the translation and exposition of the Holy Quran as soon as possible.

There is another matter I would like to mention. Yesterday I reminded you of the financial difficulties the Jamaat is facing. I want to add that we should not be perturbed by difficulties for this too is a sign of our truth. Incidentally, it reminds me of a French writer who says: I have read scores of books which describe Muhammad, on whom be peace, as false. But all such books leave me unmoved in the face of a strange sight. I find Muhammad among his companions poor, ragged and illiterate. They are sitting in a small room which is known as the Mosque. The roof is a rough thatch of date leaves. When it rains, the water percolates to the floor. When they pray, they have literally to prostrate themselves in inches of water. Not one is fully clad. Yet behold, the Prophet is seeking their advice about how to conquer the world! And he does in fact conquer the world! When seen against the background of this strange spectacle, millions of derogatory pages pale into sheer

insignificance.

It was exactly like this when the Promised Messiah (on him be peace) declared that he had been commissioned as a prophet. Had he been immediately accepted by chiefs and kings we would have been hard put to it to prove that the success which he eventually attained was an act of God. It would rather have appeared to be the act of Chiefs and Kings. All his kith and kin turned against him when he made his claim. Maulvi Muhammad Hussain of Batala, his greatest erstwhile friend and admirer, declared that his brain had become unhinged. He announced that it was he who had projected and promoted him and that now he alone would degrade him.

The religious doctors of the entire Muslim world rose in opposition to him. Muslim divines of the Arab and non-Arab countries issued edicts against him. He faced this global opposition, alone. He conceded that he was single-handed, that he had no supporter and the world at large was opposed to him. But he posed this simple question: What shall I do with this word of God which I distinctly hear: A warner was sent unto this world; the world accepted him not; but Allah will accept him and establish his truth with mighty signs. How can I disregard this divine voice, he asked?

At the time, the Government too was hostile to him. So were the people. But what was the end result? He was alone on one side and the rest of the world was on the other. You do not have to go far. Look at this large gathering! Those present here are his devoted followers; and there are millions more who are not present here.

Last year during my visit to Syria, a renowned writer of Damascus who is an acknowledged master and stylist of Arabic literature, derisively said to me: Do not try to publish in these parts the books written by Mirza Sahib, the Promised Messiah, for they contain a number of errors. When they come across these errors, people here will form not a very

complimentary opinion about him. I said: All right, I am here before you; I shall not leave until I prove the hollowness of your charge. I invite you to raise as many objections against his writings as you possibly can and I shall rebut every one of them.

He said: I am a well-wisher; I do not want to join issue with you. I said: You must, if you possibly can. He said: No, you will lose face. I said: If we are pretenders, it is your duty to expose us. If we are based on truth, your criticism will not harm us. In fact, it will be helpful. But he failed to set forth any objection. However, he added apropos of nothing in particular, that Arabs would never accept a non-Arab as the Promised Messiah. I said: I am going to establish an Ahmadiyya Mission here. We will also organize a community here. You are welcome to do all you can to stop us from doing so.

My visit to Syria was to last only for five days. But God be praised, a surprising thing happened. On the eve of my departure from Damascus, a scholar and master of Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages, sent me a letter at 10 p.m. He wrote that he had been waiting to see me since morning and was not sure if he would be able to see me at all. Hence the letter. He affirmed his faith in the Promised Messiah. He also offered to be posted as a missionary wherever I liked. Now we have a full fledged mission and a community in Damascus. Even the gentleman who had predicted no Arab would accept Ahmadiyyat has sent word that his bona fides should not be doubted and that he would never oppose the Movement.

Therefore, do not be perturbed that you are poor and weak. Any one who believes that poverty and weakness are a bar to success, is guilty of setting up associates with God; for he mistakenly thinks that it is because of his person who considers himself useless is equally guilty of ascribing to the All-Knowing God the error of choosing a useless tool—his own self—to bring about a spiritual revolution in the world. If a soldier armed with a damaged gun or a broken sword sets out to face the enemy, could he be called a good soldier? If not, then how can he be useless whom God selects to serve his cause? Indeed,

he it is who has a function to perform. He whom God chooses is not to be despised. Indeed he alone is honorable.

Did not a chief of Medina announce some thirteen hundred years ago that the most honored resident of Medina would expel the least honored resident-by which he meant the Holy Prophet? Referring to him, God says: He says honor belongs to him alone. The truth is that honor consists in accepting the Messenger of God. The result of his boast was that his own son waited on the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) and made the following submission:

*Messenger of Allah, I have heard of what my father has said. For this he deserved capital punishment. I request that I may be appointed to carry out his execution for I fear that if anyone else is allowed to do it, may be Satan may cause me to think ill of him.*

These words uttered by his own son must have brought home to his father the hollowness of his boast.

Therefore, do not harp on the inadequacy of your means, knowledge or status. The means which built the community to its present size were much too inadequate compared to our present means. If hundreds have been able to attract millions to the fold, why cannot millions attract billions.

The other day I saw a vision. I found myself delivering the Friday sermon and saying that we must take good care of the health of our children for the burden we carry will increase a thousandfold when their turn comes to carry it.

Our future generations will witness how the major powers of the world will have to accept the fact that Ahmadiyyat can no longer be destroyed or ignored. But God will not rest content with this much alone. He will continue to enlarge the community until the world acknowledges that Ahmadiyyat, the true Islam, is the one and only faith in the world. The Promised Messiah (on him be peace) when he was all alone, announced that Allah had told him that his community would attain such heights of eminence as to make other communities



look like gypsies. Some will believe today, some tomorrow and others the day after. Thus will the community continue to increase in numbers and in strength. The rich and the poor, the commoners and the aristocracy, the rulers and the ruled will all accept the Promised Messiah as the true prophet of God until the community representing true Islam will stand out prominently alone and other disciplines will pale before its luster just as the stars pale into insignificance before the sun.

These are the words of God. They are bound to be fulfilled sooner or later. No obstacle can shake our faith, nor can any opposition cause us to despair. He who has seen the community grow from one to millions, cannot lose hope of its future progress. We are not so wanting in faith. We have witnessed hundreds of thousands of heavenly signs and the fulfillment of so many divine promises. How can we ever doubt our future? True, we are weak. We do not have the strength or the necessary wherewithal. But it is not we who will conquer the world but God who has all the strength and the power. Therefore, let us not be discouraged by difficulties and obstacles. Let us have unswerving faith in the fulfillment of the promises that God has made.

Now I turn to the main subject. After the moral training of a child how can it be safeguarded against sin?

The answer is that human nature is diverse; therefore, you cannot afford to generalize. The same recipe cannot be helpful in all cases. Even a physical ailment does not admit of the same treatment for every patient. Take the case of the common cold. To some, a cup of tea can provide instant relief. In the case of another, sweetened curd or whey is helpful. There are still others who require a prolonged medical treatment. There are those whom medicine can help while there are others who simply baffle medical experts. Why? The answer is simple. Different people suffer not from one but from different diseases. Therefore, they also require different kinds of treatment. The same is true about other areas of human life. Human beings differ. This difference, therefore, has to be kept in mind in prescribing treatment. Following the same

principle, I will now discuss how sin may be avoided.

First of all, let us consider the human type which is pure and undefiled, can make use of reason and act in the light of its verdict.

### **Islamic Concept of Purity**

It should be clearly understood that according to Islam purity does not merely mean purity of overt word or deed. Islamic purity also implies purity of the heart and of the mind. In the estimation of God, a person cannot be accounted pure unless he has a pure mind. A person may not actually commit a sinful act, yet he cannot be called good and pure if his heart has a liking for evil and he takes delight in talking about sinfulness, unless, of course, in his heart of hearts he dislikes the taint of sin. For instance, there are persons who do not use abusive language when enraged but secretly curse their opponent and denounce him as a rogue. We cannot call them pure; only they have been able to hide their inner impurity successfully. In Islam purity means purity of heart. The tongue, and for that matter, visible conduct are mere tools which might only exhibit external purity. The Holy Quran says:

*Whether you disclose that which is in your minds or keep it hidden, Allah will call you to account for it.*  
(2:285)

God here raises a very delicate issue. To Him, the primary thing is the inner condition of the mind. Overt actions, including speech, merely express the inner state of mind which indeed is the real subject of divine judgment. You may or may not do an evil deed or speak an evil word. But if your heart is impure, you will face divine judgment. Elsewhere Allah says in the Holy Quran:

*Be mindful of your obligations to Allah, as far as you can, and hear and obey, and spend in the cause of Allah, It will be the better for you. He who is delivered from the niggardliness of his mind is of those who shall prosper.*

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(64:17)

This means do all good deeds, but purify your hearts, for a heart that is impure will be called to account.

After making clear that good means the good heart, let me now proceed to discuss the threefold method of avoiding sin if the person concerned is clean and uncorrupted:

1. He or she must have true knowledge of right and wrong. The heart might urge towards right action, but if you do not know what the right action is, you cannot perform it. Similarly the heart might warn you against evil, but if you are ignorant of what and why an act is evil, you cannot guard yourself against it. Thus it is essential that you should know what you ought or ought not to do. It is not enough to have the capacity to do or not to do a certain action. For instance, you may be very eager to please your friend but you cannot do much unless your friend tells you how best he can be pleased. Therefore, knowledge of actions, good and bad, is of the greatest importance.
2. He or she must know the context in which right action has to be done and bad action avoided. For instance, you ask your servant to place furniture inside a room. The servant may be very active and eager but if he does not know where each item is to be placed, he might easily put tables in place of chairs and chairs in place of tables. The same would be true of a person who is ignorant of the appropriate occasion for a particular action, that is to say, when the action should be done and when not done. Hence he must know the circumstances under which an action is to be performed or avoided.
3. He should be conscious of the evil to which he is prone and which he wants to discard. That is why one of the conditions precedent to spiritual treatment of the self is that we should know our faults. He should also know wherein he lacks virtue, so that he can pursue good and avoid evil. If the heart is not corrupted and the rust of sin has not eaten into the mind, knowledge, albeit true

knowledge, will be enough to transform him into a virtuous person; for how can we treat that which we do not know? It is knowledge of a disease alone which can help facilitate its treatment.

I shall now briefly discuss the foregoing three points of treatment. First, something about our knowledge of right and wrong. I have come across quite a lot of people who have the capacity to be good, but are ignorant of right and wrong. For instance, many men and women ask the following questions:

1. Are we rebellious and wantonly vicious?
2. Are we oppressors?
3. Do we misappropriate what belongs to others?
4. Do we tell lies?
5. Are we adulterous?

If not, then can you point out any other sin which we may have committed? What they mean is that if they do not commit these five sins, they do not commit any sin. These are described as the five sins under the Law. Their purpose seems to be to urge that there are no sins besides these sins. The fact is that there are hundreds of sins constituting a long succession. It is not possible to discuss them all, considering the limited time at our disposal. Also there are sins that are beyond human ken. The Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) was the one and only human being who had knowledge of all sin. There have been others who were vouchsafed this knowledge to a certain degree. But none was given nor can possibly be given the kind of knowledge possessed by the Holy Prophet (on him be peace and blessings).

Once in a dream I found myself telling a friend that neglect of physical exercise too was a sin. Now we do not call it a sin in normal life. But supposing there is a person on whose life depends the security of a million other lives. It would be sinful on his part not to take good care of himself. Who could be braver than the Holy Prophet (on him be peace) yet regular

watch was kept for his personal safety. At his residence too proper security arrangements were maintained. A critic might ask whether he considered that his own security had priority over the security of others. But he would be missing the point; for what the Holy Prophet (on him be peace) did was just right and necessary because on his life depended the life of the entire world. Without him, Islam could not have been established.

Therefore, for some to rest and keep good health becomes a positive virtue and its contrary a sin. Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani in one of his books says: There is a time when I do not eat until God is pleased to say: Abdul Qadir, get up and eat for My sake, or wear these robes to please Me. It is men like him who would do even their daily chores only when God wants them to; of course, not for their own sake but for the sake of God, for whatever they do, they do it to please Him. Thus there are sins and sins. They constitute a vast ascending or descending order. Their quality changes with the change of the person. Mystics put it like this. They say that the virtues of the sinners are the sins of the innocent.

### **Major Vices**

Now I shall give an outline of the major vices.

1. Personal vices. They directly affect the individual concerned.
2. Vices that affect not only the person concerned but other persons as well.
3. National or group vices. They are vices considered in the context of the condition or quality of a group or nation.
4. Vices relating to God.

Comparatively speaking, virtues too are of four kinds:

1. Personal virtues which affect the person concerned.
2. Virtues which also influence others besides the person concerned.

3. National group virtues.
4. Virtues which relate to God.

To take up vices first, in the same order:

Personal Vices: I will list some of the more obvious vices. Others are not so obvious and may be identified only through divine help. The idea is that if we become conscious of these major vices, we shall be better able to guard against them. These vices are as follows:

1. Arrogance: It means feeling haughty and big inside. Without letting others know, you may secretly feel big. This vice obstructs inner cleanliness.
2. Meanness: To be a tramp; to loiter about like vagrants or associate with vagabonds and to adopt such immoral professions as do little credit to the human person. This too is a vice of heart. In such cases, no progress is possible unless the peculiar attitude changes.
3. Haste: To act and choose without forethought. Here, too, ultimately it is the person who is harmed.
4. Suspicion: Secretly to impute evil motives to others and to suspect their bona fides without even communicating to them the secret doubts and fears.
5. Illicit love: Even if it is secret and undivulged.
6. Malice: To harbor designs against others even when such designs do not find practical expression.
7. Cowardice: Secret or public timidity.
8. Jealousy: To think of depriving others for self-gain.
9. Impatience: Feeling fidgety or upset over reverses and failing to do what is supposed to be done.
- 10 Lack of ambition: Not to aspire for big goals but to rest content with minor roles. This vice could cause great harm, particularly in case of leaders and Heads of State; it could work havoc, for lack of ambition on their part also kills

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ambition at lower levels of the nation. How beautifully has the Promised Messiah (on him be peace) put this point in the following verse:

*O Ahmad my beloved; I swear by the beauty of thy countenance, that we have stepped forward only because you are ahead of us.*

In other words, the spiritual elevation and progress of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace) alone paved the way for our progress. Hence lack of ambition is a vice in the common man, more so in the leaders of men.

11. Sycophancy: A wheedling, fawning attempt to flatter. The servants of the rich suffer from this vice most.
12. Ungratefulness: To have scant regard for kindness shown by others.
13. Lack of steadfastness: Lack of perseverance; to start doing a task and leaving it unfinished.
14. Laziness: When a person is indolent and ceases to function.
15. Negligence.
16. Disbelief.
17. Lack of courage to affirm the truth.
18. Over-delicacy: To be too fastidious and finicky, out of place or to an extent that inhibits the power to act.
19. Ignorance: Not to try to learn and acquire knowledge.
20. Avarice.
21. Ostentation: Doing things to show off.
22. Ill-will.
23. To be easily discouraged: This is a peculiar vice of the rich. The slightest difficulty would make them lose heart and give up.

24. Regard for evil: Not to dislike evil is also an evil.
25. Use of intoxicants: Taking intoxicants of all kinds like alcohol, opium, cannabis, snuff, tea, coffee, tobacco, etc.

True, some of these are articles which are used as food, for instance tea. But taking tea becomes a vice if it becomes a habit which cannot be given up without injury to health. You might have to go for propagation of the faith into the rural interior where tea is not available. Will you carry a *samavar* and tea things with you and make your own arrangements? Will it not be a bother, causing untold complications? Islam requires every Muslim to be a volunteer who should be able to set forth on short notice. Therefore, habits which hinder dispatch are discouraged. The story of the proud Pathan who had run short of snuff would illustrate the point. I saw him, begging a shaggy Kashmiri for a pinch. I observed the proud Pathan had humbled himself to the poor Kashmiri because of his need of snuff!

Smokers who come to Qadian are deprived of a number of benefits. In the early days, one of our relatives who was a sworn enemy of the Promised Messiah, used to mislead new visitors. He would make seating arrangements in the compound and invitingly place *hookas* or smoking pipes, for free use. Visitors attracted by the pipes would drift towards him, whom he tried to lead astray to his heart's content. He would emphasize that he was a close relative of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and was fully cognizant of the true position. 'Had there been any truth to his claim, I would certainly have accepted him as the Promised Messiah', he would say. Thus many were deceived.

Once an Ahmadi visited Qadian and went to this gentleman to have a smoke. The gentleman availed himself of this opportunity to malign the Promised Messiah to his heart's content. But the visitor kept silent. Provoked, the old man started abusing the Promised Messiah with renewed zeal. This too failed to elicit any rejoinder. At this, he lost his temper and challengingly said to the visitor: Why, what are you thinking?



Why don't you speak? The visitor replied: I am thinking that the dirty habit of smoking has been responsible for my coming to a man like you. Had I been not a smoker, I would not have come here and suffered the ignominy of hearing the Promised Messiah being reviled.

Let me tell you, as I have told you a number of times before, that smoking is a foul habit. Other intoxicants are equally harmful. They should be given up once and for all. Certain intoxicants breed the habit of lying. I will not name people who are addicts to spare them embarrassment. But the fact remains that intoxicants damage nerves. Therefore, do not become addicted to any. Thank God, I have an innate antipathy towards such things. In my infancy, I was given opium during an illness for about six months. Mother tells me that once I missed a dose and there was not the slightest reaction, whereupon the Promised Messiah (peace be on him) observed:

*Do not administer to him any more that which God has delivered him from.*

Even now I can discard taking things which I use daily, without suffering any adverse effects. Occasionally, I stop taking tea despite the fact that in our family tea is served as part of breakfast. I do this to avoid making it a habit. As a matter of fact, we should not form any such habit – intoxicants or no intoxicants.

26. Arrogance: Looking down upon others.
27. Enmity: Even If it is never made public and lies hidden in the heart, it is a vice.
28. To distrust others: It prevents one from delegating a task to others.
29. Greed: This too is a vice of the heart.
30. To grieve too much: Too much grief damages the faculty of application.
31. Excessive joy.

32. To be a busybody: To meddle in things with which one is in no wise concerned.
33. Loquacity: Glib talk. An over-talkative person is a mindless person and would answer questions without much thought.
34. To be callous and hard-hearted: Absence of compassion too is a vice.
35. Sadism.
36. Extravagance.
37. Suicide.
38. Purposeless lies: Lying is a major vice. But some people are given to telling purposeless lies. This too is bad.

The evils that are related to others are of two kinds:

1. Those which have to do with human beings.
2. Those which concern animals other than human beings.

At this stage, the Hazrat was asked how to give up smoking. Hazrat replied: Smoking is more difficult to give up than opium eating. I had a friend who was an old addict. He wanted to give up opium eating but his physician warned him he would die if he gave it up. But he did, In fact, give up this bad habit. For a few days, he had to suffer but he soon recovered and was restored to good health. I shall take up this question later on in the course of my address. Without disturbing the general pattern of it, I will say at this stage only that you can give up smoking by giving it up.

The vices relating to human beings are the following:

1. Rudeness: Not to respect those who ought to be respected.
2. Exaggerated expression of love.
3. Faithlessness: To invoke your friend's assistance when you need it, but to deny assistance to friends when they need it most.
4. Fatuity or Silliness: Being short-tempered; exhibiting

uncivilized behavior; to be trigger-happy; to hurl bogus threats under minor provocations. The case of the two Hindu *Banyas* (shopkeepers) will illustrate the point. They were quarreling. One was cursing. In reply, the other would challenge his opponent to curse him again. He would say: I will break your skull if you curse again. Now the joke was that he could easily have tried to smash the other fellow's head the first time he was abused. He did not have to wait to be cursed twice. The other fellow too was equally shallow. Every time he was challenged, he would say: I shall curse you a hundred times. But he did not dare actually repeat the curse. Each time he was told: If you curse me again, I shall break your head. At the time, I was a child of eight and was an interested spectator of this strange sight. I waited for long to see if the first *Banya* would repeat the curse and earn a broken skull, but nothing happened. Soon each retired to his shop. Suddenly the verbal battle was again joined. One of them again abused the other who in turn gave the same old repeat performance. He came out of his shop and shouted: I shall break your skull if you abuse me again. The altercation continued for a long time but nothing happened. This is vacant, witless puerility. It also shows cowardice. Similarly to be over-aggressive is also a sign of fatuity. It is also a form of inner weakness to start shouting and grumbling at the slightest provocation.

At this stage, Huzoor interrupted his address and said: Asking questions during the course of an address is not desirable. But since the subject under discussion is of great importance, I feel I should try to answer some of the questions which friends have thought fit to address me. One is: Which professions according to me are mean? The answer might land us into unnecessary controversy which I would rather like to avoid. Nor would I like to decline answering the question. I would, therefore, simply say that to my mind professions which obstruct progress may be called mean. Another question that has been asked is: What is the difference between *tamaa* (greed) and *hirs* (avarice), the two vices I mentioned earlier.

Briefly, *tamaa* means to expect the other person to give you something which you covet. *Hirs* is hankering after something regardless of the source from which it might be procured.

One question is: Can the *Wasiyyat* (bequest) of a smoker (bequeathing at least 10% of his or her income and property to Islam) be formally accepted? It is a very complicated question and I do not want to give a perfunctory answer during my address. I would deal with this question later.

5. Using abusive language: Abusive language is another habit which is universally considered bad, unlike the Punjabi custom of inviting a child to use such language and then gloating over it when it complies, as if cursing were a virtue. I have witnessed such performances myself.
6. *La'nat*, or placing a curse on a person.
7. *Bud-dua*: To pray against someone. Placing a curse on a person is different from praying against him. The former implies a spiritual condition and the latter a physical condition. To pray for someone's death is *Bud-dua*, and to place a curse or *La'nat* on someone is to invoke divine wrath upon him which means that he or she may perish spiritually. There is, however, an exception to this rule that is when a curse is invoked by a prophet. In such a case the curse ceases to be a curse but amounts to a statement of fact that the heart of the person concerned has been corrupted.
8. Dishonesty or breach of trust: For instance money placed in trust is either not returned or returned only in part.
9. Divulgence of secrets: It is a vice to divulge other peoples' secrets. But there are exceptions to the rule. For instance, saving the person concerned from harm. If X intends to murder Y, the vice shall consist not in disclosing but in hiding this secret. Similarly, secret attempts to conspire, damage or otherwise to bring an established Government into disrepute must be reported to the proper authorities.
- 10 Backbiting.

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- 11 Discourtesy: Not to meet people with a smiling countenance; it injures the feelings of the other person and breaks ties of love.
  - 12 Undue partiality: It consists in siding unduly with one of contending parties with whom one happens to be friendly.
  - 13 Fraud.
  - 14 Miserliness.
  - 15 Oppression.
  - 16 Ingratitude: To disown a favor done to one.
  - 17 To be dirty and unclean.
  - 18 Negligence.
  - 19 Quarrelsomeness.
  - 20 Mischief-making: It is a well-known vice and needs no explanation.
  - 21 Creating disturbance: By shouting in public places or creating noise by irrelevant talk in an assembly or otherwise causing distraction to those who are attending to their work. I have found Europeans to be very careful in this regard.
  - 22 Causing deliberate harm and pain.
  - 23 Highhandedness.
  - 24 Robbery.
  - 25 Murder.
  - 26 Theft.
- I was already expecting questions on this. One friend has obliged by asking that sometimes it is customary to steal as a mark of friendship. For instance, in certain villages, it is an established practice to steal off one another. The answer to the question is that despite social sanction, it still remains a vice.
- 27 Physical fights.
  - 28 Undue self-praise.
  - 29 Libel.
  30. Slander.

- 31 Faultfinding: It differs from slander, which is to talk about someone's faults or vices before people with intent to humiliate him. Faultfinding on the other hand, consists in reporting slanderous talk to its object, thus causing trouble between the parties concerned.
- 32 Casting aspersions or spreading calumnies.
- 33 To belittle with a view to humiliate someone before others.
- 34 To call a person names: Giving uncomplimentary or derogatory epithets as is common in our country.
- 35 Satire: Pungent jokes which disgrace and humiliate other persons.
- 36 Making faces: A vice common among women and the young.
- 37 Conspiring to harm others.
- 38 Sadism.
- 39 Violent anger: that is to say overt or expressed anger.
- 40 Vindictiveness: To exceed the limit in revenge.
- 41 Offering bribes.
- 42 Taking bribes.
- 43 Usury: To lend money on interest.

These are some of the major vices which have to do with other human beings.

Now I shall mention vices which relate to beings other than human.

1. To use things which emit obnoxious and nasty odors. The Holy Prophet (peace be on him) has warned that eating food which is ill-smelling or obnoxious repels the angels. They are shy of visiting a person who is ill-smelling.
2. Keeping pet dogs without purpose: The Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) has said that angels do not enter homes where dogs are kept.

Vices relating to lower animals are:

1. To beat animals unnecessarily.
2. To overwork animals: This vice is peculiar to the farmer. He continues to exact work out of an animal but when it becomes too old and weak to function, he sells it to the butcher. I do not mean it should not be slaughtered. What I mean is that it is wrong to overwork and weaken an animal to make it unfit for work.
3. To under feed animals: It is not the farmer but others who are usually guilty in this regard. A farmer would rather feed his animals even at the cost of remaining unfed himself. Supposing there is famine. The farmers do not say there is no food for them; they say there is no fodder for the animals.
4. Not to provide proper medical treatment for sick animals.
5. Torturing an animal: For instance, branding. The Holy Prophet once saw a donkey which had been branded on the face. He admonished: Do not brand an animal on the face for it is a very sensitive spot. If it has to be branded, let it be branded elsewhere – on the leg, etc.
6. Not to protect animals against the inclemencies of the weather.
7. Not to pay due regard to the sexual requirements of lower animals: Animals have passions like humans. Arrangements should be made for their satisfaction or they should be desexualized.
8. To torture animals: Either in front of their young, for instance, to slaughter or starve them; or torture their young before their eyes.

### **National or group vices:**

1. Propagation of evil: If someone goes about saying that so and so is a liar, apart from being a person to person evil, it also becomes a national evil; for if it continues to be announced for some time that a group or nation has liars in its ranks, the intensity of feeling against lying wears off,

- thereby making it easier for this vice to spread. Propagation of evil amounts to a kind of national suicide.
2. Selfishness: To promote and prefer personal interests when they conflict with national interests.
  3. Wanton surrender to vice and disobedience to law: For instance, prostitution or public drinking.
  4. Procrastination: For instance, laziness in the performance of national duties.
  5. Neglecting the moral training and education of children.
  6. Neglecting the educational needs of children amounts to destroying a nation; for children of today will become the nation of tomorrow.
  7. Being dirty and unclean: I have mentioned this vice earlier in the sense that others feel disgusted because of the stink. I mention it here in the sense that it causes disease which ultimately could destroy a nation.
  8. Lack of the sense of responsibility: This means not to feel the obligation to do one's duty.
  9. Lack of understanding and tolerance of another's failure to perform his duty or of the resulting loss whether the lapse was due to oversight or to an error of judgment, or was deliberate.
  - 10 Rebellion: At this stage Huzoor, interrupting his discourse, said: A friend has made a suggestion which I had a mind to dwell upon. I take this opportunity to do so now. The friend reminds the missionaries and other advocates of Ahmadiyyat not to employ harsh language. I agree and insist that we must be always courteous and polite. You will not find any harsh language in my writings or speeches. Do I not feel hurt when the Promised Messiah (on him be peace) is reviled? Indeed I do. But I have never countered harshness with harshness. I know some people would quote passages from the writings of the Promised Messiah (on him be peace) to justify occasional use of such



language. But let them remember, the Promised Messiah (on him be peace) was a divinely commissioned magistrate or arbitrator. It was his station, to which he was appointed by God, to tell people their true worth. We do not have that station and prerogative. For others, being harsh is a sign of inner weakness. It might give temporary pleasure to some but when future generations read and judge our words cool-mindedly, they will lament our using those words for they will no longer be angry. They will not have before them the offensive writings of our opponents. Instead they will have the shame and mortification to seek to hide such books and writings as contain this kind of language.

- 11 Inhospitability: Lack of the sense of hospitality is a national evil.
- 12 Deception: To practice deception and fraud in business is also a national evil.

Here again, Huzoor interrupted his discourse and observed: Tradition says that on one occasion the Holy Prophet (on him be peace) was delivering his sermon when the companions started asking question after question. This displeased the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) and he said he would stop the sermon; and asked them to go ahead putting as many questions as they wanted and that he would continue answering till the Day of Judgment.

I find myself in a similar situation. The long line of questions which are being asked during the address, is unending. Would you like me to stop the lecture and go on answering the questions? I have hardly completed the 35th page of my notes on this subject. Twenty five pages of notes still remain to be dealt with. If I were to start answering each and every question, do you think the lecture will ever be finished?

Resuming, he proceeded:

As I was saying, fraud in business is a national vice for it destroys the credit of a nation. When I last visited Kashmir, I

found the annual trade of silver utensils and 'Shawls' at an ebb. It had come down from ten million rupees annually to 1.7 million owing mainly to the dishonesty of those engaged in this trade and industry.

- 13 To criticize workers in front of those who are not connected with the matter.
- 14 Publicly to denounce the whole nation without naming the guilty: To denounce the whole nation because of a particular evil without identifying the guilty is bad. For instance, to declare that the whole nation is a nation of cheats. As a result the nation does, in fact, become a nation of cheats.
- 15 To grudge contributing to national ends.
- 16 To cultivate friendship and closeness with those who harm the nation.
- 17 Non-cooperation with the representatives of the Government or of the community.
- 18 Poor standard of obedience.

Now I shall enumerate evils which relate to God:

1. Swearing and taking oaths in the name of God unnecessarily. A solemn oath may be taken before a magistrate, or on occasions when an oath is prescribed or is permissible; otherwise swearing in the name of God as a matter of habit amounts to an insult to God.
2. Despair: When one loses all hope of ever solving one's difficulties. This is the result of lack of reliance on and faith in God.
3. To harbor evil in the heart: God created the human heart to make it His home. That is why the heart is called the House of God. He who tarnishes the heart, stops God from entering His house.
4. Refusal to submit to the Law of *Shariah*.

5. Belief in false dogmas: For Instance, setting up partners with God.
6. Disbelief in the true dogmas like God, angels, prophets, revelation, heaven, hell.
7. Violation of the laws of the *Shariah* about God or man. For instance, not to offer prayer, not to perform pilgrimage to the *Kaaba*, not to carry out the prescribed rules of inheritance and not to follow divine guidance about morals. All these laws and injunctions are prescribed by God. Therefore, to violate them is to displease God, in addition to bringing pain and suffering on His creatures.
8. Inadequate love of God.
9. Disrespect to God and the Holy Prophet (on him be peace).
- 10 All evils which are related to others are also related to God. For example, ingratitude is ingratitude to man or God.

### Virtues

1. Bravery.
2. Alertness, promptitude.
3. Acquiring knowledge.
4. Humility.
5. Righteous indignation: To show resentment on sight of evil.
6. Thankfulness.
7. To think well of others.
8. Earnest benevolence.
9. Industriousness.
- 10 Modesty.
- 11 Pity.
- 12 Steadfastness: To persist in doing the right.
- 13 Dignity; Refusal to imitate others without need or purpose. In our country, people seem to lack this virtue. They are prone to imitate whatever the West does.

- 14 Loftiness of ideals.
- 15 Fortitude.
- 16 Conscientiousness: Not to follow others without enlightened belief.
- 17 Inner gratefulness: Sincerely to feel grateful in your heart for the favor done to you.
- 18 Search for truth.
- 19 Honest acknowledgment of merit in others.
- 20 Commiseration: It differs from pity. Pity means the tender feeling aroused by the suffering of others which moves one to extend help. Commiseration means to suffer the suffering of others.
- 21 Fighting for your rights: One should be able to fight for one's rights except when they may be surrendered as a mark of favor or are just not claimed. Virtue consists in refusal to surrender one's right under duress.
- 22 Capacity to excel: It implies the urge to beat others in good works.
- 23 Never to accept defeat: To suffer defeat but never to take defeat lying down; never to rest content but to continue resisting and fighting.
- 24 To be wide awake and wary: Never to sleep over enemy designs.
- 25 Ready acceptance of truth.
- 26 Power to stand hardship: One should have the power to bear suffering and reverses with patience.
- 27 Endurance or stamina: One should have the staying power and be not upset whatever the odds.
- 28 Courage.
- 29 Love of virtue.
- 30 The wish to help others: Not to flinch from extending help to others whenever the occasion rises.

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- 31 Plain living: Not to spend too much on one's own comfort.
  - 32 Guarding one's honor.
  - 33 To acknowledge the merits of others.
  - 34 To be moderate in everything.

### **Virtues Relating to Others**

Virtues relating to angels are as follows:

1. *Zikr-i-Ilahi*: Remembrance of God or the contemplation of His attributes. We have it on authority that Angels rush in where *Zikr-i-Ilahi* is practiced. The Holy Prophet (peace be on him) has said that angels surround such a place.
2. External cleanliness: We are enjoined to use perfume where angels' visit is likely. For instance, to bathe and apply perfume on the occasion of the congregational Prayer on Friday is to follow the practice of the Holy Prophet, peace be on him.

### **Virtues Concerning Mankind**

1. Justice.
2. Benevolence.
3. Feeling of gratefulness in response to benevolence.
4. Cleanliness.
5. Generosity.
6. Loyalty.
7. To act compassionately.
8. Friendship.
9. *Hilm* or condonation: It means to forgive mistakes in view of the extenuating circumstances. It is to be distinguished from *Afu* which means to forgive despite guilt. *Hilm*, on the other hand, means to condone in view of the redeeming features of the action.
- 10 Self-sacrifice.
- 11 To make interest-free (benevolent) loans.
- 12 To give in charity.

- 13 Cooperation.
- 14 Honesty.
- 15 Search for peace; to try to bring about peace and harmony.
- 16 Forgiveness.
- 17 Keeping of promises.
- 18 To raise the fallen.
- 19 To extend due regard and respect to equals.
- 20 To show proper deference to superiors.
- 21 Reconciliation: It is a virtue to bring about reconciliation in case of confrontation and to make an attempt at rapprochement.
- 22 Brotherliness.
- 23 Keeping secrets.
- 24 Cheerfulness.

### **Virtues Relating to Lower Animals**

- 1. To take good care of their diet.
- 2. To exact work only according to their capacity.
- 3. To feed animals which are not employed by man: The Holy Prophet (on him be peace) said: Once it continued to rain for days on end with the result that birds had to go hungry. A person who fed them was blessed with faith and consequently entered paradise.

*Those in whose wealth there is a well ascertained  
share for those who ask and those who do not ask.  
(70:25-26)*

It is a hallmark of the faithful that they share their wealth with not only those who request for help but also with those who do not so request. Birds and other lower animals also belong to the latter class. They too should be properly fed.

- 4. Taking care of animals: The poor dumb animals should be protected against the inclemencies of the weather. Their

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sexual requirements too should not be ignored. Similarly their off-spring should also be taken care of.

### **National or Group Virtues**

1. Giving of Zakat: Prescribed 2.5 percent poor tax on income and capital.
2. To contribute to meet national requirements.
3. Hospitality.
4. Social and national service.
5. Obedience to authority.
6. Cooperation with authorities.
7. To work for the security of the country.
8. Sense of responsibility.
9. To submit to punishment when guilty.
- 10 To publicize the virtues of others.
- 11 To shun the enemies of the nation.
- 12 To protect national honor-to contradict false charges against the nation.
- 13 To be honest: To be scrupulously honest and upright in trade and commerce.
- 14 To impart knowledge.
- 15 To provide moral education.

### **Virtues Which Pertain to God**

1. To be perfect in faith.
2. To love God.
3. To carry out fully all duties under divine law, duties to God and to man.
4. Optimistic faith in God.
5. Fear of God: To uphold the inviolability of divine honor.
6. Purity of mind.
7. To place reliance on God: To try hard but at the same time firmly to believe that divine succor alone brings success.

8. To pay scrupulous regard to all good morals which relate to God. For instance, honoring commitments, etc.
9. To discard all false beliefs.
- 10 To remonstrate with those who are disrespectful towards God and to try to persuade them through argument to desist from disrespectful and ungrateful behavior towards God. For instance, to try to make that one understand and think better of God who says that God has been cruel and has given him nothing, for it amounts to being disrespectful to God.
- 11 To convey the truth.
- 12 Respect for institutions which belong to God.

What are the occasions when certain actions are to be done or not to be done? The answer is both simple and detailed. If I were to try to answer in detail it would not take less than fifteen to twenty hours, even if I tried to be brief. I would, therefore, adopt the simpler course. I will give only the barest outline, pointing out some of the major landmarks:

1. Not to stop carrying out obligations which one owes to God unless one is forcibly restrained or is justified by another divine injunction. For instance, not to be able to perform *Wudu* (ablution) because the hand or the face is injured. Similarly one divine Command can override another such Command. This is illustrated by the following example. It is a divine injunction that a woman should wear the veil in public. But this too is a divine injunction that she should lift the veil on the occasion of the pilgrimage to the *Kaaba*.

The second Command overrides the first. As a result, not to wear the veil in the *Kaaba* becomes a virtue. Again, it is a duty under divine law to obey parents. But if this duty conflicts with another divine Command, virtue consists in not obeying parents in such a case.

- 2 Not to do unto others what, all things being equal, one would not like done unto oneself. There is, however, a



qualification What is required is not that a person should do to others what he wants others to do unto him. This is what the Bible says, which to my mind is not quite right. What I emphasize is that one should not say or do to others what one would not like said or done to oneself, presuming the circumstances are similar.

- 3 To avoid extremes. For instance, some would either completely stop offering *nawafil* (voluntary prayer) or would offer *nawafil* to the exclusion of all regard for domestic duties. Once a case was reported to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) to the effect that a certain person was given to observing fast during the day and offering *nafl* (voluntary prayer) throughout the night. Summoning him, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) admonished him:

*Your self too has Its right over you and you have an obligation to your wife also.*

4. To act in accordance with the particular divine attribute which the act invokes.

How can one determine which evils one suffers from?

1. By self-examination: When one comes to know what are the various virtues and vices, one should conduct a self-scrutiny in order to identify the vice from which one suffers and the virtues that one does not practice.
2. By consultation with a sincere friend: One should consult some sincere and close friend who should be asked to study one's overt behavior. Of course, he should not set out on a hunt for secret vices. That would in itself be an evil. The function of the friend should be to point out the faults in one's overt actions, faults of which one may not be fully conscious.
3. By self-identification: Even a friend is likely to overlook a friend's faults. To remedy this, one should have recourse to a third method. One should try to identify in one's own person the virtues and vices that one is able to identify in

others.

4. By identification of faults by opponents: One can go one better. One should know what faults one's enemy finds in him and proceed seriously to check up if those faults are really found in him or not. This would bring to one's knowledge quite a few faults of which one was not aware before. Similarly, one could also check up on the virtues which one's enemies acknowledge for not un-often, even an enemy cannot help acknowledging one's merits.
5. Best method of self-appraisal: The best and most important method to be fully posted about virtues and vices is to study the Holy Quran. When the reader comes across the vices from which the earlier peoples suffered, he should reflect and consider whether he himself does or does not also suffer from them. Also when the Holy Quran mentions a virtue, the reader should check up whether he has that virtue or not. There is another great advantage of such a study. As it proceeds, all virtues and vices will gradually unfold themselves, one after the other. This is not possible otherwise. We cannot think of every virtue and vice all at once. Also, recitation of the Holy Quran gives rise to fear of God which should help the pursuit of virtues and avoidance of vices.

### **When Knowledge of Evil Fails to Uproot Evil: Some Suggestions.**

The foregoing guidance is for those whose souls have not become rusted with evil. But what about those who know something to be evil, yet cannot give it up! For instance, they do not offer prayer even when they know that not offering prayers is a vice. Or, they commit murder even when they are convinced that murder is a vice. No detailed answer to this question is possible in this brief discourse. It could not be set down adequately even in a book of ordinary size. It is a vast subject. I can, therefore, mention only a few points bearing on the problem.

Such a person should accept the fact that rot has set in his

soul and that there is in him an ingrained resistance to the pursuit of virtue and the avoidance of vice. This condition could be ascribed to the cumulative effect of evil actions done in the past.

### ***Istighfar*: Praying for forgiveness.**

The primary remedy lies in *Istighfar* – in seeking God's forgiveness by invoking His attribute of covering up and forgiving sins. *Istighfar* has two aspects. In one, the sinner seeks divine forgiveness for the sins he has committed in the past, or prays to ward off sins to which he is a prey.

In the other, the person concerned prays to God that his tendency towards sin be suppressed altogether and not even a vestige of sin should touch him through His grace. It is in this sense that Prophets seek *Istighfar* of God.

### **Deeper and deeper knowledge of God**

One should have true knowledge with an enlightened understanding of divine attributes and allow them to envelope one's soul and study them at close quarters and try to imbibe their true spirit. For instance, while contemplating His grace, one should recall the bounties one has received from Him and say: Why should I not give to His creatures that which He, in His Infinite grace has given to me? Such reflection would inspire him with resistance to evil and love of virtue.

### **Reflection on consequences of good and bad actions**

One should reflect on the good consequences of virtue and bad consequences of evil. One should visualize how virtue ultimately yields good and vice harmful results. This would help one acquire knowledge of good and evil.

### ***Taubah* (Repentance)**

The next step is *Taubah*, or repentance before God with an awakened conscience. *Taubah* means:

1. Genuine remorse over past sins. This is a permanent state

of the heart.

2. Fulfilling the obligations that were left unfulfilled. For instance, to perform pilgrimage to the *Kaaba* if it has not been performed already. But neglect of prayer cannot be made good like this. For such default the only recourse left is to seek forgiveness of God.
3. Seeking pardon of each person affected by the sinner's defaults, such as God has caused to be forgotten.
4. Doing compensatory favors to those who have suffered at one's hands.
5. Firm resolve not to commit an evil act again.

These are, in fact, the conditions precedent to *Taubah* which is granted only if these conditions are adequately fulfilled.

The Holy Prophet, peace be on him, has directed:

*Takhallaqoo bi Akhlaqillah:*

Adorn yourselves with divine qualities.

One should not worry too much if the heart is not in it. One should persist in doing good as a duty. One should continue to be charitable, even if charitable acts hurt one. One should go on praying even when one is unable to concentrate. The important thing to remember is that duties must be performed with studied intent and without losing heart. The Promised Messiah (on him be peace) used to relate this story which I have also related a number of times.

A disciple once visited his spiritual preceptor and mentor and stayed the night with him. The preceptor spent a great part of the night in supplicating and at the end the disciple heard God's response that the supplication was rejected. He was shocked, thinking that the preceptor was not a good guide since his prayers had been rejected although people came to him to request for prayers. However, he kept his counsel and said nothing. The next night the same thing happened. The preceptor prayed through the greater part of the night and

received the same reply. The same performance was repeated the third night.

Now the disciple could keep silent no longer and asked the preceptor: You have been praying for the last three nights. Every time you pray, God replies that your prayer shall not be heard. Why do you persist in offering the same prayer again and again? The preceptor replied: You do not know that I have been offering the same prayers for the last twenty years and I have not lost patience. You have heard the divine answer only three times and have lost hope. My business is to pray. It is for God to accept or not to accept. He is doing His will as I am doing my duty. It so happened that on the fourth night the divine response came: All the prayers you have made so far are granted. Thus a man's duty is to continue to pray under all conditions and never give up. Not un-often, an act of external virtue initiates an inner process which gradually wipes a person clean.

Should this, too, fail to help; resolutions are made and broken, a rise is followed by a fall, every effort meets with a reverse; it should be a fall, every effort meets with a reverse; it should be known for certain that a spiritual rot has set in and the heart needs a detailed and full remedial treatment. It should be realized that evil has triumphed. His self respect has died and he is like an animal who is led by the nose. His lower self has attained mastery over him and leads him with impunity.

In such a case remedial treatment, not on a short term, but on a long term basis is needed. Before I proceed to outline this treatment, I would like to point out the hitherto current philosophy of morals among the Muslims and the one expounded from the Ahmadiyya point of view. Ibn Mardweh, may Allah have mercy on him, is considered the founder of Muslim ethics. He wrote a regular treatise on the subject. After him, Ibn Arabi (may Allah have mercy on him) is considered the greatest thinker on the subject. He was followed by Imam Ghazali (may Allah have mercy on him) who wrote a compendium on the subject which runs into as many

as four volumes. He is supposed to have pronounced the last word on the subject. I would like to throw some light on the subject to enable the student of today to appreciate the errors in the earlier expositions. In their own day, their views were valid, but today they need to be modified.

The basic difference between the moral philosophy of Al-Ghazali and the Ahmadiyya moral philosophy is that the former emphasizes negative values while the latter is essentially positive in character. This change in approach was brought about by the Promised Messiah (on him be peace). He pointed out that morals do not merely mean the absence of evil but also the presence of Good. It is not denied that self-control is a road to morality, but it is not the only road. While contemplating the philosophy of morals, we cannot ignore certain factors, some of which are as follows. God says:

*I have created men, high and low, that they may worship Me. (51:57).*

Again, He says:

*Those who prove fortunate shall be in the Garden, abiding therein so long as the heaven and earth shall endure, excepting that which thy Lord may will. This is a bounty which shall never be cutoff (11:109).*

This shows that man was created, not for not doing certain things, but for doing certain things. Hence our creation has a positive and not a negative purpose. Negation is at best a precaution. It means to remove the obstacles which stand in the way of the realization of the ultimate goal. It is a means, never an end. If the purpose of man's creation was no more than negation or extinction, where was the need for his creation? This purpose was being served better without his creation. The situation is similar to the one in Hindu Theology in which God is described as not this and not that. Man was created not to negate but to affirm, always accepting negation to be a means, never the end. Therefore, the real issue is what should man become, not what he should not become.

Secondly, it is agreed that the ego is like a horse. True, the horse has to be exercised. Within reasonable limits it has to be kept lean but not too lean; fit enough to ride yet not so unruly as to throw the rider. But have you ever seen someone who should have become a good horseman merely by starving the horse? Once during a journey, one of our party who was not much of a horseman, declared he would not ride unless a lean horse was procured for him. Accordingly a lean horse was brought. He appeared to be afraid of this horse too and wanted to know if there was no leaner horse available. Therefore, if a person does not know riding, he cannot learn it by starving the horse. Similarly it is a mistake to believe that by starving the ego, you can tame it or can make it obey your commands. You control the ego not by starving it, but by learning the art of controlling it.

Thirdly, it is no use denying that sin is the result not only of the domination of the ego but also of the death of the ego. For instance, shamelessness is caused by the death of the ego. In such cases the ego needs to be revived to enable it to function as required.

Thus the ego is like a horse. To make it function properly, sometimes it should be allowed to become lean and sometimes it needs to be fattened. It should neither be completely demolished nor should it be permitted to become too headstrong to obey.

The Promised Messiah's approach to morals differs from Al-Ghazali's in another respect also. The Promised Messiah (on him be peace) emphasized that the basis of faith is hope and anticipation. The Holy Quran does indeed say that faith lies between hope and fear but nowhere does it say that it lies between hope and despair. About despair, the Holy Quran even says:

*O my sons, go ye and search for Joseph and his brother and despair not of the mercy of Allah; for none despairs of Allah's mercy but the unbelieving people. (12:88).*

The Holy Prophet (on him be peace) is reported to have

said that God will treat His servant as he expects to be treated. Therefore, no system which breeds despair could be called Islamic. We should also be very watchful about fear. It must never exceed hope which should outweigh fear. Fear certainly is part of faith but is never as big a part as hope. Allah says:

*1 shall inflict My chastisement on those concerning whom I so determine; but My mercy encompasses all things. (7:157).*

In the heart of the faithful, hope should, therefore, dominate over fear.

The heart of a believer is full of hope. He is afraid but not as much as he is hopeful. He is convinced that God will not be so harsh as to let him perish. In truth he is afraid not because he doubts God's mercy but because of his own faults. His hope proceeds from his faith in divine grace. Is it not true that our faults appear insignificant when compared to the grace of God? In other words, if a believer fears God because of his Self-Sufficiency. If he fears God because of his own weakness, let him not forget that Allah's might is overwhelmingly greater than his weakness. In either case, hope reigns supreme, for the source from which it springs is stronger than that of fear.

But it must be remembered that hope is for those who submit, not for those who rebel. You cannot continue doing whatever you please and yet hope to win God's grace; for that would be rebellion and there can be no hope for the rebellious. Indeed hope is only for those who submit.

Also remember, the believer fears God not because he is not sure he will not be able to perform a certain action or that he will be punished if he does not perform it. He is afraid because he is not too sure if the course he is following will really lead him to success. Nor does he fear because of his failure to act in a certain manner and of the consequent punishment. He is afraid that he will not be able to win divine grace if he fails to perform the action as God expects him to do.



In short, Islamic mysticism is based on hope and fear, hope being the dominant factor. Positive forces are released only by hope. Fear can generate nothing more than negative forces. Since the real purpose of man's creation is to generate the love of God, that can be done only by hope. Fear can at best ward off sins. Islam seeks to dispel fear. We have seen that the Holy Quran assures us:

*My mercy encompasses everything. (7:157).*

Then the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) clarified the position still further. He said that cheering dreams proceed from God and frightening dreams proceed from Satan. Since the impact of dreams on the mind is undeniable, he warned that we should not be afraid of frightening dreams since their source is satanic. This certainly does not mean that every dream of that kind is satanic as Prophets too have such dreams. The idea is that if there is a multiplicity of dreams of this kind, to the total or near total exclusion of hope-inspiring dreams, it should be presumed that they are satanic in nature. Thus the Holy Prophet (on him be peace) sought to remove fear from the hearts of the faithful.

There is, however, the risk that a person who dreams such dreams, may have a true dream for once and dismiss it to his loss as satanic. The Holy Prophet (on him be peace) has also pointed the way out. He said: When a believer happens to experience a dream of this nature, he should turn over to his left side and spit out and recite: *La haula wa la quvvata illa billah* (There is no security against ill and no strength to achieve good except through Allah).

The point he has made is a subtle one. When we spit at something, actually or figuratively, we mean to reject it as unworthy of our attention. By his advice, to spit out, the Holy Prophet (on him be peace) has inspired the faithful with courage and hope. There is every possibility that among many such dreams one may on occasion be true. The recitation taught by him is, therefore, very significant, in so far as it provides an occasion to seek divine forgiveness and strengthen

trust in God. The symbolic rejection safeguards against the evil effects of satanic dreams. Similarly the recitation of *Lahaul* shields us from the consequences of divine warning. By reciting "*Lahaul*," we completely surrender ourselves to God and thus escape His wrath. This twofold treatment should dispel all fear. Behold, how beautifully the Holy Prophet (on him be peace) has secured the faithful against surrendering to fear.

This brief exposition would mark the difference between Al-Ghazali's view and the view of the Promised Messiah (peace be on him).

Now I shall revert to the appropriate remedies for the treatment of those who are spiritually sick and are incapable of moral action, having failed despite effort. But let me first remove one misconception. It may be asked: If such persons are incapable of right action, what benefit could such remedial advice bring them?

First, unless and until, right action becomes a physical impossibility, salvation lies in trying and continuing to try to do right. In case such action does in fact become a physical impossibility, purity may be achieved without action. For example, the insane are incapable of performing moral actions. For such, the Holy Prophet (on him be peace) has said there will be provided opportunities.

Actions are of two kinds: those that can be performed in all conditions, and those that cannot be performed in certain conditions of the heart. The latter category are related to thought and emotions. The former are never impossible, for they are external in nature. For instance, no one can say that he or she cannot perform the external act of prayer. But a person could no doubt say that it is not possible for him to banish illicit love from his heart. Thus there are these two categories of actions, those involving the emotions, and those not involving the emotions.

We know how physical ailments are treated. When the doctor prescribes physical exercise for a weak patient who is

unfit to do any work, does he tell the doctor how can he take exercise, being unfit to do any work? He does not say this because there is a difference between the work which he is unfit to do and the exercise the doctor prescribes. Both require effort but one is within his capacity while the other is not. Even to augment physical energy, action is needed. A patient who is too weak to get up and is permanently bedridden would naturally be prescribed exercise consistent with his condition. May be the doctor would only prescribe massage. When he gains some strength, he would be able to sit up and when he is a little stronger he would stand up.

The same obtains in the spiritual sphere. A spiritual patient also begins with minor actions and progressively rises to higher levels. If a student finds the 10th grade reader too difficult, he is advised to study the 9th grade reader. He cannot say: Since I cannot read the 10th grade reader, how can I read the one meant for the 9th grade? In the spiritual sphere also progress is made from lower to higher levels of action.

Such cases need special remedial treatment which I shall outline presently. But preliminary measures have to be taken which I have already mentioned and which are as follows:

1. Acquisition of thorough knowledge of right and wrong, virtue and vice.
2. Knowledge of appropriate use of each.
3. Self-examination.
4. Frequent recourse to *Istighfar*.
5. Effort to acquire cognition of God.
6. Reflection over the consequences of good and evil actions.
7. Effort to reflect divine qualities.

I shall now outline principles of treatment of such cases. Without doubt, such a person is spiritually sick. Sickness cannot be treated without proper diagnosis. The patient should first determine what is his ailment. Then he should ask himself what does he wish to achieve. The answer is likely to be twofold: purity of heart and reform of conduct. The former

is related to the love of God. The sickness of the heart signifies the extinction of the capacity to love. I have related a vision of mine on a number of occasions. I saw Jesus (peace be on him) standing on a raised platform. He looked like a child and raised his hands towards heaven. I also saw his mother Maryam (on her be peace) descend from above and stand on a higher portion of the platform. Then she took a step downward and Jesus raised himself a step and leaned towards Mary. In response, she too leaned over him. At that instant, the following words issued from my mouth: Love creates love.

Thus love creates love; but love is inspired by:

1. Beauty.
2. Benevolence.

Now imagine a person who witnesses the beauty of God, reflects over His attributes, receives His gracious favors and is conscious of God's relationship with him but fails to respond with love. He would be like a child who does not love his mother. The capacity to love has died within him. He is like a sick person who cannot tolerate medicine or nourishment as his stomach is out of order. The first step towards his restoration to health would, therefore, be to tone up his stomach. The same thing is true of one who is spiritually sick. His emotions should be stimulated. As an overt act induces an inner reaction, let him assume an attitude of humility and entreaty, at least externally. In his prayers let him put on a pitiful expression even artificially; for even such action induces a corresponding state in the mind. This is illustrated by the case of an American Principal of a college, who had been a brilliant student but proved an utter failure as Principal. He consulted a psychologist who told him his failure was due to his excessive leniency, which prevented him from maintaining discipline. He was advised to simulate sternness and look tough with set jaws and compressed teeth. He followed the advice and within a short time he came to be known as a most successful Principal.

If a coward starts strutting about he would develop courage

and bravery. Soldiers are trained along these lines. They have to practice marching with their chests pushed out and their chins aloft. This develops their courage.

The first remedy, therefore, is that he who suffers from a default should artificially induce the corresponding quality; this would equip him with that quality. To develop love, he should make manifest an attitude of love. For instance, his handshake should be firm and fervent. When a visitor wants to leave, he should insist on his staying on, even though he should desire his departure. When his behavior begins to exhibit the external signs of love, he would gradually develop the faculty of love. He would then begin to love God also, which he could not do before, because, he had lacked the faculty of love altogether.

He should also intensify his love for his parents and children. This is the love which the *Sufis* have described as *majazi* or reflective love, true love being the love of God. It is in this sense that mystics called it reflective love. They meant to emphasize and intensify this kind of love as it was legitimate love. Later the meaning of this term became corrupted. *Majazi* or reflective love does not mean to fall a prey to love that is not permissible and lawful. It means loving intensely those relatives whom one may love legitimately. This will augment the faculty of love and foster the love of God.

The second factor in spiritual reform is improvement in the quality of action. In this context it should be remembered that action is directed by the will. One determines to do. One determines to do something and does it. The helplessness of a person who wishes to do something but finds himself unable to do it may derive from one of three causes.

1. He may have lost control over his will. His ego may have become too weak to effectively rule over his will. The ego is the master and the will is its agent. The master has become too weak to direct the agent to have something carried out and fights shy of the agent. The agent thus

becomes lax in requiring performance.

2. The ego or the master is not weak, but the will or the agent is sick and has lost control over the emotions which are like servants of the will. When the agent falls ill, the servants become lax and refuse to obey. In other words, the communication between the ego and emotions is impaired.
3. Something intervenes between the will and the emotions. The will, the power to direct and the emotions are ready to obey, but communication between the two is interrupted. Either the intervening distance has become too great, or some other hindrance stands in the way and the orders of the will do not reach the emotions. Thus sinfulness and lack of virtue could mean:
  - a. Weakness of the ego, or
  - b. Weakness of the will, or
  - c. Some intervention which nullifies the control of the will over the emotions. For instance, a smoker may have the will to give up smoking but when he sees the pipe, he cannot help himself and succumbs to his habit.

I shall now point out the factors which help foster the ego and strengthen the will.

1. The wish to survive. Every animate wishes to survive. Try to kill a small insect. Note how it tosses and twists. This shows it wants to live. The spiritual patient should know that if his sickness is prolonged, he would die. He should, therefore, strengthen his will to survive, which is a natural urge and can be fostered by reflection.

A smoker drifts towards a smoker and a wine-bibber seeks like company; but in face of mortal danger all this is forgotten and shunned. It is the wish to survive which overcomes all weaknesses.

2. Along with the will to survive, the will to crush all opposition should be fostered. This is a corollary of the wish to survive. Survival is not possible unless the will to

overcome all opposition is strengthened. This can be done by constant reflection that every obstruction will be swept aside.

3. The third method of strengthening the ego is to foster the determination to achieve whatever may be needed. There should be concentration on whatever may appear difficult to achieve. This would boost the ego.
4. The capacity of resisting whatever may be harmful should be fostered.
5. Steadfastness should be fostered. This too nourishes the ego. Steadfastness may be difficult to attain in all cases, and in some it may appear impossible, but it should not be ignored. Steadfastness in some situations would foster steadfastness in others. This should help to buttress the ego.
6. Prudence. This too results from the urge of survival. Due consideration of all aspects of a situation would promote self-control and the capacity to keep a secret, and would stimulate wisdom and the sense of expediency. The ego would consequently become stronger.
7. Mental effort to promote caution, alertness, cleverness and farsightedness would also help to foster the ego.
8. Aversion to being praised, and refusal to listen to it, would strengthen the ego. Praise slaughters the ego like a sharp knife. The Holy Quran expounds this beautifully. It says:

*Imagine that those who exult in their deeds and love to be praised for that which they have not done are secure from punishment They shall suffer a grievous chastisement (3:189)*

Such people readily believe what others say in their praise, but do not pause to consider whether they have truly done anything praiseworthy. They do not perform much and rest content with whatever little they happen to have done. They are eager to believe what others say in their praise.

They dwell in a fool's paradise of false praise. Thus aversion to praise strengthens the ego.

9. Development of self-respect. There should be intolerance of every type of ignominy and disgrace. Why should evil be ascribed to me? This ego is roused and is lifted up which rises in revolt and gets things done by the will.
- 10 Development of dignity: Do not get involved in what is none of your concern. To put one's finger in every pie is the sign of puerility. It spells the death of the ego.
- 11 Generate hope. Be ever hopeful. This also fosters self - respect. Continue to be optimistic. This promotes self-confidence.
- 12 Cheerfulness and good humor. They are invigorating. Worry saps vitality.

Some of these may be difficult to put into effect. But if a person were to follow at least some of them, he would soon perceive an accession of strength. All these exercises are mental. Their practice will help promote the development of the mental powers which control the will. The best method would be for one to ponder over the true status of man which I have expounded. This would soon be perceived to reinforce the ego.

### **Ego and Will-Power**

But an unduly inflated ego has its own drawbacks. It may lead to sinfulness. It is like a cruel master who is given to beating his servants unnecessarily. Its cure lies in thinking about God's Self-Sufficiency. Such a one should pause and reflect: If my ego persists on punishing every minor fault of others, what would happen if God were to call me to account for everything? Whatever I have is a bounty of God; I am not its owner. I am only a trustee and I shall be called to account for the way in which I discharge this trust. I should not, therefore, be unduly critical of others.

If the ego is built up or is already strong, but the difficulty



lies with the will or the intervening obstacles between the ego and the will, the following treatment would be appropriate:

1. Let external conduct be put in accord, even artificially, with what is desired internally, thus inducing a corresponding inner reaction. The Promised Messiah (peace be on him) has laid great stress on this.
2. Concentrating attention on God. This is essential for success. All thinking should flow in one direction only and every conception beside that of God should be obliterated from the mind. The Holy Quran says

*We cite in evidence those who pursue their efforts vigorously. (79:2).*

This means that those who seek success in an enterprise, become wholly immersed in it. They direct their thinking in such manner that the particular enterprise becomes their goal, and they cease to be aware of anything else. When a project occupies the whole expanse of the mind, then alone can success be achieved in it. When a person who is a habitual liar makes up his mind to give up lying, he will succeed only if he concentrates every moment on the idea that he must not tell a lie and must give up lying altogether.

Repeated and constant thinking on a particular subject generates an inner strength. But such strength is subject to a risk; it can go berserk and run out of the control of the will. Many people complain that their thoughts wander during prayer and they seek a remedy. This means that their faculty of thinking has run amok. They concentrate on something other than God. They seek to direct their attention on God, but their attention runs away after something else. It is wrong to think that such people cannot concentrate. They can concentrate, but their trouble is that their attention is not under the control of their will. It has broken loose and become independent. It strays and wanders. In such a situation, effort should be made to bring it under the control of the will.

How can this be done? I will discuss this point later. I

would, however, make one suggestion here. Those people whose attention wanders during prayer should not consciously try to concentrate. They should pray just as they do other normal things. This would bring relief from their condition.

3. Constant exercise of will-power. Determination that an action embarked upon will be continued regardless of any obstacles that might be encountered. But will-power is not always adequate and strong. A person resolves to perform an action but then falters. Will-power has, therefore, to be strengthened. For this purpose I suggest a "tonic" which is composed of as many as fourteen ingredients, which are called from the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (on him be peace):

- a. Repetition of and reflection upon the verse of the Holy Quran:

*I have created men, high and low, that they may worship me. (51:57).*

God says I have created man for the sole purpose that he should worship Me and thus be My true servant. Man should, therefore, think along the following lines. God has created me for nearness to Him. His purpose cannot be frustrated. I shall become His true servant; it is not possible that I should fail in this purpose. He should not imagine that he cannot accomplish anything. He should conceive as if God has taken hold of him and urges him to action. The mystics call this *Muraqbah*, deep reflection. But it does not mean mere passive thinking. It means repeated reflection and conviction that God having created him for becoming His servant, he could not possibly become anything else.

- b. Reflection on the purport of the verse of the Holy Quran:

*Surely, We have created man in the best mold. (95:5)*

He should reflect: God has invested me with the best faculties. Whatever good can be achieved by any other person can be achieved by me also. The attainment of the highest status is possible for me also. Then how can I fall? He should concentrate on this and revolve it in his mind frequently.

- c. He should reflect on the verse:

*Assuredly We have created man and We know well what kind of doubt his mind throws up. We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. (50:17)*

His line of thinking should be: God has created me, and He knows the subtlest doubts that rise in a person's mind and distract it. But God is closer to man than his mind, and can instantly resolve the doubts that rise in his mind. God has comforted man in this verse by reassuring him that he has nothing to fear from doubts, as the means of resolving doubts is closer than that which prompts doubts.

- d. He should reflect on the verse:

*True honor belongs to Allah and to His Messenger and the believers; but the hypocrites know it not (63:9)*

He should reflect: I am a believer and a believer cannot possibly be vanquished. How is it possible, then, that my will should not prevail? He should repeat it over and over until the will overpowers the ego.

- e. He should reflect over the verse:

*Surely, thou shalt have no power over My true servants, barring such of the erring ones as choose to follow thee. (15:43)*

God says that Satan has no control over God's servants. I am His servant. How is it possible that evil should hold sway over me?

- f. He should reflect on the verse:

*Hearken, the friends of Allah shall certainly have no fear, nor shall they grieve. (10:63)*

I fear no one except God. I am a believer; and a believer has no fear except the fear of God.

- g. He should reflect over the verse:

*We are your friends in this life and in the Hereafter. (41:32).*

He should reflect: Angels descend upon believers and assure them: We are your helpers; then why should you worry.

- h. He should reflect on the verse:

*Despair not of the mercy of Allah; for none despairs of Allah's mercy save the unbelieving people. (12:88).*

He should think thus: Difficulties cannot make me despair. Despair is death which I am not prepared to accept. If the will does not obey, I will not rest until it does.

- i. He should reflect on the verse:

*O soul at rest, return to thy Lord, thou well pleased with him and He well pleased with thee. So enter among My chosen servants, and enter My Garden. (89:28-31).*

I am at peace and boundless possibilities are open to me. Why should I lose heart when God is with me and directs me to enter His everlasting paradise.

- j. He should reflect on the divine promise that a believer shall be held in honor in the world and that he shall not suffer disgrace. This also fosters will-power.

- k. He should reflect on the verse:

*He has subjected to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; all of it. In that surely are Signs for a people who reflect.* (45:14).

He should reflect that all failures result from greed and avarice. But he has no cause to be greedy for God has already provided everything for him.

1. He should reflect on the verse:

*Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. Those who are with him are unyielding towards the disbelievers, compassionate towards one another.* (48:30).

He should reflect: Evil thoughts, designs and stimuli cannot enter my heart. I belong to the people concerning whom God has said that they are not influenced by the disbelievers; they can be influenced only by those who believe.

- m. He should remind himself repeatedly of the verse:

*O ye who believe, be mindful of your duty to Allah, and keep company with the righteous.* (9:119);

and should reflect on the saying of the Holy Prophet, peace be on him: He who keeps company with the righteous does not encounter ill fortune.

He should reason: Good designs that take shape in my mind influence others. God admonishes us to keep company with the righteous. If I cannot influence any one for good I cannot be a believer.

- n. Finally he should reflect on the following verse which relates to the Holy Prophet (on him be peace):

*We granted not everlasting life to any human being before thee; then if thou shouldst die, will they live on for ever.* (21:35).

This life being transitory, not a moment of it should be

wasted.

These fourteen items would help strengthen willpower so that it can control feelings and emotions, but it is necessary to ponder over them fully and deeply.

4. The fourth measure to strengthen the will and to remove the obstacle in its way is to launch an all out attack on the very first day against the fault that has to be got rid of. When an army attacks, it starts the attack in full strength. The same should be done in fighting an evil. One's full strength should be employed against the evil that has to be vanquished.
5. One should cultivate the habit of practicing the virtue which one is seeking to acquire; and should cultivate the opposite of that which one seeks to discard. For instance, if one is apt to lose one's temper one should cultivate urbanity.
6. The habit of thinking and reflection should be cultivated and haste should be eschewed. This would provide a safeguard against evil habits. Such habits take advantage of haste and retreat before reflection and deliberation.
7. When it is resolved to do or not to do something, all the pros and cons should be deliberated upon systematically so that a complete picture is impressed upon the mind. This would facilitate the doing of that which is desired and the discarding of that which should be eschewed.
8. Occasionally that which is lawful and desirable should be voluntarily given up so that the habit of acting against his wishes may be cultivated. For instance, a person who suffers from the habit of stealing and is unable to discard it, should on occasion refrain from that which is lawful and desirable. He should sometimes keep awake when he wants to sleep, or abstain from eating something he much desires to eat. In this way he will strengthen his will. Hazrat Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) has said:

I learnt to recognize God through the repeated frustration of my resolves.

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This means that he made certain resolves but failed to carry them out. He resolved again, and again he failed. But he persisted and refused to be discouraged and did not yield to frustration, until he found God. If he had stopped short after the first failure he would not have met God.

9. One should examine one's ego repeatedly like a physician who checks up on his patient over and over again.
- 10 One should aim high and not be content with anything less. He who aims at the highest achieves something worthwhile, and becomes the master of his ego.
- 11 Besides all this is recourse to prayer. When one's own effort fails, one needs external help. The first stage is one's own effort which is internal help. The external help one should invoke is divine help. One should make one's own effort and also pray to God for help. One should supplicate that one is trying to do whatever one can; but one can succeed only if God helps one. This may be illustrated by a story. A saint had a disciple who was devoted to mysticism which he had studied for a long time under the guidance of the saint. The saint enquired from him whether Satan was found in his part of the country. The query surprised the disciple who countered with: Is there any place which Satan does not frequent? The saint asked: What will you do if Satan should attack you when you return home? The disciple answered: I shall fight Satan. The saint said: Granted that you will fight Satan and make him flee. But what will you do if he returns and renews his attack when you try to turn to God? The disciple submitted that he would again fight. The saint said: If you keep fighting Satan all the time, when will you be able to turn to God? The disciple was non-plussed and requested the saint to guide him on the point. The saint said: If you go to visit a friend and his dog worries you what would you do? The disciple submitted that he would beat the dog with a stick and scare it away. The saint asked what would he do if the dog were to return and worry him again. The disciple answered that he would call the dog's master and request

him to restrain the dog. The saint said: Very true. You should follow the same method in combating Satan. You should supplicate God: I want to come closer to you but your dog – Satan – does not let me approach you. You alone, Lord, can keep him off me. Thus one sure means of avoiding evil is prayer to God. One should pray: God, I am doing my best to ward off evil, but I cannot succeed unless you help me.

I have received a query concerning the suggestion that we should aim high. A friend asks whether it is permissible to entertain colorful wishes. To my mind, it is not desirable to indulge in this kind of wishful thinking. For example, the Promised Messiah (on him be peace) has said that we should not hanker after divine revelation. Loftiness of aim or ideal is to be distinguished from wishful thinking and aspirations. Greed means to crave and run after fanciful desires, but a goal or aim is determined after due consideration and is followed by diligent effort for its realization. One who is given to wishful thinking is like a beggar, but one who fixes his goal and strives for its realization, does not beg but fights for a cause.

The same is true of the wish to receive divine revelation. Revelation is a bounty and a feast from God to His servant. No one would like to visit a friend in order to partake of a feast to which he has not been invited. That would be considered undignified. But if one visits a friend in order to meet him and the friend entertains one that is fit and proper. Such is the case with revelation. A servant prays to God for nearness to Him and a high spiritual status. When he attains such status, he begins to receive revelation. But if a person hankers after divine revelation that would mean that he is greedy for the feast, but has no urge to achieve nearness to God. Thus it is not proper to entertain eagerness for receiving revelation.

To revert to the topic in hand, if a person, despite putting into practice the directions that I have outlined, is not able to avoid evil and pursues virtue with increasing success, he should realize that the malady from which he is suffering is more physical than spiritual. He should know that there is



something wrong with his nervous system. He should consult a competent physician. If medical advice is not available, he should follow the following fourfold regimen:

1. Physical exercise.
2. Stoppage of all mental work.
3. Proper diet.
4. Try to feel relaxed and keep cheerful.

It should be remembered that in many cases spiritual maladies are occasioned by imagination like physical illness. This is confirmed by my own experience. When I started studying medicine, I began to feel as if I was suffering from every disease which I tried to study. But a medical student told me that their teacher had warned them against such a phenomenon. I would, therefore, urge you to avoid falling into the mistake of imagining that you suffer from every spiritual ailment that you happen to contemplate.

This reminds me of the story of a teacher who was a hard task-master. On one occasion his students decided to take a holiday. One of them proposed that if they would cooperate with him, he would procure them a holiday. They agreed. Whereupon he approached the teacher and with concern in his voice enquired whether the teacher was feeling well. The teacher told him to shut up and attend to his work. But the student persisted and told the teacher that indeed he looked somewhat pale. The teacher was furious and gave the student a bit of his mind. He was soon followed by another student who made the same enquiry from the teacher. He too was rebuked, albeit, with a little less vehemence. He was followed by yet another student who in turn was followed by still others repeating the same enquiry and voicing the same concern. When the seventh student approached, the teacher admitted that he was, in fact, feeling a little out of sorts but admonished the students that they were harping on his indisposition unnecessarily. When the fifteenth or sixteenth student enquired about his health, the teacher confessed: Yes, I do feel a little feverish. Let me, therefore, take a little rest.

By the time he was able to lie down in bed, he had actually developed fever. He had already allowed the class to leave. The story goes that the students on reaching home, suggested to their parents to visit the teacher and enquire about his health. Some of them repaired to his house to express their sympathy and concern. The teacher became convinced that he was seriously ill, so much so, that he rapidly grew worse and eventually died.

This may only be a story but it has some truth in it. Modern western research shows that since the multiplication of patent medicines, the number of diseases has shot up. Exaggerated claims are made about these medicines. Each medicine is advertised as a panacea for a host of ills. The reader is easily led to believe that he is suffering at least from one of the listed diseases for which the medicine claims to provide a ready cure and he procures the medicine. His lively imagination then makes him actually ill. Therefore, one must not submit to imagination.

Another matter that needs to be attended to, and which is of national and communal concern, giving currency to the notion of widespread corruption. There are people who are addicted to slander and spreading scandals about others. For instance they would declare: Everyone here is vicious and a crook. In the beginning, some people protest against the calumny and try to stamp it out; but gradually their protests become milder and they adopt a passive attitude. In the end they too begin to give credence to the calumny.

So pay no heed to such derogatory propaganda or else the evil will also infect you. The Holy Prophet (on him be peace) has said: He who ascribes an evil to others, himself comes to suffer from it. Nations perish because of this evil. It is your duty to restrain those who spread scandals. A scandal-monger should be challenged to name the guilty person and furnish particulars, instead of condemning the entire nation or community.

The Holy Prophet (on him be peace) has said: A person who condemns the nation on account of an evil from which it is

alleged to suffer is the one who gives currency to the evil. To denounce people as vicious, makes them vicious. Such slanderers are national enemies. They should be opposed and resisted. They should not be permitted to spread obscenity and calumniate the nation. On the other hand, it is also true that a nation that becomes heedless also perishes. The correct method, therefore, is to bring each alleged evil to the notice of the proper authorities. If, on investigation, the report is found to be well-founded, it is for the authorities to take appropriate steps to combat the evil.

When I prepared the notes for this address I had to revise my original estimate that one meeting would suffice for the address and came to think that it would take two days to complete it. But at the end of the second day, I find that there are forty points which still remain to be discussed. If God so wills, they may be incorporated in the printed version or they may be discussed on some other occasion. These forty points deal with the question: How to become virtuous?

### **A Prayer of the Promised Messiah**

I shall conclude this address with a quotation from the Promised Messiah (on him be peace). In this quotation which I shall presently read, he has given expression to anguish and concern that if we fail to become truly virtuous, we shall betray the purpose for which this community has been founded, and we would not become heirs to divine grace. We should, therefore, strive to develop the qualities that have been enjoined upon us by the Promised Messiah (on him be peace). I hope that those friends who have listened to this address and taken down notes will put all these methods of self-improvement into practice, so that we might demonstrate to the world that in our conduct also we continue unmatched.

The truth is that unless every one of us is saintly in his conduct, we cannot bring about a spiritual revolution and the salvation of the world cannot be achieved. We should remember that we have to fight not only prevalent evils but also the strong current of evil thinking. We have to fight the swollen river of evil thinking that is surging everywhere. Ours

is a very delicate situation. I beg you all to try to become what the Promised Messiah (on him be peace) wants us to become.

Now I proceed to read out the prayer of the Promised Messiah (on him be peace), in which I also join. The Promised Messiah (on him be peace) says:

What shall I do, where shall I find the words that should move the hearts of this people (Ahmadiyya Community). Lord, vouchsafe to me the words and reveal to me the speech which should illuminate their hearts and like an antidote rid them of their poison. My soul is all fevered with eagerness to witness the day when I should find that my community is largely composed of people who have truly forsaken lying and who have entered into a sincere covenant with their God to safeguard themselves against every evil and shall withdraw altogether from arrogance which is the root of all evil, and shall pass their lives in the fear of their Lord.

I pray and I shall continue to do so to the last breath of my life; Allah may purify the hearts of this community of mine; that He may extend His hand of mercy and turn their hearts in His direction. May He lift all mischief and rancor from their hearts and grant them true and genuine love for one another. I am convinced that my prayer will be accepted and that God will not permit my supplication to be in vain.

This prayer of the Promised Messiah (on him be peace) shall certainly be accepted and will not prove to be in vain. But reflect whether it find fulfillment in us or in those who will come later? Of what use will it be to us if it is fulfilled in favor only of those who come later? I urge you, therefore, to keep in mind this prayer of the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, and strive your utmost that it may be fulfilled in our own persons, and that we may be comforted with viewing the spectacle that the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, desired to witness.

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I declare this gathering closed with this prayer and grant the participants permission to depart.