

***Journey
Towards Insight***

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PREFACE

Science has made immense progress, yet many believe that, even with all of the modern tools at our disposal, human beings' function at no more than 10% of their mental capacity. This leads to the question of what exactly it is that comprises the remaining 90%. Yet another question that arises is this: If it has taken man four and a half billion years to be able to apply only 10% of his ability, how long will it take for him to make use of the remaining 90%?

This is an era of knowledge. The constant generation of ever-improving and ever-changing inventions makes it abundantly clear that knowledge, creativity, and research are the engines of modern progress. The history of the rise and fall of nations clearly shows that the nations that dedicated the highest degree of energy and resources to the pursuit of knowledge were the ones able to advance the frontiers of progress, while those nations that scorned such activity were left behind by history.

Yet with all of the undeniable progress of the human race, so many individual men and women have tumultuous inner lives. Having lost their peace of mind, beset by financial worries, tortured by emotional conflict, imprisoned by addiction, and vulnerable to new fatal diseases of affluence, human beings in the twenty first century seem no less fearful today than their forbears were many centuries ago. An avalanche of fear and insecurity has been loosed upon humankind, crushing so many men and women beneath its oppressive weight.

There are those among scientists and intellectuals who retain a strong measure of compassion for Allah's creatures. Those among them who wish to follow this tender calling of their heart and save God's creatures from misery and insecurity can only do so by attaining and applying spiritual knowledge. But in order to do this, they must demonstrate sincerity and purity of intention that is untainted by material desire.

My purpose of writing *Journey Towards Insight* is to shed light on those obstacles that prevent man from encountering and embracing his true-self (i.e., his spirit)—obstacles that have deprived him of his peace of mind, obstacles that have imprisoned him in the shackles of his emotional burdens, obstacles that have turned his life into a living hell. This book attempts to explain how we, as individuals and as a nation, can attain peace, for it is peace that the greatest of all blessings.

Those who establish a relationship with Allah are endowed with His attributes, the chief among which is service to humankind. No prophet of Allah has yet lived who did not devote his life to serving His creatures. One who serves humankind is, in fact, following the practice of Allah. The more passionate one becomes in serving Allah's creatures, the closer one becomes to Allah—He and Allah become friends. It is this friendship which releases him from the bonds of all fear and grief. It is this friendship that enables him to attain a peace of mind and heart that has value beyond measure.

Glossary of Arabic Terms

Abbrv.	Term	Translation
<i>Saw</i>	<i>Sawllaho alaihi wa ala Aalhi wassalam</i>	'Peace be upon him and his progeny' [This salutation is reserved for Prophet Muhammad saw]
<i>Ra</i>	<i>Radi allah taala anho</i>	'May Allah be pleased with him'
<i>As</i>	<i>Alaihis-Salam</i>	'On whom be Allah's peace'
	<i>Rahmatullah alaih</i>	'On whom be Allah's mercy'
	<i>Hadhrat /Hazrat</i>	An honorary address, used especially for religious figures.
	<i>Sahib</i>	A polite address
	<i>Hadith-e-Qudsi</i>	a saying of the Holy Prophet narrating a direct revelation from God

Religion and Our Generation

During the caliphate of Hadhrat Umar (r.a.), a woman brought her to him and said:

"O Leader of the Righteous [Ameer-ul-Momineen']! My son eats too much sugar. If we run out of sugar, he keeps on asking for it, and it causes me a great deal of worry."

Ameer-ul-Momineen, Hadhrat Umar, thought about it for a moment and then said: "Bring your son back in a week."

The lady returned after a week. Hadhrat Umar addressed the child, "Son, eat less sugar and don't insist on it. Your mother is worried about you." He then said to the child's mother: "You can take him now; he won't bother you again."

Those present in that company asked:

"O Ameer-ul-Momineen, you made that woman wait for a week to say only that; whereas, you could have said the same thing the first day!"

Hadhrat Umar "replied;

"I used to eat too much sugar myself. I reduced my intake of sugar to a minimum and followed that restriction for a week to make it a strong habit. Had I on the first day instructed that child that he should eat less sugar, my advice would not have worked on him. Now the advice will have effect on him, and he will follow it."

In this age of uncertainty, misery, worry, and insecurity, it becomes clear that, (as) we observe that people advising youth as well as adult acquaintances to stay away from sin while not following their own counsel, that the advice falls on deaf ears because we ourselves do not follow it.

There is an outcry all around that the present generation has turned away from Islam—that it does not follow the path of its ancestors. Why do we forget that we too are counted among this generation's ancestors?

If the present generation has strayed away from the teachings of the beloved Prophet (saw), it is more our fault than theirs. Everyone knows that lying is wrong and that usurping wrongfully inflated profits and participating in the black market constitutes a swindling of the rights of Allah's servants. However, lying has become a means to achieve success and prosperity in our lives. And pocketing profits in excess of the limits prescribed by the Quran has become a kind of science. When children see that their parents chant the teachings of Allah and his Prophet from their lips, while their actions run counter to those teachings, the only conclusion their progressive minds can arrive at is that religion is merely the verbal expression of ideas and concepts; and that it has nothing to do with action.

Chaos and commotion is rampant in the world. Every person is trapped in this problem or that. Peace of mind no longer exists. The prevailing perception of insecurity has thickened the shadows of sorrow and grief. Newspapers publish reports on a daily basis of accidents and loss of precious human life. At times

we hear the heart-wrenching and horrifying news of buildings that once reached the sky, falling to the ground and killing hundreds of God's servants. In light of all this, it is not difficult to speculate that we are under attack by earthly and heavenly calamities. On the surface, we explain the occurrence of these terribly tragic incidents by reasoning that they are the result of the greed of those who constructed buildings [with cheap faulty material] or the result of natural movement and changes within the earth. But if one looks at it from the perspective of a devout Muslim, one realizes that according to God's declaration, it is the crimes and misdeeds of those dwelling in human society that invite such earthly and heavenly calamities.

When a nation deviates from the laws prescribed by God and starts to ignore the distinction between good and evil, the citizens of that nation start to suffer weakness in their power to believe. Eventually a time comes when their power to believe is completely extinguished and doubt and suspicion penetrate their belief system. Due to these doubts and suspicions the nation becomes a victim of superstitions. When superstition takes hold of people, it brings with it many kinds of doubts and fears, the logical conclusion of which is greed and base desires. Such greed and base desires take a person to that point where uncertainty and superstition gain a complete control over him. This is the point where a person becomes deprived of the real joys of life, and it is no longer God but superficial and material means, which become the Centre of his life. And when a nation's complete dependence is on material means, then an unending series of earthly and heavenly calamities will naturally occur, leading to annihilation of such nations.

We should not forget that Allah the Exalted tells us to stay away from doubt and uncertainty. This is the same doubt and uncertainty which Adam (a.s) was commanded to stay away from, Eventually Satan lured Adam" into the trap of doubt and uncertainty and, as a result, Adam (A.S)· Lost the blessings of heaven.

Fireworks

In today's sitting, let's call ourselves to account and try to figure out why our hearts are deprived of peace and contentment, and why do feelings of insecurity constantly surrounds us.

Our heart becomes restless when we see that each person is lost in a maze of thoughts, oblivious of his surroundings, displaying the image of sadness and grief on his face, absorbed in his own world. Those who have much and those who have little are equally afflicted. Monstrous shadows of illness, worries, vanity, and inferiority complex, hold us tight in their clutches. In short, there are as many problems as there are people, but they do share one thing in common: None is at peace. On the forehead of each are deep creases of discontent, Insecurity, and feelings of loss. Each stands as one defeated; each stand as an image of hatred and contempt. Greed for wealth and the ever-increasing demand and expectation to raise one's standard of living, has turned this world into hell for the progeny of Adam. Nations greedy for power have spent profligate sums of money for showy displays of fireworks in the name of human welfare and development, while teeming masses of humanity are afflicted with hunger and poverty.

Why is this negative thinking so common today that a person is not happy with the things he has. Why does he run after things in pursuit of which he is forced to stray away from a life of moderation? There is only one answer to that: We are deprived of the blessings of patience [*sabr*] and the reliance upon God and the acceptance of His will [*istaghna*]. Allah the Exalted says:

**Surely, Allah is with those who patiently persevere
[The Holy Quran, chapter 2: verse 153]**

This means that those who are not patient and at peace with. Allah's will, who are not grateful for what they have, and who are not content with what they have, move away from Allah. This distance from Allah means the loss of peace and wellbeing and the loss of contentment of heart. This loss causes one to become unfamiliar with the pleasure of patience and contentment with the will of Allah. This patience and contentment is the sword with which we can cut the shackles that bind us, the obstacles that impede us, and the insecurity that strangles our spirit. When a person acquires the treasure of patience and contentment, trials and tribulations lose their hold on him. And when patience and contentment become an integral part of a nation, the society within that nation collectively reforms, and begins a sure and steady march towards true progress and prosperity.

Keep in mind that happiness and peace of heart are not something external. This is an internal feeling. When we gain familiarity with this internal feeling, we are suffused with peace and contentment. When he gains familiarity with this all-embracing style of thought, a person frees himself from hellish life

of trials and tribulations and becomes aware of that true joy and happiness which is the right and the inheritance of those who possess this way of thinking.

It is proven from heavenly scriptures and all revealed books that Allah the Exalted has created this universe with love, when one ponders the formulas of the creation of the universe, every facet of life appears an image of love and sincerity, from the beginning until the end, the entire life of a human being, for whose sake this entire universe has been created, is established along two [opposing] aspects [or two differing outlooks]. Adopting one of these outlooks brings a person closer to the creator of the universe, whereas, adopting the other outlook moves a person away from his Creator.

It is related in a Hadith-e-Qudsi ['a saying of the Holy Prophet(saw) narrating a direct revelation from God'] that Allah the Exalted says; I was a hidden treasure, thus I created creatures with love I may be known." The point under consideration here is that Allah the Exalted says that, 'I have created with love,' which means that the only means to recognize Allah the Exalted is love, and thus the emotion which leads away from Allah the Exalted is 'hatred,' in opposition to love. The teachings of the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah he upon him, are beacons of light, showing humanity the right and true path. It has been the mission of Gods prophets to train the minds of Allah's creatures in such a way that they develop amongst themselves brotherhood, selflessness, sincerity, and love for one another.

A society in which love holds a prominent place always remains peaceful, whereas societies where estrangement and hatred prevail remain forever inflicted with mental chaos and insecurity.

Love is Sincerity, hatred is entirely composed of anger, wrath, and revenge. Anger is also a form of hatred. It is stated in Holy Quran that

Allah the Exalted loves those benevolent people who control their anger and forgive others [The Holy Quran, chapter 3: verse 134].

One aspect of hatred is prejudice. The Holy Prophet (saw) said person who lived with prejudice and died with prejudice is not from me." In other words, the one who is prejudice will lose the intercession of the Holy Prophet (saw).

Since love is a means to achieve a peaceful life and a peaceful heart, a person in whom this delicate energy of love circulates remains safe from trials, tribulations, and serious illnesses, and his face develops a special attractive quality. In contrast, the impure, intense, and scorching waves of hatred burn the human face and in fact, make one's mind so heavy, distressed and gloomy that the life-giving beneficial waves bestowed on him by Allah the Exalted become poisoned and venomous. On account of this poison, a person suffers from many kinds of obstacles, and many types of diseases.

A detailed account of diseases caused by hatred would make for very gruesome reading. The biggest misfortune borne out of hatred is that a person moves away from his Creator, and this distance causes his expulsion from the circle of Ashraf-ul-makhlooqat ['best of the creation' —a distinction bestowed on

humans by Allah' and into the realm of lowliness and beastliness. Hatred mutilates the human face, and among the diseases which develop within a person due to this satanic emotion are cancer, various forms of fistula, and many other such untreatable ailments, in which a person is trapped and dies in pain and misery.

Mother

This humble servant addresses you every month on a different topic. In today's sitting I would like to say something about the mental worries, feelings of insecurity, fear, and despair about the future that are faced by the Muslim population.

Seeing the sad, sorrowful, and lifeless faces, it appears as if we are travellers who have no destination. But if we adopt the beautiful ways of the Islamic lifestyle, we can bring an extraordinary power of attraction to our faces. Not only the Muslims, but other nations as well have been attracted to the enlightening ways of Islam and have been pulled towards this religion that manifests truth. Just as surely, as air, water, and light, the faith of Islam is the common inheritance of all people. But it is not enough to verbally declare this. A show of selflessness and other actions consistent with such a declaration must also follow.

In today's modern and technological age, reverence and respect for parents and elders is decreasing every day. This is the first in a series of steps which leads to the deterioration and loss of Islamic moral values. According to God's command, the Holy Prophet (saw) has composed, for his followers in particular and for humanity in general, principles that are clear and illuminating. The practice of these principles will shield us from mental chaos, nervous tension, confusion and worry.

Once, while the Holy prophet (saw) was distributing meat, a woman arrived. The Holy Prophet (saw) left his task and spread his mantle [or 'un-sewn outer covering'] on the ground, and, with immense respect and reverence, asked the honourable lady to sit on that mantle. *Hadhrat* Abu Tufail (r.a) says that he asked people [regarding the lady], "Who is this honorable personality?" Those present there told him that, "this revered woman is the 'mother' who nursed the Holy Prophets" on her milk, as an infant."

In regards to the kind treatment of parents, in chapter Bani Israeel, Allah says,

**"And your Lord has commanded that,
'worship none but Him, and show kindness to parents."
[The Holy Quran, chapter 17: verse 23]**

Show of gratitude towards one's benefactor is the first requirement of decency, and the truth is that the tangible cause of our existence is our mother and father, under whose supervision and with whose upbringing we grow and reach mental maturity. Considering the extraordinary sacrifice, unparalleled effort, and the exceptional love and selflessness they display in the upbringing and the training of their children, justice demands that our hearts be filled with reverence, gratitude, and love towards them, and every fibre of our being be thankful to them. This is the reason why, along with the command to show

thankfulness towards Him, God has instructed that we be thankful towards our parents.

We are also commanded to show kindness and respect towards our parents' friends. We are instructed to acknowledge their advice with respect. The Prophet" of Allah has said:

**'The highest virtue is that a person should
be benevolent towards his father's friends.'**

[Muslim]

When we make a garment, regardless of whether it is constructed of a cotton fabric, wool, or nylon, its purpose is to cover ourselves. Similarly, in order to keep itself hidden, the spirit ['rooh'] has made up a garment, and this garment is our body, which is composed of flesh and bones. Just as, without a body, a garment has neither significance nor its own movement, in the same way, the garment of the spirit has significance only as long as the spirit gives it significance. When we wear a jacket or a coat, it is not possible that while that coat is on our body, we can move our arm without the sleeve moving along with it. It is also not possible for us to hang that coat on a peg or put it down on a bed, and for it to move of its own accord. A garment's significance remains only as long as it adorns a body. Just like a woollen or cotton garment, all the movements of a garment composed of flesh [which is our body] are dependant on the spirit. As long as the spirit remains in the body, the body moves about and shows sign of life as soon as the spirit breaks its relationship with the body, the body becomes no more significant than a coat hanging on a peg.

If an intelligent, mentally competent, adult does not know who his parents are, then regardless of how capable and intelligent he is, a feeling of loss and deprivation surrounds him. And feelings of loss and deprivation create such a huge vacuum in a person's life that eventually such a person becomes mentally ill. Whether insanity is on a small scale or large, such a person would still be called insane.

Although we are aware of the fact that we exist, but we are unaware of the reality of who created us. Suppose we say that, 'our creator is Allah,' then that would be just like saying that the body of flesh and bones is the real person, whereas that person has no significance of his own. This person is under the control of the spirit, whereas the spirit is hidden from our worldly eyes. Merely offering lip service that, 'our creator is Allah,' does not fulfill the requirements of acceptance of one's Creator. That person who has no idea of who his parents are will similarly say that, 'his parents gave birth to him.' If we are not familiar with our spirit, then declarations of Allah as the Creator and the Lord would be based merely on our speculation. How tragic is the fact that in society, a person whose parents are not known is not given any status. Yet, at the same time, the best that many of us are able to do is to offer lip service when remembering Allah, the Exalted, while we consider ourselves *Ashraf-ul-Makhlooqat* ['best of the creation']. Allah is He whose hearing we listen with, whose vision we see with, and whose heart [favvad] we think with. Yet we consider it unnecessary to recognize the God who gives us birth, who raises us with his special favour and blessings, and who protects us, while He himself has announced:

**"And those people who strive in Our path--We surely
guide them in Our ways." [The Holy Quran, chapter 29: Verse 69]**

It has been the mission of all prophets, on whom be peace, and all Godly men that, just as people have familiarity with their parents, they should gain an understanding of their Creator.

Test

Misery and helplessness has trapped humanity in its monstrous clutches even though, among Allah's creatures, humans have been bestowed blessings so great and powerful that the earth, the skies, and the mountains humbly refused to bear their weight. According to the laws of Allah the Exalted, when a nation strays from the right path, it must endure heavy tests. In order to protect itself from such trials, tribulations and insecurity, it will search for those paths which lead towards peace and prosperity.

This world is an examination room. Here, intentionally or unintentionally, every person is involved in some kind of a test. For each person, the objective is to succeed in his test and determine a direction for his life. One person may be wealthy, another poor, helpless and sick. Yet another may be lacking in respect for his parents or elders. All these circumstances constitute tests for these individuals.

The universe has been created along a bipolar continuum; going from one end of the continuum to the other means progressing through one stage. And stepping from one stage to the next stage is a test. Try to picture that child in your mind who, when presented his test sheet in the examination room, starts to cry and wail instead of writing, protesting bitterly as to why he is being tested.

The growth, progress, and prosperity of humanity, is not possible without achieving the strength that comes only after going through hardships. Gold becomes purified only after passing through blazing fires. Had humanity not passed through the fires of hardship, people would still be dwelling in caves.

A person cannot solve his problems without being willing to do so. All prayers, incantations, and medicines serve only one purpose: to strengthen the will power of the supplicant, whether he is physically ill or mentally troubled. He may in fact be strengthened so much so that he can escape from the maze of his problems and issues, as he gains the mental clarity required to become truly free.

All the great people who have lived in this world were faced with one issue or another, but they were well aware of the fact that problems only remain problems until a person achieves mental focus and a life of peace. Trials and tribulations lose their hold on such people who make the service of God's creatures their primary mission. Serve someone who is needy and helpless, and you will see how much peace you achieve as a result. Helping others and being of service to them is the height of humanity, and it is to spread this mission that Allah the Exalted has sent one hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets, whose message it is that,

'Allah the exalted has created human beings in His likeness, and service towards humanity is service towards Allah.'

**Do not be fooled by the mirage of existence, Asad
The universe, entirely, is a confinement created by the enticements
of the imagination**

[Couplet by Mirza Asad-Ullah Ghalib]

An examination of life leads us to only one conclusion: that the image of a person is composed of colours derived from a wide variety of thoughts. It is thought that brings us close to a joyous life; and it is thought that makes us familiar with a sorrowful life. It is said that science has reached the pinnacle of progress, but today's scientists are saying the same thing which the bearers of spirituality had declared thousands of years ago, and the propagation of which is the mission of their followers even today—that *matter* has no significance. Life is established on the basis of waves, and these waves, dressed in thoughts, take on the form of things. What we see in these images made of matter is imaginary—a mere trick of the eye. The saviour of humanity, the benefactor of mankind, Holy prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, unlocked this mystery 1400 years ago when he recited these words of Allah's revelation:

Allah is the light (wave) of the heavens and the earth.

The Holy Quran, [chapter 24: verse 35]

Man, who considers himself *Ashraf-ul-Makhlooqat* ['best of the creation'], would, were he to ponder over his beginning and his end, soon realize that the first building block of his existence was laid in decay and putridity, and the culmination of his existence is that his beautiful body becomes the feed of insects. In spite of this open and clear reality, how many from among the people contemplate over their beginning and their end? If one studies the depth of imagination of people, one can see that each person is lost in the imaginary world of selfish gain. Most people have only one desire, only one focus in their lives: Wealth, wealth, and only wealth. This wealth is in fact a pit of quicksand, and if any man should fall into it, he will not emerge from it with his higher senses intact.

Those people, who accumulate silver and gold and do not spend it in the way of Allah, are eventually tormented with painful punishment. There is nothing wrong with acquiring wealth. The tragedy is that we now regard wealth as everything and the poison created by the ills of this perception is coursing like blood through the veins of society. This is the reason that today we crave even a fleeting moment of peace, and feelings of insecurity have surrounded us from all sides. Wealth has violated the sanctity of human relationships. It is a mad race in which, riding the imaginary horse that glorifies lust and greed, we are being driven towards fire.

In every age, the wise have spoken against the greed for wealth. Quran has called it *hatamah* ["crushing torment, hellfire;" chapter 104], the flames of which rise like pillars that overpower the heart and incinerate the man. The wealth that is not "*hatamah*," like the bright sun, or a star-lit night, or the coolness of the moon, or like the scented breeze, is that peaceful heart that has no greed or avarice, that stays away from lies, that has the yearning to help others as well, and that wishes to live for God's creatures. It is these kind hearted people who are blessed with peace of heart and mind, and their constructive thought is the thought of Allah. In their view, all people are their kin. They see Allah's *noor* ['pure light'] in everyone. Their life is a compilation of such bright and pure thoughts that have no impurity in them. Hell created by greed and sin finds no room for them. Their life has the kind of serenity that is felt by an infant in his mother's arms. Try to break free of these chains of greed, and avarice, and love of wealth, and see how much peace you find. No person in the world is bad; only thoughts are good or bad. If you have wealth, spend it in the way of Allah on suffering, weeping, and ailing humanity. Be thankful for whatever you have. Do not dwell over what you don't have. Rise above against feelings of inferiority. The standard for worthiness, nobility, and purity is not wealth, but each person's pure and living thoughts.

Kingship

I want to tell you the formula by use of which an insignificant person assumes the status of Ashraf-ul-makhlooqat ['best of the creation'] and steps into the kingship of Allah the Exalted, and with the continual practice of which he attains the position of a member in Allah's kingship.

Have you ever wondered what Allah the Exalted does?

Allah, as a Creator, is at all times and at each moment busy in the service of His creation. As we span life from birth till death, it can be seen that, in the mother's womb, in infancy and childhood, in youth and adulthood, and in old age, Allah the Exalted provides all the means which are necessary for a person. May it be air, or light of the sun, or light from the moon, or the earth's ability to produce resources, each based on a centre and according to a law, is responsible for the service of mankind. This continual service is established and maintained according to a specific system and law of Allah Almighty—a law which Allah the Exalted has set up Himself, and which He continues Himself.

It is an observed fact that when we want nearness to someone, we adopt their habits and behaviour. If you want to befriend someone who is punctual in offering *salaat* ['Muslim form of prayer'], you start offering *salaat* with him, whereas, if you want to befriend someone who likes to play cards, you start playing cards with him. The point is that if we want the company of Satan, we start liking the traits of `Satan, whereas, if we want the nearness of *Rahmaan* ['Allah the gracious'] we take on the habits and traits of *Rahmaan*. And the habit of *Rahman* is that He is at all times engaged in the service of His creation.

Hence, if you wish to gain familiarity with Allah, your Creator, and if you wish to rule the universe by virtue of your nearness to Him, then make the service of Allah's creatures your way of life. Indeed, those who have love for Allah's creatures are friends of Allah, and a friend always showers his friend with favours and graciousness.

"That is Allah's grace; He bestows it upon whomsoever He pleases; and Allah is the Lord of immense grace."

[The Holy Quran]

In relation to history, an important aspect of all the cultural progress that humanity has made up until now is the assessment of the present and the identification of the future. All fields of knowledge that are in practice today, in one way or the other, are doing their part in the struggle to improve the present and to guarantee a secure future, for mankind. It is said that the study of history is the most significant area of knowledge.

Today, we know that many civilizations, much more advanced than ours, lived on this earth and then became extinct, and only their traces remain. It is not just the research on prehistoric times that mentions these destroyed nations; rather, the consistent and continuous history of humanity is full of countless such examples.

When we investigate the factors responsible for the complete destruction of these nations, it becomes apparent that the nations whose relationship grew strong with the world and weak with their Spirit were eventually overpowered by greed. Worldly want becomes the purpose of life for such nations, and the entire society in such nations is trapped in an unending race of greed from which there can be no escape. Decency and nobility, righteousness and purity, all lose their significance; and the one who has the greatest accumulation of wealth, and the one who has the most items of comfort and luxury, whether necessary or not, is seen with respect and esteem in the society, whereas, not a single individual can deny that this is all temporary and imaginary and, in the end all such material goods must be left behind. None of the things goes along with the person, and the one thing that does go along which he can use to live with peace and the comfort in the next world he goes without. Those people who have no inheritance to take along to the next world are surrounded by trials and tribulations in this world in such a way that life becomes difficult. Sorrow and misery attacks them in horrible forms and turns them into the walking dead. When this situation moves from the individual level to the society as a whole, nations are either destroyed or the faces of their citizens appear damaged beyond recognition.

Love this world turns them into cowards. They become afraid of the real life that is death. Narcissistic, aimless, disorderly, mischief-making, cruel and unjust behavior becomes common. Other nations entangle them in many kinds of conspiracies, trapping them with enticements of wealth, and eventually driving these weak-hearted nations to extinction.

Trust

Friends!

We were never so badly dependent on each other's prayers as we are today. Every individual in each home is restless and agitated. Have you ever entertained the question as to why this is so? When moral values break and disintegrate and a person becomes removed from his spirit, materialism overpowers and surrounds his being. What is *matter*? It is a collection of elements, and is by its nature always changing. Have you ever witnessed matter stable, in one form? Indeed, it was for the purpose of bringing about constant change that matter was created. The more a thing displays change, the further removed it is from truth and reality. There is no change in truth or reality. Reality stands independent ('*Qaaem-bizzat*'), without external support. A thing that stands independent as such is not influenced by the upheaval and the alterations of the environment. What is a human being? He/she is spirit. What is spirit? Spirit is the Work ('*amr*') of Allah. What is the work of Allah? Work of Allah is the Will of Allah. What is Allah's Will is that when he intends to create something He says, 'Be,' and it is.

Employing even a little bit of reflection, makes it clear as daylight that we, individually and collectively, are spirits in the work of Allah. The Work of Allah is the Will of Allah, and when Allah's Will comes into motion, universal phenomena begin to arise, and they arise in such large numbers that worldly counting cannot number them.

Now, when we look at our environment, the environment of our homes, our sorrowful lives full of difficulties, our confused, distressful and past-ridden thoughts, we are left with only one conclusion, that we have imprisoned our lives in a material bubble. We have severed our relationship with the spirit almost completely. How unfortunate is humanity that even though it has everything, it is poor and penniless, empty-handed and close-minded; it has eyes, yet it is blind. Even though it knows that the relationship with *matter* is temporary, it has made it its purpose of life.

Everyone knows that after a set time, no matter what, in the blink of an eye, we will pass away from this world and will be forced to relinquish all material comforts and luxuries.

O mankind! God's Nature has been so gracious and merciful to you that at each step it has opened doors of knowledge for you, and to take you in its protective embrace it has sent one hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets--Alas, if only you contemplate over what you have gained and what you have lost!

O disobedient children of Adam and Eve! You are immersed in that putrid pond of disobedience where there is only loss for you, both of the world and of the faith. Indeed, this loss is the impure and unsightly mark of human misfortune.

Friends!

Come, let us find that inheritance of ours, the weight of which neither the heavens, nor the earth and the mountains, could bear to carry--that inheritance, before which the heavens and the earth, the sun, the moon and the stars, all stand in obedience. This trust [bestowed upon mankind] is present in our spirit, above and beyond the confines of *matter*.

Self-abandonment

Who were we? Who are we? And, why are we the way we are? These are the kinds of questions that frequent the mind of every intelligent and aware person. And in the absence of a satisfactory answer, many a people lose their way. As a penalty for their lack of understanding, not only do they fall victim to self-abandonment, but they also end up denying the Being that provides life energy to every single part of this entire machinery of existence. That everlasting Being which Being a single empowers a single drop of blood with so much strength, awareness, and intellect that outer space comes within its grasp and reaching for the stars becomes its pastime. And the same drop of blood, when desires, gives so much significance to an unspeakably small particle of matter that its value becomes greater than hundreds of thousands of living breathing men. And when the awareness to build and create comes into play, the same drop of blood magnificently rises and surpasses the peaks of the heavens; the universe stands before it wit, it lewd, and the angels stand before it with heads bowed in servitude.

In the bipolarity of construction and destruction, when this unmentionably minute particle [of blood] descends into the depths, it becomes plagued with greed, and the monster of insatiable desire to raise the material status of life consumes it completely. All its mental energy is focused on everything that lies outside the limits of morality. It conjures up terrible Innovations and inventions that are masterpieces of demonic proportions. All the constructive abilities of the brain, dressed in the demonic robe of destruction, wreck havoc on Allah's earth.

Indeed, the present age is clear proof of this. How heart. Wrenching is it that, during the blessed month of Ramadhan, we continued to hear such news every day as would make us wonder what kind of loathsome and trampled individuals we have become? And when we see that it is our youth that is involved in this ruin of society, our heart aches and cries out that all this is happening because we have turned our faces away from our teachings. We don't pay any heed to that treasure of knowledge, the acquisition of which instils peace and serenity in a person, and every part of his being rejoices.

What kind of life is it, which leads one to live without being plagued with the feelings of insecurity, and without being touched by the monstrous effects of an inferiority complex without being overpowered by any fear, and without finding one's self engulfed in the clouds of sorrow and misery?

The problem today is that the present generation has reached such a high level of mental maturity that it refuses to accept anything that is presented to it against the laws of nature. Scientific advancement has greatly matured human awareness. When the mature and aware individuals of our young generation attempt to comprehend the knowledge inherited from their ancestors, they are silenced and reprimanded, and are told that religion does not tolerate such inquisitive meddling, whereas, quite on the contrary, the Holy Quran invites contemplation at each and every step of the way. On the other hand, when they observe the life of their elders on whose shoulders rests the responsibility of the moral training and upbringing of this generation, they experience a deep sense of loss at seeing that there is a great distance between what is preached and what is practiced. Thus disappointed, they adopt a way of life which clashes with the sentiments of our elders, who know of the right path. We, as elders, repeatedly declare that the younger generation has no respect left for the elders, that they are devoid of that love and brotherhood upon which an exemplary society can be built.

By God, we should look within our own selves! Try to see the difference that has grown between our own words and our deeds. Although we have the power to assert our authority and change this life of hypocrisy, we stand idly by. Why do we expect something of our children which we ourselves are unable to follow? Today, if a father lives a life of lies himself, how can he expect that his children will live their lives truthfully and aware of the right path?

We lack courage, we steal by means of trickery and fraud. When a youngster takes the same hypocrisy to the next level and steals the cars of worshippers offering taraaviah prayers in the mosque, and when he gets involved in some murder, we cry out and lament that the youth has gone astray. Our children are not born as murderers, thieves, hoarders, hypocrites, smugglers, from the belly of their mothers. They have progressed to the level of an art, what they have seen in their elders. Entire columns of newspapers and books with hundreds of pages are being written on the claim that it is all for the sake of reformation of the younger generation. We declare that if, along with these gigantic claims of reformation, the elders do not truly reform themselves, and the situation will not improve. Why do we forget that the mind of a child, when he is born, is like a clean slate, and it adopts the same habits and ways that are present in the environment. Not one person will deny that a child speaks the same language as is spoken by his parents.

In order to reform and refine our environment, it is necessary that we reform ourselves first. We must prove with our words and action that we are among those individuals of the society who have heeded proper guidance and are walking on the right path. In reality, our youth is a clear reflection of our own character as a nation.

Holy and exalted is He who has created us with predetermined measures, and has graced those measures with the praiseworthy qualities which he finds pleasing as the ultimate Creator. He is the one who placed us in that honoured group that pleased Him, and gave us the ability to call to our Lord, and to keep the fast [of Ramadhan] —that fast for which He Himself is the reward.

Honourable are those who attained the blessings of holy Ramadhan —those who with all the dedication of their heart, spent their days and nights remembering Allah, and who treated their brothers with kindness and were of service to them.

Prayer

This concept of science is so common now that even if a student of early years is asked, he will at once reply: Everything, each action, each trait, even the sound of our voice, and each word uttered by our tongue, remain afloat, in the form of waves in the environment.

If we are somehow able to increase the wavelength of sound above 1600 or decrease it below 400, we will be able to listen to the voices of our ancestors who passed away hundreds of thousands of years ago, and will be able to convey our desires and wishes to them.

Prayers is also a desire and a wish. Its aim is to reach that Holy and Greatest being who holds the reins of everything. He is Omnipotent — He can, whenever He wishes, and however He can, whenever alter the system of operation of this universe. Some 1400 years ago, when Muslims were famous for the greatness of this universe. Some of their character, devotees of Islam were gaining dominance over the world of non-believing oppressors. Such was their awe and majesty that the guards of Bait-al-Magdis [The Dome of the Rock] presented to them the keys of the Holy House of Allah, on their own accord. Then a time came when this nation which once stood strong as an indestructible wall, fragmented into different sects. The purity in the character of the Muslims eclipsed and the Muslims began to recoil. 'They recoiled so much that the fabric of their organization disintegrated.

From the time we gained awareness of life, as far back as we can remember, our eyes and ears have witnessed only one thing, whether it be in mosques, or personal gatherings, or on pulpits, or in crowds of hundreds of thousands, a single prayer is being repeated that, 'O, Allah give us victory over the enemy!' Another thing which we have heard since childhood is that, 'Oppressors are maghdhoob ['under wrath of Allah']; they will never be able to rule.' This is the commentary usually presented for:

**[' ...those who have not incurred Thy displeasure,
And those who have not gone astray.']
[The Holy Quran, Chapter 1: verse 07]**

Friends, what a travesty it is that strangers are constantly trampling our identity by means of violence, cruelty and injustice, while we are moving along a path of constant degradation and turning into the living image of the verse:

**['Then, if he does evil deeds, we degrade him as the lowest of the low.']
[Holy Quran, Chapter 95: verse 05]**

Miles away from practice, we have made mere verbal utterance of prayer our sole means of support and reliance.

Just as sounds are left echoing in the environment, prayer unaccompanied by action, character, and sincerity, is also unable to escape the confines of this earth. According to the laws of Allah the Exalted, only that prayer is given acceptance in His court which is congruent with continuous and unending actions of the supplicant. The pure and holy life of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, stands before us. The reason for the creation of the universe, the beloved Prophet of Allah, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not teach us mere verbal calculations. He presented the elevated and exalted model of life with continuous action and struggle. We are ever ready to make verbal claims, but when it comes time for action, we are as good as thorns on a plant, not its fruits and flowers. Who does not know that lying, nepotism, unlawful hoarding, backbiting, causing disputes to break relationships, looking down on others, and surrendering to the enticements of material gain in one's life, all result in agonizing misery. Yet we are running towards this hell. The heavenly caller is beckoning us, warning that the direction we are headed leads to hardship, but alas, even though we know and understand everything, we have turned our lives into a hell.

The divine guide, the king of prophets, the all-merciful, benefactor of humanity, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had told of a person who after completing a long journey, reaches for the pilgrimage of holy places. Wrapped in layers of dust and dirt, he raises both his hands towards the heavens and says:

'O, my Lord! "O, my Lord!'

Even though his food is haraam ['forbidden' or 'acquired by forbidden means'], his drink is haraam, his clothes are haraam, and it was with haraam means that his body became nourished and grew, so how can the prayer of such a person be accepted?

In today's society, the way we earn a living, our style of living, our standard of living, and our words and deeds are all too clearly at great discrepancy with the life of the Prophet of Allah".

Microfilm

Just like the solar system, the human system also has a point of focus—a centre. In order to reveal the system and the centre of mankind, it is essential that we become familiar with that law based on which every moving planet of this system orbits around its centre.

[Like in the solar system], in the human system also, many planets orbit around their centre, and as a result, a vast multitude of people revolve around them. This act does not rein; in limited to this world alone, in the heavens as well only those names are called out that are focused on their centres.

The Prophet (saw) of Allah has said:

When Allah loves a servant, He conveys to Gabriel" that, 'I am freinds with such and such a person; you be his friend also.' Then Gabriel also loves him and sends a call to the dwellers of the heavens, so they also grow fond of him and make him their beloved. And when the love for him is announced in the heavens, the hearts of those on earth are also opened towards him, and he gains love and acceptance among all. [Bukhari and Muslim]

These are those pure-natured people belonging to mankind who are aware of the galactic system working within them. When a person reaches on inner awareness, and the curtain of space and time lifts from his eyes, he is able to see that all is present within him Within the human person is a point and this point is a microfilm of the universe. When this point is allowed to expand and broadcast, the entire universe comes into motion on the screen of the human mind

A beautiful and fitting example of this point is the seed of the Banyan ['strangler fig'] tree. When the earth gives it warmth, according to a special process, the seed of the Banyan tree, which is even smaller than a poppy seed, breaks free of its outer covering and the seedling of the Banyan tree appears from within. Then this seedling grows into a tree so large that a large group of men can stand under it. When a seed tinier than that of a poppy can hide an entire Banyan tree within then what kind of wonders must be hidden within a human being who is Ashraf-ul-makhlookat ['best of the creatures']?

The beneficence of nature exists for the benefit of everyone. All that is desired happens. Nature is, at every moment, busy guiding mankind. If we can discover the atom, distribute sound waves across the entire world, and create microfilm, then we can also gain the knowledge of that point within us which, like the seed of the Banyan tree, contains a record of the entire universe.

Confines of time and space lose their hold on those servants of Allah who delve into this boundless sea of awareness, and factors which are a product of time, such as sorrows, difficulties, and worries, all break their ties with such people. When a person steps into this realm of action, Allah showers him with favours and bounties, and the entire universe orbits around him.

Worshippers of Wealth

Friends,

Finally, fourteen centuries have come to an end. Just as no one has ever returned after death, the 511,000 days and nights of the fourteen centuries are also gone, never to return. It is incumbent upon us to call to account what we have gained, and what we have lost, in these 1400 years.

The ever-increasing scientific progress has given new heights to the pursuit of knowledge. Now, it is conceivable that man is about to enter that sphere of control over the universe where matter attains a negative value. It has become an observed fact that man is an embodiment of countless lights which adorn him, and it is this adornment of light on which material existence is based. From a superficial perspective, it would seem that man today is much more advanced than the man of 1400 years ago—so advanced that not only has he discovered the wavelengths of sound, but has also mastered the techniques of decreasing or increasing those wavelengths. He has command of sounds with wavelengths above 1600 cycles/second. He has the ability to transmit as waves, that aura of lights which represents the real person, and show it on screen, thousands of miles away, with every feature of that person intact. Space has condensed so much that within a one-inch space (of a microfilm) an entire book consisting of hundreds of pages can be saved. As far as progress in relation to time is concerned, distances of thousands of miles can be travelled within hours.

But when we consider the outcome of all this amazing research and progress, how heart wrenching it actually is!

Friends, what progress! Every face of today is an image of sorrow and despair. Despite all the provisions of comfort and luxury, man is troubled. This progress has disturbed the peace of mankind. Humanity searching for peace is inflicted with so many new diseases. Everywhere one hears the same cry, that man is busy poisoning his fellow man's life. When we compare the undeveloped past of our ancestors with the present time, we experience a deep sense of loss, knowing that they lived with patience and forbearance, and did not fall victim to extremes, as is common today. Granted, they did not enjoy amenities like television sets, VCRs, refrigerators, and other such modern day advances; they did not have clothes as comfortable as we wear today; nor did they have such grand houses as we live in today; but they lived in peace, and were healthy and happy, and were able to sleep peacefully. Each man is his own mirror. The other side of the mirror shows how a few men of "genius" gave so much importance to a tiny atom that it gained more significance than hundreds of thousands of human lives.

Horrific cylinders have been invented by man which can, at the push of a button, deprive an entire city of oxygen, condemning its population to death. While searching for peace, as sleep deprivation took over, the invention of sleep-inducing drugs caused such a state of self-deception that, instead of bringing restful sleep, these drugs drove people out of their senses. The utilization of atomic power gave rise to such diseases as are untreatable, and that are so horrific that their name alone is enough to bring a terrifying death.

Allah the Exalted had said:

O, Adam, dwell you and your wife in heaven, and eat therein plentifully, wherever you will." [Holy Quran chapter 2: verse 35]

'Wherever you will' is indicative of the fact that heaven is free from the confines of time and space. In heaven, Adam has the same ability to free himself of time and space, which science has employed to break free of the confines of space. This is the same ability which has enabled man to venture into the vastness of outer space. This is the same ability which has removed distances.

Since this ability was employed to show one's superiority over others, it has become the cause of worry, inconvenience and hardship for the entire world. If this progress comes with only enough change that it advances purely for the sake of Allah, to serve Allah's creatures, then according to Allah Almighty's statement, the following will come to pass:

"Eat therein plentifully wherever you will."

Within these fourteen centuries, we have come closer to the heavenly ability which frees us from the confines of time and space, but we have gone farther away from that heavenly ability which gives peace of mind and contentment. May God enable the growth of this ability in the fifteenth century—the ability which brings happiness and joy to us at each and every moment—and may we become the living commentary of this verse of the Holy Quran:

O dear ones,

Whatever is present in the world is for your sake. All these Images, adorned with light and colour, are made for us. God has no need for food or drink, clothing or shelter, or provisions of any kind. All these things have been placed at our command so we may enjoy them and prosper from them. But our state is such that we have, instead a servant to this wealth and its benefits. This is the way of thinking we have adopted in these fourteen hundred years.

Come let us promise that in the fifteenth century we will not worship wealth. Instead, we will employ wealth as our servant and slave- a servant known to be unfaithful to all and one that, if it becomes the centre of attention, causes painful torment trails and affections.

27th January

Friends, come, let us speak of the beloved:

The month of January has come before as well, with all exquisiteness, its joy, its happiness, its sadness and sorrow, and its shock of separation, and thus will it continue to repeat in the future also.

The universe forever in motion, if ever stopped for even an instant, would dissolve with all its colour and fragrance into the expanse of its surroundings. In the last ten days of January, there was not a single eye that was not tearful, and there was not a single heart that had not lost its beat momentarily. The material world was in a state of trance, while the heavens carried on a celebration.

On 27th January 1979, when darkness of the night was eager to dissolve into the light of day, Qalander Baba Auliya" went into the heavenly embrace of his eternal Creator.

Once again from the radiance and purity of holy persons by remembering them. A moment's companionship with them is greater than a hundred years of sincere obedience, and after their ascendance into the heavenly world, their remembrance is greater than a thousand years of sincere devotion. This is because the remembrance of such divinely acquainted people Colours the entire being of a person with the realization of closeness with Allah the Exalted.

The Eternal Being, in order to continue and spread His beneficence, creates such servants who preach of the transitory nature of this world. It is their mission to maintain a relationship with the eternal Creator, and to introduce mankind to Him.

In today's sitting, let us talk of that beloved — that kind soul Kindness towards humanity demands that the sound waves of the friend who cared for humanity be spread on the pages of "Voice of a Friend," such that a collective picture emerges before us.

So said Qalander Baba Aulia RA:

"Among mankind, all men, women, children, and the elderly, by virtue of their relation to Adam, are all creative secrets of the Creator of the universe they are brothers and sisters; none greater than the other. Only he is worthy of greatness who has a comprehension of the immensely vast divine knowledge of Allah's attributes; he in whom Allah's attributes reflect with prominence; and he who is of benefit to Allah's creatures, and at whose hands, none suffer."

The one who preaches goodness is good within himself first. Just like a person with bad character whose heart is corrupt in itself, destroys others or commits other evil because of his own corruptness.

The fire of anger first causes irritation in the blood of the one who is angry, so that his senses are affected and lose their energy, or in other words, his life energy is destroyed and causes harm to others. Allah the Exalted does not like any Harm to inflicted on mankind. Allah Almighty states:

"Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men;-for Allah loves those who do good"

[Holy Quran, chapter 3: verse 134]

A candle burns itself first, and when it thus forsakes every moment of its life, moths gather around and give their lives at this sacrifice of the candle.

How can one who does not possess intimate knowledge of the divine impart that knowledge to others? How can one who is penniless and destitute himself, bestow charity on others?

How tragic and horrifying is the act of being happy at causing others harm, whereas, according to our relation with Adam and Eve, this act is tantamount to cutting our own roots. There is only one tree, with countless branches and leaves. If a branch strikes at the root of its own tree, how foolish an act that would be, as it thus places itself in harm's way. If happiness is what we ultimately desire, then how can we ever gain happiness by causing harm to those of our own species!

Every person is related to every other person. Every person is acquainted with every other person because there is an ongoing exchange of "life-giving waves" among them. In a festive gathering where hundreds of people, oblivious of all problems, are joyful and happy, a single person's tragedy can bring sadness to the entire gathering. Why is this so?

This is because all individuals of the species are attached to other like links on a chain. When one link weakens, the entire chain weakens; when one link breaks, until the other link draws close and joins the chain, it can no longer be called by name. The Holy Quran states:

"And hold fast, all together, to the rope of Allah, and be not divided."

[Holy Quran chapter 3: verse 103]

Unity and brotherhood make for a graceful past, a joyous present, and a bright future.

When an artist draws a picture, at first he himself enjoys all the details of that picture. If an artist is not satisfied with his own creation, how can one expect others to be impressed by it? Not only will others not be impressed, they may start to ridicule the unworthy work of art, causing frustration, anxiety, and sorrow to the artist. Do such works which satisfy your own selves, lest your conscience die out. This is the secret by which you can be a source of guidance for others.

All should try and struggle their utmost in their everyday affairs, but without concern for the desired outcome. The outcome should be left to God, since man is a mere pawn in the game of circumstances. Man is forced to live as his circumstances dictate. Indeed Allah is omnipotent and has power over all. He has control over circumstances, and when He wishes, and however He wishes, circumstances change.

If someone causes you pain, forgive him without hesitation because revenge itself is a calamity. The desire to take revenge weakens one's senses.

If you have caused someone pain, seek forgiveness from him, regardless of whether he is young or old. This is because greatness lies in humbling one's self. In light of the Holy Quran:

"Man was an unmentionable thing...Allah breathed into him of His spirit...thus he turned into a hearing, seeing, [and aware human being]."

[Holy Quran chapter 76; verses 1-2; chapter :32: verse 9]

What is spirit? Spirit is Allah's work. Allah's work is that when He intends for a thing to happen He says, "Be," and it is.

A person who has doubt in his heart can never be an Aarif ['one who has intimate divine knowledge'] because doubt is Satan's biggest weapon, with which he moves man away from his spirit. This distance from spiritual traditions closes the doors of knowledge, awareness, and insight of the divine, on man.

On Godly people, ascends the heavenly rain of His mercy and His manifestations. The pure light of their blessings and benevolence illumines a world around them.

Energy

After years of searching and investigation, physical science has revealed that all the energies that operate in the universe, which were considered to be four in number before, are only of three types. Due to lack of knowledge, one type of energy was being identified as two. It was this discovery which won the Pakistani Scientist Doctor Abdus Salam a Nobel Prize in physics.

A view has also come forward that, with the advancement of knowledge and investigation, twenty-five, fifty, or one hundred years from now, science will prove the fact that, in reality, there is only one energy that operates the universe, which due to lack of knowledge was considered to be of four, three, or two types.

Additionally, scientists have invented tools and methods in photography such that pictures taken by their means show that each material object is surrounded by a coloured light, named "aura", the study of which can reveal certain mental and physical states which are hidden from the naked eye.

Thirdly modern psychology has reached that level of discovery where it has revealed that, when human mind focuses on a thought with complete concentration, its subconscious is able to transform that thought into material phenomena.

Everyone knows that, along with all other affairs, the progress of knowledge and discovery is also governed by universal laws. Nations that strive to adhere to these laws achieve prosperity. When the European nations and the United States of America gave precedence to matter confined in [natural] resources, universal laws came into action and started to reveal the concealed abilities and powers of material resources, and thus today these nations have gained superiority based solely on their educational excellence.

Present day science, on the path of exploration and discovery, has come to the conclusion that the entire universe is a manifestation of a single power. This revelation is not new. Many among our ancestors have declared that a single energy controls the universe, and that energy is directly related to Allah the Exalted. The Holy Quran illustrates this reality in these words:

Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth.

[The Holy Quran, chapter 24: verse 35]

When we compare material sciences to the knowledge of our ancestors, we are left standing in awe at witnessing that, about eight centuries earlier, Hadhrat Shah Abdul Qadir Jilani (r.a) was one such great scientist who was familiar with the universal laws, and through whose blessed person, hitherto concealed universal laws were revealed. Today's science, even after having spent billions of dollars, has not been able to discover the ways taught by Hadhrat Shah Jilani (r.a) for the utilization of nature's laws, and the path determined by him to understand these laws.

A key factor in the success and progress of scientific fields of knowledge is the presence of electricity. And now it has become clear that electromagnetic waves are present in every object that exists. These waves operate in varying quantities and ratios in different objects, and a basic energy gives life to these waves. It is these waves which sustain life, and all aspects and movements related to life.

Sheikh Muhiuddin Abdul Qadir Jilani (r.a) " had stated that the earth and the heavens exist on a light which is fed by Allah's noor ('pure light'). If mankind can change the focus of its mind from matter towards that light, man will have the power to ascertain the enormous transcendental abilities stored within him, with the use of which he can not only make subservient all earthly objects, but can utilize the energy and waves within those objects in fulfillment of his needs. The entire universe will come before him in form of a point or a circle. At this stage, man no longer remains dependant on material Resources. Material stand in servitude to him.

When we look at the teachings of the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophets (saw) and then observe the condition of the Muslims, we are left with nothing but disappointment. This is because a great distance lies between the actual teachings of the Holy Quran and the practices of the Muslims. The path determined by the Holy Quran and the path taken by the Muslims, follow two separate lines that never meet.

Allah has made man His vicegerent [or assistant]; He has instilled in him the knowledge of His attributes; He has created him in His own image. Being a vicegerent does not mean that, when the king of a country does not depend on pen and paper in execution of his authority, that this vicegerent should be dependant on pen and paper for execution of his authority.

As Allah rules without dependency on resources, His vicegerent too should be free of dependence on resources. Just as God said 'kun' ['be'] and gave existence to the universe, his vicegerent too, by the activity of his mind, can make use of God's creation. This is because Allah's vicegerent is aware of the fact that all manifestations of the universe are related to same being.

The Muslims, [today], are destitute in direct proportion to the treasure of transcendental knowledge that they possess. The ancestors of the Muslims have left an inheritance of enormous treasures for them to be able to rule and conquer the universe, but they are an unfortunate nation, as they have mistaken these diamonds for stones, rejected them, and have thus lost the ability to benefit from these riches. All of this is because the Muslims have been pushed far away from the path of reflection for certain reasons, and they have reached that point where all their actions are for mere commerce.

How absurd it is that, while the Holy Quran is declaring our rule and sovereignty over the entire universe, and is opening the doors of rule and sovereignty for us, we only use the Holy Quran to adorn our shelves as a book of blessings. When a calamity falls, we recite a few verses from it and pray to be relieved of worldly trials, but our attention is diverted from the fact that,

If we make reflection of the Holy Quran our habit, and step into the field of action based on that reflection, then our rule over the entire universe is guaranteed.

It is a pity that we have disregarded these treasures and have become dependent on others. According to the Holy Quran we have been made rulers over the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, and the heavens all, and have been told ways to achieve this sovereignty, yet in every facet of life we have settled for the crumbs left by others and have considered that the purpose of our life.

Our life has been limited to achieving this world only. Our worship too is reserved only for show and only for the sake of gathering worldly blessings. We give so much importance to the physical aspect of actions, but do not take even a drop from the ocean flowing within. The unmatched sun on the Horizon of knowledge and insight, the expert in the formulas of conquering the universe, Hadhrat Adul Qadir Jilani (r.a), may Allah's mercy be on him, says:

O hypocrites! Listen to the Prophet's message.

'Those of you who sell the hereafter in exchange for this world!

Those of you who sell The Truth in exchange for mere creation!

Those of you who barter the Everlasting for the mortal!

All your commerce is a lost transaction; your wealth is pushing you towards the abyss of complete ruin—how pitiable you are. You are becoming the object of Allah's wrath!

Birds

An observation of the way of thinking of those around us would make one conclusion certain: that each person is distressed about one thing or another. Each is engulfed in feeling of worry and self dismay. Life has become so hectic that the passing of months and years has become secondary. The desire for comfort and luxury has destroyed the identity of man.

Two hundred billion cells in the human mind, with all their and at each step of the way, bring our attention to the fact that this concocted life is a deadly poison, not just for the individual but for the entire human race. But man, the third aspect of the existence of Adam and Eve, does not heed the cries of his mind. It seems as if a seal has been set on the hearts and over the ears, and over the eyes is a covering. Why is this so? And why has mankind taken upon itself such torments? There is but answer to this question:

We have established the accumulation of material wealth as the highest purpose of life.

We know that, like man, birds and mammals are also God's creature. They also have needs. They also get hungry and thirsty O mankind, have you ever wondered how the Provider arranges sustenance for such a large creation?

When a farmer collects his harvest, he tries to gather each morsel of grain. His intention is that not a single piece of grain remain on the ground, yet billions of God's creatures eat to their full and all their nutritional needs are met.

It is Allah's grace that, when a flock of birds dives towards the ground in search of seeds and grain, holding their necks and claws aligned with the force of gravity, before the birds actually reach the ground, their nutritional requirements have been created. Billions upon billions of birds are thus not dependent on resources like man.

How are the nutritional requirements of birds created before they even reach the ground? It is a secret, yet it is a fact which can always be observed by mankind. Beholder of insights into secrets and symbols, Allah's friend, Hadhrat Baba Taj-ud-Deen Nagpuri (rth) captures this fact so beautifully in a couplet! Baba Taj-ud-Deen(rth) " used 'Daas Maloka' as his pen name:

Baba Sahib (R.A) says that four-legged animals do not work for wages, nor do birds conduct commerce, yet it is Allah the Exalted who provides a living for all.

When a seal is set on hearts and ears, no advice is effective, yet what can one do,

["I have been commanded to announce, there is no god, but Allah."]

It is madness that, by sabotaging all values of society, man has considered material wealth the be-all and end-all of his existence. It is equally insane that, Even though no one heeds our advice, we keep on admonishing.

Once, Prophet Jesus (a.s) was traveling for missionary work when a cleric ('mullah') approached him and said; "I would like to join you in your journey."

Hadhrat Jesus(a.s) accepted his request. While on their way as the sun turned hotter and the ground began to scorch their feet. The two travellers stopped and sat under a tree and decided It was a good time to have their meal. The cleric had three pieces of bread before him, while Hadhrat Jesus (a.s) had only two. When the cleric saw that Hadhrat Jesus" had only two pieces lit bread he at once hid his own meal, and said: "O Prophet, I am older in years than you; in comparison I am much weaker. We will need water with our meals. Would you inconvenience yourself and bring some please?"

When Hadhrat Jesus(a.s) went to fetch water, the cleric ate up one piece of bread. When both sat down to eat, Hadhrat Jesus(a.s) inquired, "Did you not have three pieces of bread?" The cleric replied, "No, you are mistaken." Hadhrat Jesus(a.s) remained quiet. After the meal, both lied down to rest. Hadhrat Jesus(a.s) so gathered three piles of sand and blew on them. All three turned into gold. When the cleric woke up, he saw the three piles of gold. With amazement, curiosity, and joyous excitement he asked, "O Prophet, to whom belong these piles of gold?"

Hadhrat Jesus (a.s) replied, "One is mine, one belongs to you, and the third is for the one who ate that third piece of bread."

The cleric responded at once that it was, he who had eaten that third piece of bread. Hadhrat Jesus (a.s) remarked that, "If you ate that piece of bread then two parts of gold are yours, while one part is mine." The cleric went on to say, "You are an honoured servant of Allah—a prophet. What use do you have of gold! Why not give that to me as well."

Hadhrat Jesus (a.s) replied, "If you end your journey with me here, then you may have the third portion as well." And so Hadhrat Jesus (a.s) got up and started to walk away. Jesus (a.s) was still within the view of the cleric when three men appeared and started to beat the cleric. The cleric lamented and complained all he could but the three men paid no heed. All three of them were robbers who were hiding from the law.

After much discussion and argument, it was decided that the three men would take two piles of gold, while the cleric will keep one. Additionally, the robbers set the condition that the cleric would fetch them food from the market, as they were sure he would not betray them because of the greed to collect his gold. Long story short, the cleric started towards the town to fetch food. Boiling with rage, the cleric kept thinking of how the three men had assumed their right on his wealth. He reasoned that they were cruel and ruthless and that it would be a travesty of justice to forgive them. So, after he had bought the food from the market, the cleric poisoned it. While on the other side, the three men conspired to kill the cleric upon his return. They reasoned that there were three piles of gold, so the three of them would make good and rightful owners without the cleric in the middle to spoil the distribution. Without the cleric, they could easily carry on the distribution in equal parts.

As soon as the cleric returned with the poisoned food, one of them killed him, and then the three sat down to eat. They had only taken a few bites when all three of them passed away.

The point under consideration is that the word "cleric" does not apply to any one individual. The Bible has mentioned this to point out a way of thinking of a worldly and greedy man, regardless of the society he belongs to.

Adoration of wealth is stamped on us so prominently that we have become living examples of the cleric. Each person is caught in the greed of this world. The outcome of this avarice has been presented in the story just narrated, and revealed to us like a motion picture. Is there anyone who will heed the warning!

**["So take a lesson, O ye who have eyes."
(The Holy chiral) chapter 59: verse 2]**

Peace

All religions share the common teaching that this world is a place of examination and testing. Peace and joy result for the individuals or nations that succeed in the test; Hellfire awaits those individuals or nations that fail the test.

Whether in the physical world or the world of lights (heaven), in both man has been provided means of luxury and comfort. Just as houses provide shelter for people in this world, in the same way palaces await their occupants in heaven. Just as the fruits of the earth are a means of enjoyment for us here, in the same way grapes, pomegranates and apples are present in abundance in heaven. Just as men and women are a source of peace and contentment for each other in this world, we see in the heavenly world of lights the existence of hoor-o-ghulmaan [beautiful chaste maidens, and handsome male servants']. As sweet water is necessary for our life in the mortal world, heaven presents to us aab-e-Kauthar ['water of the spiritual spring of kauthar. Within the confines of time and space, we experience joy and ecstasy [on the one hand], and sorrow and grief [on the other]. It is these same aspects that are known as heaven and hell in the other world.

Within each person resides the ability of both superficial thinking and deep reflection. When reflection deepens, the only conclusion that becomes apparent is that each person carries with him heaven and hell, and it is related to one's way of thinking. If a person's way of thinking is free and on the pattern of thinking of the prophets (s.w) of Allah, then his entire life becomes heaven. If the way of thinking contains elements that are satanic, one's entire life becomes hell.

Those possessing hoards of gold and silver require the same amount of food to eat and the same amount of fabric to cover their bodies as those bereft of wealth. A person living in a mansion consisting of ten rooms sleeps on a single bed [like any other ordinary person]. No single person, no matter how wealthy, has ever been shown to require more than one bed.

A difference can be created in the distribution of resources, yet everyone's requirements to live are the same. Whether in conditions of material abundance or of scarcity, there is no guarantee of a peaceful life. The path to a peaceful life and contentment of heart may be traversed only through a different way of thinking; and that way of thinking requires that man become familiar with himself. The act of gaining familiarity with oneself is based on reality, whereas escape from reality makes life fictitious and imaginary.

Today we are living in an age where novel discoveries are revealed on a daily basis. In this world of exploration, man has plumbed the depths of the ocean and is continually at work uncovering its hidden secrets. In his search of hidden secrets, man has also reached for the stars. Mars, presenting a new path of discovery, lies before him. After all these observations, man has no choice but to conclude that this process of investigation will not reach culmination until man finds himself. It is necessary that one should find transcendental abilities within oneself. It is with this intention that the non-Muslim nations have started travelling into the depths of their conscious. They are in search of new insight that could serve as a beacon of hope within the stormy seas of man's troubled existence.

To escape the pangs of anxiety and discontent, we have received an inheritance from our ancestors that is called muraqabah ['meditation']. It is through meditation that we can bring to the surface the abilities hidden within us. Meditation is an act that has been the practice of the prophets" of Allah mid all the Aulia-Allah ['friends of Allah/ saintly people']. The last prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, mediated in the cave of Hira for a long period of time before the initiation of his prophet-hood.

According to a survey report, the number of people in America who meditate in order to achieve a state of spiritual intuition and ecstasy, exceeds one million. These statistics clearly show that, even in a self-sufficient country like America, people are returning to the way of thinking of the Aulia-Allah, in order to achieve peace of heart and mind, and in order to live their lives properly.

Through meditation we are not only able to comprehend our own selves, but the past and the present also lies before us like an open book, and a joyous life becomes our destiny in light of this comprehension.

Volcano

Friends! Who am I?

Brothers! Who are you?

Companions! What is this world?

Dears! What kind of an existence is this—forever dancing along the path of death!

What happened was that at night when the sky was glittering, in the serene atmosphere made delicate by lights, a bright star WAS travelling towards an unknown destination. After traveling through the entire night, the star had left the east and had made the west its abode.

I could not tell if the earth was moving or if it was the star that was, in motion. Lying down on the wooden daybed in the courtyard the entire night's account is that the star had gone from the east to the west and had been taken over by the cover of light. Obviously, travelling all day, the star would again each the same point where it had commenced in the east- and this process is continuous.

Just as the stars and the earth are revolving and rotating, each and every particle of the universe is in motion in its own way. Man, for whom this entire universe has been created, is also interchanging within the world of feelings and emotions each and every moment. Each moment that is to arrive is the past ['mazi'] and the past is death or non-existence ['fanaa'] reality, it is the presence of death [fana'] which forms life or existence ['baqaa']. In the absence of death [or non-existence] it would be futile to mention life [or existence]. When the childhood of a thumb-sucking youth goes through the stages of death ['fanaa'], adolescence comes into existence. That is, the death of childhood is adolescence and then adulthood, and the death of the early part of adulthood is old age. When old age goes into non-existence, we are born into another world. It is a process that goes on without end.

Just as adulthood is born at the death of childhood and old age arrives after the early years of adulthood succumb to death, in the same way the days and nights of the world are dying and being born at the same time. Just as man can make his life short if he desires, or spread it over a hundred years if he so wishes, the same is true of the life of the world.

Today, when the spell of progress is all pervasive, it is extremely painful to see that the age of the world, caught in the attractive and deceptive trap of progress, is diminishing. The earth, in agony like a sick and feeble limb, is crying, "For God's sake, have mercy on me and on yourselves." But there is no one to lend an ear to her sobbing and sorrowful voice.

In order to gain superiority, nations have built such weapons upon which are hovering looming clouds of death. These weapons threaten the lives of the four billion people who live on this planet. Once something comes into existence, it becomes necessary to utilize it. In today's age it has become so easy to make an atomic bomb, that a team of over a hundred people can make an atom bomb in a small factory.

The great danger that is apparent to the open eye, in connection with the production and propagation of atomic weapons, is that very soon the time will come when a great many countries will have atomic weapons and that, eventually, in times of war, their use will become inevitable.

Friends! What kind of a progress is it that the world is standing at the brink of atomic war and we have made our abode a volcano about to erupt?

Eventually, this magical spell of progress will break one day. This been going on all along: nations that were not aware of the formulas of life ['baqaa] and death ['fanaa'] have been wiped off the face of earth, and today neither their names nor their remains exist. For God's sake, please reflect on where we are headed. Death is on our chase, while we are deceiving ourselves by giving it the name of progress. This is the result of that conduct and character that has taken a hold of us like a monster. Allah the Exalted states:

**Then whoso does an atom's weight of good will see it,
And who so does an atom's weight of evil will also see it,
Al-Zilzal: part 30 [Holy Quran ch99: v7-8]**

Atom Bomb

The creator of the universe said: "I am about to appoint my vicegerent in the earth."

The angels humbly offered their opinion before Allah the Exalted saying, "This earthly servant will become a symbol of violence and bloodshed upon earth."

Listening to the angels, God did not negate their objection by proclaiming, 'Man will not cause disorder in the Earth.' Instead He replied, "I know what you know not!" He then taught Adam the knowledge of His attributes and, presenting him masterpiece of His to the Angels, He said, "Now show much knowledge you possess compared to him."

Trembling in the awe of God's grandeur and majesty, the angels exclaimed,

We only know what Thou hast taught us. Indeed Thou art All knowing, the Wise!" [The Holy Quran, ch2: v33]

According to the angels, human beings cause chaos and disorder. But possessing the knowledge of God's attributes, they become God's vicegerents [or viceroys]. In other words, if man is not the viceroy of God, he is evil incarnate-creator of disorder. The natural consequence of causing evil and disorder is the distance that one creates between oneself and Allah, and this distance from Allah throws one in the clutches of fear and despair. A fearful person always tries to prove himself as more aware, more intelligent, and more powerful than others. Over the lengthy span of 2000 years, this perception of fear has grown into such a mountain, that its expanse has taken over the vastness of the entire Earth. To rid themselves of fear, nations have made such inventions as to destroy their own kind as make the Earth shudder. And, giving this horridness the name of "progress," they have engendered unrest and anxiety in the entire human population. To prove his superiority, man has invented weapons that can destroy the world in the blink of an eye. These intellectuals of mankind, who indeed are not Allah's viceroys, have brought disgrace upon themselves by inventing and reinventing deadly weapons. According to reports of the conscientious individuals of developed nations, we learn that 40,000 atom bombs exist in the world today. It is impossible to even estimate the number of traditional weapons. Why is such progress taking place? Against whom are these weapons being made? Who will be destroyed by the use of these weapons? Is this not tantamount to burning down one's own house?

The earth belongs to Allah; the earth is the centre of the welfare and prosperity of the people; the earth is our place of birth; the earth is the womb that holds all of our natural resources; and it is the earth whose fields and gardens

have been made a bountiful spread for us by Allah's blessing. How unfortunate that, in the name of progress, we are bent upon destroying the very womb in which we have grown to maturity. What kind of a progress is this that will turn into ashes the colourful beauty that surrounds us—the flowers and the trees, the mountains and the valleys, the gardens and the deserts? This is not progress. This is decline, misfortune, and fear—the fear that, 'we will be destroyed by our own brethren,' and we thus resort to amassing such power so that no other group from our kind can destroy us. But there exists an unavaoidable law that, as a thing comes into being, its use becomes inevitable.' These 40,000 atom bombs and who knows how many other kinds of blank that have been created will inevitably explode one day, and when the world is released from this glittering illusion of Progress not even a pebble or a tree will remain; and neither will remain any evidence of progress of the fearful humanity.

Come out of this life of fear! Then there will be no need to amass these means of destruction and the earth will not be brought to ruin—the earth whose every particle gives us life.

Allah the Exalted states that,

"The friends of Allah shall have no fear; nor shall they grieve."

[Holy Quran, ch10: v62]

Presence of fear and grief is hell; to rid oneself of these is heaven

These pure souls from among the youth of the next generation who kept fasts to respect the holy month of Ramadhan and whit offered worship in the mosques with the depth of their hearts, received Allah's mercy and they became the recipients of spiritual blessings, because Allah the Exalted has stated,

"I am the reward of fasting."

[Bukhari and Muslim]

This humble servant congratulates with prayers of blessings all the recipients of spiritual rewards who have gained acceptance in the sight of the Lord.

I am also very thankful for the love and devotion expressed kith, and gentlemen through the beautiful Eid cards they have sent.

May Allah the Exalted keep us all united, and protect us from Satanic "discord and division," so as to spread the mission of the Prophet of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be up on him. Amen!

Charming Face

Our King is God. Our king is the Prophet(saw) appointed by God.

A few intellectuals were sitting contemplating. The issue being discussed was: 'What is attraction?' Why is it present?' And, 'What is its source and fountainhead?'

One said one thing, and another gave arguments in support of his own point of view. One man spoke out thus:

"The earth has attraction (gravity). This is why an apple falls on the ground."

Another man said:

"But according to general observation, the force of gravity can also be escaped, even if temporarily. Speed and haste are also a way to escape the force of gravity."

Far from the city, away from human habitation, in a deserted area lived a wise man. When the issue could not be resolved to any conclusion, the men went to this wiseacre and inquired:

"Sir, what is this force of attraction?"

The wise man dived into the sea of contemplation and brought to surface precious pearls of wisdom. He said,

"Right now whatever is present before us is space. A bottle is a bottle because there is space inside it. If the earth did not have space within it, seeds could not nourish and grow. If seeds are freed from space (i.e. turned into lentils) then life after life, even the concept of a tree would not remain."

Man is also space, and within this space flows stream of life. The universe is also space, and this space orbits around a Being that is its life force. When pieces of space combine, they turn into earth, iron, stone, gold and silver. If they are broken apart, they go on dividing indefinitely.

The wise man picked up a lump of clay. He showed it to the people and said,

"Sirs, if this lump of clay is thrown at someone with force, will it hurt?"

The people replied, "Yes, it will hurt."

The wise man crushed the lump of clay into fine powder and blew it in the air. He then asked the people,

"Where is that lump of clay?"

Then he picked up two dried stalks of the same shape and size. He threw them both in the air at the same time. They did not land on the ground at the same time. He said,

"Friends, both of these stalks were thrown in the air at the same time. The space they were thrown into was the same. The strength that was exerted to throw them was. Then why did these sticks not land on the ground at the same time? This is because the action of space keeps on interchanging within things."

Our king is God. Our king is the Prophet(saw) appointed by God.

On the other side of space is a ruler-the All-Powerful Emperor. All of a sudden He thought that a system should be established so people would recognize Him. As soon as the thought occurred, intention was formed. That intention took the form of 'Kun' ['be'] and shaped into such an image whose every part presents a complete and coherent picture.

In the absence of a screen, a picture cannot be displayed; in the absence of space, there can be no mention of a screen. Each and every particle that is space is so because someone inhabits it. King of the kings, Allah, has turned every particle into space to exhibit His glory, and then has occupied that Space. But He has placed a screen between the particle and Himself. Everything behind the screen is anxious to view the charming Face. This restlessness is the force of attraction. This is the force of attraction in pursuit of which men give up kinships. This is the attraction which man uses as a staircase to reach where physical features (dimensions) do not exist. The closer this attraction is towards the Omnipotent, the greater a rank one is given as a member in God's Kingship, and his thoughts become the thoughts of his King. King of the king, Allah, is free from the tangles of time and space.

Our King is God. Our king is the Prophet(saw) appointed by God.

The Prophet king(saw), as a member in the kingship of Allah, fulfilled this law of attraction during Shab-e-Mairaj ['The night of heavenly ascension'], so much so that Allah the Exalted Himself said:

"The intimate conversation that took place between us and Our servant did occur. What the heart witnessed was not a lie."

Silkworm

When the eye of consciousness witnesses the modern world. It is astonished. It is astounded by human ability and the expression of its innovations. When observing the earth of the skies, one sees an unending chain of inventions. The subsidiary expressions of craftsmanship and creativeness of the Creator of the Universe can be seen spanning the surface of the globe.

Motor cars race along the streets, trains enable even faster travel, and airplanes pierce the skies, carrying thousands of tons of weight, traversing distances in only hours and days which used to take months and years. Airplanes travel faster than the speed of sound. Communication systems transmit pictures and sound from one corner of the earth to the other almost Instantaneously. Computers solve complex mathematical problems within minutes which would otherwise have taken several days to work out. Atomic power is utilized, and cities glimmer with electric energy and gears spin in industrial institutions. Rockets and missiles threaten destruction repeated efforts are made to explore space. Magical laser beams are employed. Amazing developments in electronics occur constantly. And, on a daily basis, developments in the fields of medicine and surgery are made. These are the subsidiary creations which are just as active in the dark of night as they are in light of day. Man, who is the supreme creation of the Best of the Creators, has been successful in establishing a long continuum of innovations with his relentless and tireless work during both day and night. Yet, although he is the creator of these things, within this web of innovations and inventions, he has failed to realize his own place, and his own value, among his own creations. Man, who claims to have conquered the laws of nature, has made himself a pawn to his own creations and is caught in a web of his own making, fruitlessly trying to escape, like a helpless fly. Man has set his mental aspirations so low that he fails to comprehend that all that he has created is a manifestation of his own hidden abilities. But he has given these abilities only a limited shape and form and has become their slave. Creator of the airplanes that pierce the skies, helplessly looks up at his own creation from ground; if he tries to take a leap in the air, he pathetic falls down. Man, who has brought into existence a machine as magnificent as the computer, is himself perpetually entangle, I in the worthless game of numbers. The inventor of gadget that can carry sound thousands of miles away has such pool hearing himself that he is unable to hear sound 200 or even 100 yards away. The inventor of gadgets that can transport images from one city to the other and even from space to Earth, has vision so poor that he cannot even see what is right behind him, let alone view distant cities with the naked eye, Man, who claims to have conquered natural phenomena will, if he honestly and impartially looks within himself, arrive at the conclusion that the magnitude of his emotional problems, mental stress, anxiety and sense of insecurity are currently at record levels.

The reality, however, is that man, caught in the shackles of long distances, has innate abilities that allow him to exercise control over the entire earth. The Creator of the universe has bestowed upon him wisdom that spans across planets, that spans across solar systems; that transcends the limitations of space and time. Man has been made as the essence of the universe by his Creator, in the shape of His most superior creation. But man did not appreciate this great reward of the Creator- he has been ungrateful. Man limited his abilities. Abandoning the traits that go beyond time and space, he settled for lower and yet lower, worthless and yet more worthless, materialism, and like a silkworm imprisoned himself in his silk cocoon. How ridiculous is the scenario that the creation is himself dependent on his creation.

It has been written in the heavenly scriptures that dominion over resources means that resources would come into existence with one's intention. What is intention? Intention is the expression of the soul's unending creative properties.

In order to activate and utilize the spiritual abilities within necessary that we possess the knowledge of the Book and that those formulas upon which the entire universe rests, and that are imparted by the Book, become manifest to us. As long as this knowledge is not gained, man will continue to be buried under heap of despair and misfortune. The earthly shell that surrounds us is that inheritance of ours due in which our revered and honourable ancestor, Adam, was regrettably thrown from the sublime heights of heaven to the lowly earth.

O people! O intellectuals! Use some sense and wisdom. What kind of progress do we really have when man is forever trying to destroy his own kind, and he calls this destruction, progress! What kind of wisdom is this that man has placed the worth of an atom over and above the value of hundreds of thousands of human beings and, with the dazzling illusion of progress has obscured peace of mind, contentment and sense of security!

Flight

O human being tear apart the layers that veil the screen of your memory and look inside. Do you not remember the blissful time when you used to breathe in freedom! You suffered from neither hunger nor thirst; nor were you bothered by the heat of sun. You had no fears and did not worry. You did not know what sorrow meant. You happily ate whatever you wished. Distances of time and space did not constrain you. Angels talked of your blissful flight into the realm beyond space.

O my brother, try and search within your mind! Do you not remember anything? Why have you forgotten the memory those golden days! Do not these memories buried in the recesses of the past make you restless? You always remember the few days you spend at beautiful resorts or the few pleasant moments you spend in the company of someone you desire, why then does your conscious not recall such great and sublime moments!

If you do not recall anything, then listen! You have been very ungrateful. You have intentionally surrendered to pain and sorrow. Rejecting the blessing of freedom, you have taken upon yourself the shackles of slavery. You have allowed yourself to be enslaved. Instead of unity and focus, you have given way to doubt and discord. You were a bird free to fly, yet you yourself invited the captors to come and imprison. You pushed your unending abilities into the dark caves of material constraints. Your base conduct made the heavens cry and caused the angels to lower their heads in shame.

O progeny of Adam and Eve! Take heed, analyze and consider your condition. You are so tangled in the web of constraints that it seems impossible for you to escape. You are under such fierce attack of trials and tribulations that you find it hard even to breathe. You wander to and fro for a piece of bread to fill your bellies. Fear of the future forever terrifies you. You want a guarantee of joy and happiness, but find it nowhere.

And look at the horrific result of the false values you have embraced. Instead of realizing the true values of freedom and happiness-for a few pieces of bread you do not hesitate to cut open the throats of your own brother! Under the colourful guise of progress you have painted the beloved earth red with blood. Clouds of misfortune are darkening. Rays of light are dimming. You are in such a state of self-denial that you have tarnished your own greatness. You are Allah's viceroy but materialism and filth have left you without refinement and purity.

O son of Adam, although you have hidden your eternal and unending life behind layers upon layers of curtains and have even buried it inside you, I will not forsake you-I will keep on trying to awaken you, whether you heed my words or not.

God's benevolence stands witness that it has sent many messengers your way, shaped into material form, and they advised you, time and again, to return to your native land, yet you always showed ingratitude.

O human being, pay heed to my words-I, who am your conscience, your inner voice-the cry within your soul! Pay attention; do not strangle my voice, or you will continue to wander helplessly in the dark abyss of misfortune, and will keep on stumbling like a blind man.

O child of Adam! Remove the chains of slavery hanging around your neck. Cut asunder the web of imaginary constraints of space and time. Don the robe of joy and happiness instead of sorrow and misfortune. You have set around you thousands of idols and are busy in their worship-the gods of wealth, of fame and fortune, and the gods of your false desires. Step forward and destroy these to pieces with the staff of Abraham and see what freedom tastes like- the freedom that you have lost by your own mistakes. Take your eyes off this world of darkness and look toward the world of light where freedom awaits you. The Holy Quran openly declares:

O Adam! You and your wife [both] stay peacefully in heaven, and eat happily from wherever you wish. ["Holy Quran Ch2: v35]

Excessive Use of Lights

All are aware that everything that is in the universe is born-it grows and develops, reaches its prime, and then its decline sets in. Eventually, progressively, either slowly or quickly, it dies. Man faces exactly the same predicament. Man is born and he through a time of innocence and then steps into the world of awareness. The adult, intelligent and conscious man, who considers this stage of awareness his highest elevation, starts to decline. A time comes when the mental and physical strength fails to bear the burden of the human structure. When the structure's bricks and stones (skeleton), cement and mortar (nervous system), plaster (flesh), and its beautiful facade (skin) lose their strength, the structure collapses and falls to the ground.

Observation of the law of motion lends us the fact that within every object that is in motion there is something stored, and it is when this stored thing burns that the object moves. Within motor cars and airplanes, it is gasoline that burns; kerosene burns within lanterns; electricity burns within illuminated bulbs, and within man energy burns in form of calories. The more calories that are stored within a person the stronger, the more active, and better looking he appears. A person's health is affected by the same ratio that his calories decline. Just as a car starts to stop and stall if its fuel supply is interrupted, man also falls and rises. This rise and fall is indicative of his superior health.

According to God's command, man has been fashioned from rotten mud and dry ringing clay. Within this insignificant object Allah breathed in His spirit, transforming it into a living being that can hear and see and taste and feel. Man is able to walk around, sleep and awaken, eat and drink, and use his will and abilities because lights have been stored within him. Excessive use of the lights quickly makes him tired and exhausted; ample supply of lights keeps him healthy and active for a longer time. The longer a man is busy in worldly affairs, the more he loses his inner peace and contentment of heart.

Worldly comfort and luxury may have its place, but it is law of nature that when man concentrates on something, that thing appears displayed on the screen of the human mind, and this display consumes the lights that had been stored - not the same store [of lights] that is being generated by the 200 billion cells of the human mind.

If one of the rooms in a house contains ten items such as a sofa set, a radio, a television set, a table, and other articles of display and luxury, while another room contains only a bed, when our eyes view the [room with] ten items, the stored lights within us display the ten items on the mental screen [whereas, in the other room we need to consume only enough lights to display one item]. In other words, the light that could have been spent for just one item is spent ten times over.

It is a general observation that an ordinary man experiences better health and a longer life, whereas a man with his mind caught in worldly affairs not only experiences poor health but also a shorter life span. The fact of the matter is that, within one of the men, the expenditure of the stored lights is less, while in the other man that expenditure is greater. Everyone knows that the one who spends more is eventually bankrupt.

From a spiritual point of view, when a child comes out from the mother's womb into this world, he possesses a large enough storehouse of lights to live a lifespan of 5000 years. He spends this [stored fuel] so excessively due to his foolishness, false pride, and ostentatious nature that the lifespan of 5000 years is reduced to a mere 50 or 60 years. In other words, man who could have lived for 5000 years, spends [life energy] excessively and runs out of it in 50 or 60 years.

It is a law [of nature] that the man who is content and at peace experience good health-he has good appetite; he does not have any difficulty falling asleep; and he lives longer. On the other hand, the man who lives in chaos and who is plagued by mental worries needs to expend many more calories than are normally required. He also has the need to eat, but in order to feel hungry and then to stop feeling hungry he needs to use medication. He wants to sleep, as sleep is the best tonic for mental energy, but he is not able to sleep. Like every other living thing he wants to experience joy, but the imprints of sorrow and misfortune and of excesses in the business of profit and loss do not let that joy come to the surface, so he covers his face with so many false faces to hide the agony within. This agony consumes an inordinate number of calories and, alas a time comes when, with so much sorrow and regret, he passes on to the next world, without having obtained his purpose in life, becoming an illustration of this [verse of the Holy Quran]:

**["He loses both this world as well as the Hereafter."
(Holy Qur'an Ch22: v11)]**

He leaves for a world where he will not find his business or his factories or his magnificent mansions-his entire life's worth is reduced to a 6x3 foot barren hole in the ground, and it does not take long before the particles of this man's body, who so worshiped the world, are trampled under the feet of both man and beast.

Awareness of Earth

We have before us two ways of thinking. One way to think is that, in order to live in this world, we become so influenced by our surroundings that we imprison ourselves within mountains of resources. And that we care for nothing but luxury and comfort and consider it the purpose of our lives.

The other way of thinking is that we not only live a life of moderation, but also take account of our lives and assess what have gained and what we have lost.

We accumulate wealth in pursuit of the enticing prospect of gaining worldly honour and respect. We advertise this wealth building magnificent mansions. We keep such articles of beauty and display in our homes as would be a proof of our own worth and significance.

As far as acquiring honour and respect by amassing wealth is concerned, it is only self-deception-a self-deception which none can deny. Castles of the Pharaohs of Egypt and treasures of Qaaron tell us that wealth is faithful to none. History repeats itself and, in every age, it reveals to us the reality of wealth. We are all aware of the life stories of majestic emperors. Even with their grandeur and glory and all their royal majesty, it has happened [at times] that fate did not grant them even small piece of land for graves in their native lands.

How faithless have proven the mountains of gold, silver and jewels for the wealthiest of men in the world! Does reality not warn us with its sobering lessons!

The earth recognizes only itself, and it keeps its each and every part connected to its womb. If earth is considered an individual then everything made of the earth becomes a part of its body. Gold and silver, iron and copper, and precious jewel are all such limbs and parts of the earth-parts on which it established its identity. Man's body is also composed of the earth, but because man has been entrusted to carry within him. Allah's trust, the conscious of the earth considers him, apart from all the other body parts, its heart. When the heart within a body is affected, the body is eventually rendered paralyzed and useless. A paralyzed and useless body is nothing but it burdens upon the earth.

Everyone knows that even if a person builds a mansion with fifty rooms, he is still only able to sleep on one bed. In his greed for wealth, he may add to his piles of gold and silver (particles of earth) as much as he wants, yet he still only requires three square meals a day to fill his belly. No matter how illumined and fragrant man makes his surrounding with artificial lights and perfumes, they cannot replace that which rots within him.

It is earth's nature to want to see its children clean; and it keep them clean. When its children refuse to leave filth and decay it leaves them alone. This misfortune turns man into something, that is repulsive and cancerous. Indeed, there isn't a punishment worse than this for any man. The Holy Quran says:

"And those who collect gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of Allah are given the tiding of a painful punishment."

Peaceful Sleep

For centuries, the changes taking place on earth bear witness to that the different periods of life, the ups and downs of time and scientific inventions are all being safeguarded in the depths of the earth. The earth is also aware of how many civilizations arose from its womb and that later went extinct.

Peering into the vastness of heavens beyond space, we see nothing but disappointment, failure and mental destitution. It seems as though, looking at the self-evasiveness and the negative behaviour of the inhabitants of the earth, the flame of hope that was once alight in the stars and their twinkling in the blue skies, have gradually dimmed. Mentally, humans, who claim to be ashraf-ul-makhloqat ['best of the creatures'], living a life worse than that of the beasts. They do not possess even an iota of the peace enjoyed by a cat or a goat.

The Creator best among all the creators, has made this earth means of agriculture and has entrusted it to man so that may rest upon it and attain peaceful sleep. For this reason, the apparent body of [man's] creation has been made from the earth, and everything that he utilizes has been made of earth. Nature has not made the earth so hard that man may not be able to walk upon it, and it has not made the earth so soft that man would sink in it. [Man] has been given the authority to utilize the earth and to make use of the blood (rays) running within the earth, however he may wish. Just like the Adam of millions of years ago, the progeny of Adam today are also occupied with cultivating the land. Just like man himself, every part of this cultivation is of the earth. Each seed that he sows is of the earth. Plants are also a form of the earth. Trees are also composed of parts of the earth. These grand buildings that we see are also of the earth. The raw material of even the largest of inventions is also of the earth.

Just as man grows bountiful trees and beautiful fields of crops, in the same way, buildings, other constructions and other articles are also a product of his cultivation.

Man sows the earth and reaps the earth. This process of sowing and harvesting has been going on continuously because man is an active member of this cultivation and he has been given the authority to intend [or will]. Thus the crop grows accordingly. This law of action and reaction, of movement and consequences, has been described by the Holy Prophet(saw) in these words: "This world is the land of cultivation for the Hereafter."

So great is the discrepancy between words and deeds that, although each person knows and says that the time lived on this earth is brief and limited, his actions are not consistent with this everyday observation. He spends his entire life in a manner that goes against the unshakeable laws of nature. He has given the name of progress to acts of violence, and he breeds unpleasantness of the future in the name of human welfare. What he does in the name of broad-mindedness is nothing but the worst kind of short-sightedness. What an illusion he has created-giving the atom bomb the name of progress, he sings the praises of the superior abilities of man. No one ponders the fact that these claimants of human welfare have assigned superiority to the atom bomb above hundreds of thousands of human lives. Man is the trustee of the abilities bestowed by nature, but as a result of keeping these abilities confined to himself in order to satiate emotions like selfishness, boastfulness and vanity, his entire focus remains upon this mortal world. The base of his actions becomes mortal like the mortal world. Thus, when he sows this world, he reaps this world. Since this world is mortal, he only secures for himself a share of immortality, and remains deprived of that eternal life that is filled with peace and joy.

Daadi Amman

Daadi Amman ['paternal grandmother'; (affectionately)] was so beautiful that her beauty had become proverbial within our entire family. She was so righteous that everyone spoke of her in acid purity. She had such skill and style in the domain of housekeeping that [all the] mothers considered it an honour to place their daughters under her supervision. I saw her for the first time when she hadn't a tooth left in her mouth. Her toothless mouth along with the wrinkles on her face gave the impression of a bouquet of flowers. She would eat her paan leaf wrapped around ['betel leaf wrapped around betel nut and other condiments'] after grinding it in a paan mortar. When the colour of paan mortar. When the colour of paan set in it would redden all the wrinkles of her face. The red colour set against her honey white complexion created such an image that left the observer in awe, in praise of the most praiseworthy Lord.

As I reached the first stages of awareness, I saw myself in the lap of Daadi Amman, and saw Daadi Amman lost in the recitation Allah's Word. I also saw that at night, before going to sleep, it was asked that the Kalimah-e-Shahaadah ['declaration of faith] be recited and, upon waking up, it was a mandatory custom to recite Kalimah-e-Tayyibah ['pronouncement of God's unity and the prophet-hood of Hadhrat Muhammad (saw)].

Daadi Amman also used to tell stories. All the stories had the same message that, 'Our king is God; our king is the Messenger (saw) of God':

Allah sent His angel to His king Prophet(saw) and conveyed the message: "My dear Muhammad-, do not worry for you, We will turn into gold all the mountain of Makkah."

Allah's prophet, our Huzur(saw) ['his honour/holiness'] said: "No, I am happy with my poor brothers. I do wish for the world."

I asked, "Amman, what is an angel?"

"Son, angels are also a creation of Allah like we are, but they do good deeds and thus become angels."

"Amman, have you ever seen an angel?"

"No, I haven't seen one yet, but I've heard that they are made of lights that glitter and glow, and when they fly, their wings emit light like that of the moon, the sun and the stars."

"Amman, have you seen our Huzur(saw)?"

"Yes son, I've seen him once."

"Amman, what does our Huzur(saw) look like?"

"Son, he is like the moon. So beautiful, so radiant, that Allah alone can encompass [his glory]."

All intellectuals agree that the first cradle of a child's training is his home. A child speaks what he hears, and what he sees becomes his knowledge. In today's world, we do not see grandmothers ever telling children that, "Our king is God, our king is the Prophet(saw) of God," Our nerves are barraged with the sounds of song and music, day and night. At night, before going to sleep, mothers do not tell their children that they should recite Kalamah-e-Shahadah before falling asleep, nor do fathers tell their children to recite Kalimah-e-Tayyibah upon waking up. No one warns that the worship of wealth is cancerous for the human race. History tells us that nations in which worship of wealth became widespread were wiped off, of the earth. Nations are not annihilated because of their sins, as sins can be forgiven. Shirk ['worshiping someone of something other than Allah'] is the one sin that will not be forgiven under any circumstance. And the worship of wealth is the biggest shirk. One of the most loathsome factors that incite this kind of shirk is the taking of interest. Interest makes one's earnings haraam ['forbidden/impure'].

How come our maternal and paternal grandmothers no longer tell us that all good actions of those who consume haraam earnings are considered null and void [in Allah's sight]? Neither salaah nor hujj is accepted of those who consume haram earnings. Our elders complain and lament that the character of the young generation has deteriorated; that, it has lost moral values; that the young generation does not show the same respect for the elders as did the generation of 40 years ago. As elders, however, we do not look within ourselves; we do not see that we have trampled the moral values which our ancestors upheld, even at the cost of their lives. There was once a time when the raised eyebrow of a parent was warning enough for children, who always sought their parents' approval for their actions. And now, what we witness is that parents fear their own children.

All of this is because the parents do not raise their children along the lines which we ourselves were raised. When the mother of today becomes a daadi ['paternal grandmother'], she does not sing the lullabies that introduce to the conscious She child Allah and His Prophets. When today's mother becomes a naani ['maternal grandmother'], she does not fully contain the moral values that align with the teachings of the Holy Quran and the practice of the Holy Prophet(saw). Whereas we desire that our young generation walk on the footsteps of their ancestors to build their lives. Indeed, this way of thinking contains so much contradiction in it that it can result in nothing but,

["He loses both this world as well as the Hereafter."]

[(Holy Qur'an Ch22:v11)]

At the Day of Judgment, we will not be asked which clothes we provided for our children, or of the kinds of meals we fed them. Instead, we will at that time be asked how we trained our children. Those parents who have trained their children well will be the successful ones. And these are the people who will be rewarded.

Tiny Creation

This is from the days when I hadn't reached that stage of awareness yet where man, having baked in the kiln of intellect, turns into a human being. But one question that pervaded my thoughts had frayed my nerves: 'What is the purpose of life?' As the boundaries of reflection embraced the concepts of life and servitude to the Creator, the reality would arise that all of earth's creation shares a common bond within the system of universe. Just as the requirements of hunger and thirst move man, in the very same manner, the other creatures are subject to the same requirements. The process of birth is just as established within the ant species as it is in man. A cat and a mouse also take care of and nurture their young ones, as does a human. As far as training is concerned, each species is bound by a particular way of thinking: From the crack of dawn, a sparrow busies herself in the task of obtaining sustenance, and so does an elephant. I have seen it with my own eyes that as a cow's calf died, the cow shed tears from her big black eyes (or three straight days).

There is another scene that I also cannot get out of my mind:

A cow, during the process of creation, is experiencing intense labour pains" and giving birth has become a serious ordeal. A Hindu woman, filled with maternal instincts, announced,

"The cow should be placed in a room and the door shut from the outside."

After some time, the door was opened, and the cow was very lovingly licking her newborn calf. Her eyes shone with the same maternal love I have seen in the eyes of my own mother. The secret revealed then was that the concept of shame and modesty is present even in cows.

Once, when a man, showing his human nature, took aim and shot down a crow, hundreds of crows appeared on the scene from nowhere and started to wail so loudly that it became impossible to hear anything else. This expression of sorrow continued till the third day of the crow's death.

As a hen paced here and there, so proudly and gracefully, with her young ones in tow, so beautiful like colourful balls of soft cotton, the sound of a hawk rudely disrupted the peace of the surroundings. The children's mother, hen, felt the danger and spoke to her young ones as if saying, "Come quickly, hide! Your mother's embrace is your refuge." The innocent children, with faces as pretty as flowers, ran in fear. The hen opened up her wings and gathered them in her embrace.

I happened to see a bird much smaller than even a sparrow. I saw her house as well. What a house it was! It was more like a protected castle in the shape of a dome, with separate rooms. The rooms included bedrooms. The bedrooms were arranged in a way that allowed light to enter. O yes, that house also had a swing-as children require a cradle too. The house was so strong that powerful winds and storms could do it no harm. It was air-conditioned from within. After searching for information, I found out that this house belonged to the weaverbird-a bird that can be considered the civil engineer of birds. It is a small bird with a body like that of a sparrow, and a size smaller than a sparrow's, but a mind more powerful than that of an elephant. Such is the level of intelligence and awareness of this bird, skilled in the fine arts, that if man, the inventor of the atom bomb, were to try for years, he would still not be able to build such a house.

This and many similar observations based on reality spurred the intellect and led to the conclusion that, 'Intelligence is not related to physical size, nor is intelligence the sole inheritance of human beings.'

When the streams of thought merged and formed an ocean, the question that begged reflection was, 'What aspect is it that distinguishes man from beast?' If man has the distinction that he invents, then the process of invention also occurs among Animals, both large and small. The fact that the nature of inventions is different is a separate discussion. But the human species cannot deny the fact that, within the inventions of other species of animals, we do not find the aspect of destruction, whereas, within human inventions, the aspect of destruction predominates.

A recurring piece of information that is circulated is that, 'Man is superior among all creation.' But superiority is proven when a bird flies without external resources, whereas man, even after spending millions and billions of dollars for the pursuit of flight, is still dependant on outside resources. With each new avenue of progress and invention that opens, a proportional increase in pain and suffering takes place. When looking at the domain of management and organization, one has no choice but to admit that the order and discipline that honey bees exhibit is far superior to the order and discipline of human affairs. Then, what superiority does man possesses which ignites such fires of conceit and arrogance within him? What distinction is it that has caused him to appear in the forms of Shaddad ['an Adite/ Adermite ruler, claiming divinity'], Nimrod, and the Pharaohs [of Egypt]?

The current age is referred to as a time of unprecedented progress. An analysis of this supposed acme of progress reveals that what is meant by progress is actually an unending process of infliction of cruelty and hardship. Progress has come to mean that poverty-stricken humanity is defrauded in the name of progress, and is left terror-writ ken by having impressed upon them the intellectual superiority of others, that the resources which mother earth produces for her children are usurped and turned into deadly weapons, and that hundreds of billions of dollars are snatched from hungry and impoverished populations and used to create nuclear weapons that would bring instant death to hundreds of thousands of people. With all of the publicity given these barbaric actions, it is difficult for God's creation to be able to think of their own survival, or to do anything for the protection of their progeny. So gruesome is this cruelty that, to prove one's self a superpower, weapons upon weapons are amassed, which, if thrown into a pile would make a mountain. Then this volcano of a mountain is used to set brother against brother-all sons of the same parents (Adam and Eve) -because if the brothers live with love and unity, the prospect of becoming a superpower would remain a dream. How intelligent and wise is the scientist who cannot fathom the simple reality that when a thing is created it is bound to be used? Have we ever thought as to why the superpower wants to destroy the earth's heavenly gardens, its cities brimming with life, and its fields full of crops? It is because they do not believe that rule and sovereignty belongs to Allah alone. And we are suffering this terrible ordeal of hardship, worry and insecurity because we have accepted as our masters those who worship wealth and are full of prejudice.

Is it still not time for us to use our intelligence and wisdom, at least to the extent which Allah's tiny creatures are capable ' [Is it still not time for us] to finally obey this command of our Almighty God, Allah:

"And hold on tight to the rope of Allah, and do not create disorder."

[Holy Quran ch3: v 10,11]

As this storm looms over us, if we do not come to our senses And do not use our natural intellect, our names will be wiped off of the face of this earth.

The Holy Quran announces this loudly and clearly:

"The nations that do not bring about a change within themselves; their existence on earth has no more significance than rubbish and dirt."

[Holy Quran ch13:v11]

Our Prayers

Death dances upon the land of the Almighty. The god of hypocrisy has awakened. Coercion and tyranny abound. The blood of innocent children is being used to irrigate the desert.

Wedged between the immensely resourceful lands of great kingships, people have shown such a horrific display of cruelty and barbarity that the heart-wrenching cries, harrowing wails and lamentation of their victims has taken away the sleep of the innocent. It seems as if the land of God's appointed messengers has turned away from us, and our feelings of shame and disgrace have reddened the sky.

This is the same group of people regarding which we have always been hearing that they are referred to [as the ones who had incurred God's displeasure] in [the verse],

**I "(Guide us in the path of)...those who have not incurred thy displeasure,
and those who have not gone astray"
(Holy Quran chl:v6)]**

That time of childhood, imprinted on the surface of consciousness by the name of memory, reminds me that, for the last 56 years, in every mosque, on every podium, in every school, and in every gathering geared towards advice and sermon, we have heard our religious leaders repeat the same prayer that, 'O Allah, destroy the cruel and bestow victory upon the victims. Now today when we see that the land of the Almighty is burning and His noble creation, trapped amid poisonous bombs, is hanging in the balance of life and death, sobbing in the iron clutches of cruelty and injustice, we have no choice but to say that the prayers of the believers offered over a period of half a century have proved ineffective. Rivals of peace have drowned conscience in the drunken celebration of their victory; that neither innocent children, nor women find any respite; that the elderly have become disabled and paralyzed; but there isn't a corner where one would hear the cry as to why this is happening, and why the believers who were promised victory by God have become a burden upon the earth!

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, gave the glad tidings of victory and success, and he also determined the path which led to the achievement of that victory.

Why have we set a seal upon our hearts, and why have we cast such thick curtains before our eyes? Why do we not see that the Holy Prophet (saw), for whom this universe was created, had used actions along with prayers! In his life in Makkah, actions went hand in hand with prayers. And this [was despite the fact that] he is that respected, honoured and holy personage by the motion of whose hand the moon fell apart into two. This [was despite the fact that] he is that dearly beloved of the Lord of the Worlds with whom Allah the Exalted communicated in private and bestowed such an honour of His nearness as had never been experienced by any human, nor will it ever be experienced by any human. This is the same exalted and honoured personage before whom angels bowed in servitude, and before whom the Angel Gabriel sat humbly with his knees folded. This is the same personage in whose imamat ['lead'] grand prophets of God offered salaah, and regarding this saviour, every prophet had given tidings in heavenly books—the one personified in the verse,

The simple truth is that after God, you alone are the most honourable

If prayer, without the aid of action, was sufficient to accomplish tasks, then what was the need for the migration from Makkah to Madinah? Why the Holy Prophet(saw) was blessed to be 'lured [in battle]? Why did the Holy Prophet(saw) lead an army from Madinah to Makkah? Why did the Holy Prophet (saw) accept boycott of the city [of Makkah]? The blessed life of the Holy Prophet(saw) tells us that Huzur(saw) never abandoned action and planning; [instead, Huzur(saw) employed] action and planning and prayed for their positive outcome.

Prayer without action is like body without soul; when soul departs the body, the body turns into a mere corpse which remains of no benefit at all. Similarly, prayer which is not backed by action becomes the downfall of nations.

We call ourselves Muslims. Does the spectacle we see around us represent what a Muslim is supposed to be? From the time of gaining awareness, we have seen that we have been trying to solve our problems with prayers alone. We pray for general things, and we also pray for specific issues. We have before us more than half a century's span of time to ponder. As a nation, we have yet to see a single prayer of gaining victory over the non-believers being heard. Why is this so?

Prayers are not heard because they are not accompanied by action. And the secret of creation is that action in itself is creation. In order to earn a living, we remain busy in the Beat of the sun and spoil our sleep-in freezing chills of winter nights. For the proliferation of our families, we get married. If prayers can become cannons, and missiles, and rockets, and bombs and destroy oppressors, then why create such bothersome disturbances in our own life? Why should a farmer bother to till the earth and thus attain his nutritional requirements? Why do we need to build houses to protect us from heat of the sun or from hailstorms? If every task can be accomplished with prayer, unaccompanied by action then instead of working and struggling for all matters that have to do with life we need only thus supplicate: 'O Allah Give us children; O Allah! Build us a house; O Allah! It is burdensome for us to sweat and toil, so put pieces of bread in our mouths for us.'

What kind of a joke is it that when our individual lives under question, every part of our body is busy in action, when the concern is for our collective life, we sit down our hands joined for prayer? If prayer alone could send kuffaar ['non-believers'] hell bound, then why was jihad made mandatory?

Keep in mind, people who only arrange for prayer to be offered, and do not exhibit any action to accompany that prayer are certainly no friends of the nation. This conjecture of theirs reveals them to be foolish friends whose plans always cause disgrace and dishonour. Who does not know that the absence of action becomes the undoing of a nation, encapsulating each person within his own self! A person lacking in action also becomes responsible for disobeying Allah the Exalted. Allah's rope slips from his hands, and rifts and cracks appear in the wall which once stood solid as steel. Nations that shy away from action become worthless and paralyzed, and incur the wrath of Allah.

Is there anyone who will make the nation aware of this deadly behaviour? Is there anyone who will tell the world of Islam that the entire life of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was based on action, action, and action? The Creator of the universe has made this universe active and has set it in motion. The sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the sky, the angels, all things and all creatures, are in constant motion. Allah's appointed messengers, and all the aulia-Allah [friends of Allah/ Sainly personages] who follow in His path have all advised action and condemned idleness:

It is action that determines whether life will be heavenly or hellish

The mortal both in itself is neither sublime light, nor hellfire

Ever since we have abandoned action and have relied solely on prayer, the sublime light has left us, and hellfire has considered us an easy meal for consumption.

O preachers! O religious speakers! O wise men of the nation! For God's sake, wake up people of the nation and tell them that nations without action turn into slaves.

Rejection of Blessings

Two Banyan leaves are set before me on the table. A quick glance reveals that they are of the same colour, the same size, and the same pattern, just as the hands of four billion people look the same, but when we read the stories of the past and present etched upon those hands, each hand presents a map of a different world. Thumbprints of the population reveal 'lair billion individual minds; and each revelation is different than the other.

Just as the progeny of the same father is of different shapes find colours, and consists of varied facial features, in the same way, hundreds of thousands of leaves of the same tree are different. Each leaf has a differently shaped pattern. Place two leaves of the same tree next to each other's and you will see.

[Like people] trees also talk to each other. They are also influenced by people of good and bad character. Music with loud and low volumes also has an effect on them. It is not a secret anymore that within man two senses work at the same time. One of these senses keeps us bound within the constraints of time and space, whereas, with the other kind of sense, the constraints of time and space are lifted and man is able to witness worlds beyond space. These two kinds of senses are actively working within everything in the universe. ! That is, all creation possesses a sixth sense.

When the sixth sense, or the inner vision, of the leaf saw me reflecting upon it, it addressed me so:

"O son of Adam! I have heard from my ancestors (trees) that Adam is ashraf-ul-makhlooqat ['best among all the creatures']. He has been given a special gift by nature. A gift of which the rest of Allah's creation remains deprived. And this deprivation is self-inflicted."

After the creation of the universe, when the Greatest Creator wanted all the creatures in the heavens and the earth to become His trustee, He addressed the creatures of the earth and the skies thus: "Is there anyone who would accept the responsibility of carrying Our trust upon his weak shoulders?"

All earthly and heavenly creatures replied in a single voice: "O Lord! We are weak and frail; we are not worthy of this." But Adam, without thinking, took this trust on his shoulders. Today the same Adam, who has been declared the most honoured among all the creatures, is miserably suffering from hardships and misfortune and has become his own enemy.

When trees talk amongst themselves of this honour, they laugh at this ignorance of Adam and say that,

"Adam, who considered himself more aware than us, is the most foolish of the creatures. Our ancestors were more intelligent and cleverer than Adam's ancestors, as they had realized that after accepting Allah's trust, not to safeguard it, and not to benefit from it, would mean the rejection of blessings, and rejection of blessings is the same as being thankless. And nations who are not thankful become a burden upon existence. Heavenly misfortunes poison their lives. The self-respect of such nations is tarnished, and these nations become the symbols of disgrace and defeat."

Listening to this wise and intelligent account from the mouth of the Banyan leaf pulled me so deeply into the river of wonder and contemplation that words failed me and I sat unable to express myself. The 200 billion cells working within the computer of my mind froze into stillness. The light within the eyes faded, rendering me unable to observe wisdom and intelligence.

At last I ended up asking a foolish question: "Does intelligence work in the same way in trees as it operates within humans?"

The leaves snickered amongst themselves and, laughing a sarcastic laugh, said:

"The acceptance or rejection of a thing is proof of awareness and intelligence. If our ancestors did not possess intelligence, how could they have said that they were not able to carry the weight of that trust?"

Earth's history of hundreds of thousands of years of violence, bloodshed, prejudice, dishonesty, selfishness, and violation and usurpation of others' rights, tells us that, compared to man, we are more aware and intelligent. We also know that no other creature lacks in intelligence as much as humans do. Is it not foolishness and ignorance that one has stockpiles of food in one's own home, yet one is starving? Is it not ignorance that the entire universe has been made subservient to man, yet he suffers from a life of constraint and confinement? Instead of using the light within him to illuminate the world, man is bent upon casting darkness over the entire earth. "Listening to this conversation of the leaves of the Banyan tree, my eyes grew moist and my heart was rent asunder. An anguished sigh [escaped my lips] and the following word resounded in my mind:

"I wish I was a leaf of a tree, upon which pearly drops of dew would rest and on whose branches, birds would sit and sing songs of Allah's praise. These songs of the birds, early in the morning, would create such joy within my soul that I would get lost in the vastness of the sky and bring back the honour of ashraful-makhloqat!"

Women

When attempts are made to solve a certain problem, when streams of thought are merged and the resulting images that appear on the surface of consciousness are analyzed, many unpleasant facts come to light.

The Holy Quran says that Allah has made everything in pairs. The religious circle, however, claims that God has created women in order to lessen the sorrow of men, and for the sake of their amusement.

When chastity is mentioned, women alone are discussed. Are men not also in need of the precious virtue of chastity? A woman's sanctity is trampled upon, and it is assumed that she is weak, and that she does not possess intelligence and comprehension. Even now, women are presented as disabled appendages in the fields of knowledge and skill. Religious leaders, preachers, and intellectuals all place a woman's status below that of a man.

This is the same woman whose very blood makes each and every limb of a man. This is the woman whom employing the creative formulas within her, gives birth to the 1200 billion cells of the brain. This is the woman who gives up her days and nights to nourish the baby that resides in her womb for nine months. This is the woman who, using the fibers of energy useful for life, prepares for the man's spirit, a dress.

Earth's gravity is unable to imprison him. He remains alive and victorious in every age. When he is present in this world he possesses nothing but the riches of wisdom and knowledge, and yet people are drawn to him; when he departs this world, masses flock to his shrine as moths hover around a flame Abdala-e-Huq Qalander Baba Aulia is the leader and chief of such pure- spirited men.

The personalities of the prophets of Allah were suffused with a particular kind of thinking. This succession of prophet-hood ended as it reached the Seal of Prophets, Muhammad, Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. However, since Allah's sunnah ['ways/ works'] neither change nor are discontinued, in every age such servants of God were born who possessed the Holy Prophet(saw) way of thinking and inherited the knowledge bestowed by him so that light would counter darkness and so that mankind would be introduced to the way of thinking which would set it free from fear and grief.

Qalander Baba Auliya RA, who was an heir to that beacon of light and guidance, the Holy Prophet(saw), has left such light behind him, in guidance of which today's worried and emotionally disturbed generation can brighten its future. The reason why mankind today is a victim to mental chaos and emotional breakdown is because it is moving farther and farther away from the way of thinking practiced by the prophets of Allah, and instead, its reliance on the false perceptions of its own making has deprived it of an awareness of truth and reality.

Qalander Baba Auliya(RA) states:

"When Allah's prophets would think about something, they would not establish any direct relationship between them and that object. Their way of thinking always was that, 'It is Allah the Exalted who is our master and the master of everything in the universe. We do not have a direct relationship with anything; instead, our relationship with everything is through Allah.' When [the prophets of Allah] attended to some matter, their thoughts first turned towards Allah before they actually focused on that matter. Before paying attention to a thing, it was a force of habit for them to acknowledge that, 'This thing does not have a direct relationship with us. Our relationship with this thing is merely because of Allah the Exalted.' As this was their way of thinking, the perception and awareness of Allah Almighty preceded every movement of their mind. As it was the presence of Allah that was felt and perceived, it was Allah who became the focus of their intent and address, and it was the attributes of Allah that they perceived and experienced. And [thus] their mind would become a representation of the attributes of Allah the Exalted."

Expanding on this synopsis Qalander Baba Auliya RA said:

"If we desire nearness to someone, we must also do what our beloved does. If we desire the friendship of Allah the Exalted and His nearness then we must do what Allah Almighty does."

It was asked of Qalander Baba Auliya(RA), "Your holiness, does Allah also work? And if so, how is it possible for man to do same work that Allah the Exalted does?" He stated:

Allah the Exalted is busy taking care of His creatures at each and every moment. He protects the creatures and provides resources for their life but does not demand any reward or compensation for it. Although man [a humble Servant of God,] is unable to offer service to the creatures at the level of the creator, but according to his ability and capacity he can serve God's creatures without demanding any reward or compensation. Being a creature, he cannot escape his need for resources, but he can tie all his needs to the greatest being, Allah the Exalted. This action gives him membership in the kingship of Allah."

He further stated:

"Every endeavor should be conducted with the utmost effort but its results should be left to Allah the Exalted."

Baba sahib"" reminded mankind that,

"Dominance over the universe and life in heaven is his inheritance but in order to achieve this inheritance it is necessary for man to acquaint himself with the ability which he possessed in heaven. It is not possible to obtain this ability unless one achieves awareness of his own spirit first. Thus, the person who acquaints himself with his inner self finds eternal peace and contentment."

Taj-ud-deen Baba RA

Animals [dwelling the land] do not work for a living, neither do birds set up shops, yet nature provides them with all the resources they require to live.

Whether it is four-legged animals or whether it is the birds, an analysis of their social and economic life tells us that they are also made of the interplay of feelings and emotions. They also possess the urges of anger, sex, maternal love, and paternal caring. Birds are also concerned with the future of their offspring. When the children complete the round of education necessary to live their lives, the parents hand over their house (nest) to their children and fly away. The parents then build another home for themselves, collecting each twig and twine anew.

Whether it is animals that graze on land, or fierce beasts, or birds, they all possess intelligence and awareness. Insects know that if they do not prepare ahead for their necessities, their progeny will be destroyed. There are animals dwelling on the earth that possess a much keener sense of the future than ordinary man. Cats and dogs can detect calamities and misfortunes before their onset.

The question arises as to what the difference is between man and beast? There is no difference between man and beast. Man is an animal walking on his two legs, like the other animals walk on their four legs. If observed keenly, man appears inferior of the reliance which a bird shows towards her Creator. Man is deprived of the contentment and careless abandon exhibited by a tiny ant.

The trait that differentiates man from beast is his connection with the Creator while remaining in the circle of thought and awareness. If a person does not have a connection with his Creator, then he is merely a beast walking on two legs. One animal walks upon four legs, while the other on two. Animals that fly and animals that swim are also included among the animals that walk upon four legs since they use wings as well as feet, and thus their state of flight becomes the same as that of four-legged animals. Within the many different species of animals, man also is one such species. But when a person develops a relationship with Allah the Exalted he leaves the category of animals and becomes a human being. And the thought and intellect that distinguishes a human being is that he cannot help but cry out that,

'Our life and our death is all from Allah,' and what proves this beyond any doubt is that when God gave us life, He did not ask us our desire or permission regarding it. There isn't a single individual in the world who was born of his own desire or who will live forever according to his desire. We are only able to make use of the resources which have already been created for us. Hadhrat Baba Taj-ud-deen Nagpur has stated this point thus in his couplet:

*Four-legged animals do not work for wages, nor do
birds conduct commerce,
So said Daas Maloka, 'it is God who provides a living for all'*

Zoo

A crowd has gathered to see the newborn cubs of the lioness at the Karachi Zoo. Small children wearing bright and colourful clothes are standing in front of the lioness's cage, delighted at seeing the cubs. The lioness sitting next to her cubs, filled with maternal love, gazes at the human children in the same caring way she looks upon her own children. At times she looks disapprovingly at her cubs' mischief and, with her glances, she tells them to stop. But the cubs cannot be stopped from engaging in their antics. Their mischievous play and jumping around is providing human children standing outside the cage with plenty of amusement. At a distance, the lion is pacing gracefully. He is also feeling happy watching his cubs but shows restraint and does not let his face betray any emotions. Nonetheless he, intently, watches over his cubs.

As my wandering glance set upon the king of the jungle, I could not help but be impressed by the glow and magic in his eyes. As my eyes met those of the lion, I felt as if the thought-hearing waves in the lion's brain, through the eyes, were colliding with his internal eye muscles and then those waves were being transmitted onto the screen of my own brain, conveying a message.

At first, I was a little worried at this situation, wary of how a lion could convey a message. What could this speechless beast say an *ashraf-ul-makhlooqat* ['best of the creation'] like me?

As soon as the thought entered my mind that a lion is a beast, the lion's intoxicated eyes started to stir up storms, and the transmission became so intense that I was forced to listen to the lion's conversation. The lion was conversing with me through the mode of telepathy.

He sarcastically said:

O human, you call me a beast. Beastliness is defined by the fact that I hunt animals weaker than myself and fill my belly. How strange is it then that when a lion consumes meat he is called a beast; yet man, who for the sake of his enjoyment shoots at the tiniest little bird and eats meat, is not a beast!

My conscious started to shake with fear as I heard this from the lion. I really desired to say something to the lion in justification, but all my knowledge and all my pride at being *ashraf-ul-makhlooqat* collapsed instantly. As I was thinking of attempting to escape from the waves coming out of the lion's eyes, the cub's mother, the lioness, set her gaze upon me and said:

O human! What is it that makes you so proud? Look—look at me! Do not turn your eyes away from me. I may be a female, but it does not make any difference. We are not overtaken by sexuality. We do not use it to amuse ourselves; rather we participate in this act to fulfil our roles in the creative mechanism of the laws of nature.

O person claiming to be ashralul-makhlooqat, listen! A few days ago, a man from your species visited here. My husband here has somewhat of a philosophical and logical disposition. Out of nowhere he got it into his head to start an argument with that human, and began by saying, 'I am stronger than you.'

The man replied, "No, I am stronger than you."

When my husband asked him to present an argument to support his claim, the man took a picture out of his pocket and showed it. In that picture the man was sitting on top of a lion.

The lion thought it over for a little while and then asked the man, "Who has made this picture?"

The human replied, "A man has made this picture."

The lion laughed a mighty laugh that seemed to shake the entire zoo, and then said: "O human, how ignorant and foolish you are! You could not comprehend a simple thing like this—had a lion made this picture, the lion would have been on the top and the man underneath him."

The distraction of children's play and other noise in the vicinity broke my link with the lioness. And I returned from the zoo trying not to think anything of the matter, yet could not help but draw number of different conclusions.

There is only One being who creates, and it is He who has bestowed upon another being the ability to create as well, but it is an indisputable fact that this second being is forced to utilize the same matter and elements in his creation which have been created by the first, One and unique being.

Man is that second being who has been given the ability to create. Whenever man creates something—whenever he brings something into existence—in one way or the other, it is influenced by what has already been created by Allah. In other words it is by utilizing Allah's creation that secondary creations are brought into existence. When two of Allah's pre-existing creations merge together, or are forced to merge, third creation comes into being. Take water and sweetness for example, which are two of Allah's creations. When water and sweetness are mixed and merged, a sweet beverage results as product.

Sometimes patchwork between two things results in the creation of a third. Patchwork [in the form of crossbreeding [between animals has resulted in the creation of mules Patchwork [in the form of grafting] on mango trees results in the many different varieties of mangoes. Similarly, there is a system of such patchwork established throughout the world. When looking at this field of patchwork one observes that this skill is prominently present in God's creation, the human, and there is present a distinction between man and a tree, or man and an animal, that man is able to perform this patchwork whereas a tree is not.

People who are familiar with the principles of spiritual perception know that when the eyes of the spirit open, distances disappear. A period of hundreds of thousands of years is compacted to seconds. All the evolutionary stages from the time of Adam until the scientific age of today pass before the eyes like a motion picture.

While viewing this motion picture of human evolution, as the spiritual eye leaves the age of caves, stones and metal, and scans the present scientific age the spirit is struck by agitation and distress, having realized that the evolutionary stages which man has called progress, are actually not progress at all. The object of this progress is not the welfare of mankind but its destruction. There is no plausible justification for this fatal and destructive "progress". Here, amassing vast wealth seems to be the only objective. And when the spiritual eye settles on the image that man, by creating test-tube babies, is busy in the patchwork [or grafting] of humans as well, dark looming clouds of ignorance and injustice seem to permeate the surroundings. The subconscious speaks out that the thankless human has reduced his status and has placed himself on the same level as mere trees.

One of the reasons God created trees is for them to be used as fuel. In other words man, by degrading his own kind to the level of plants, is forcing the earth to treat humans as fuel. As Allah the Exalted has bound the earth to obey man, the earth continuously and consistently has been turning into a volcano [in response to man's own actions]. Indeed if man fails to change his condition, the earth will burn down his species to ashes.

"So take a lesson, O ye who have eyes." (Holy Quran ch59:v2)

Fasting

Fasting is a form of worship that is irreplaceable. If one were to describe the great and countless benefits of fasting, hundreds of thousands of pages would be insufficient for the purpose. In short fasting is a comprehensive remedy for physical illnesses. It is an effective way to increase a person's spirituality. It is an unbreakable shield that protects one against sin. Those who fast will enter paradise through a special door. On the Day of Judgment, fasting will intercede on behalf of all such persons who welcomed fasting while paying it its due respect. Fasting removes physical impurities from the body and increases the flow of delicate lights within a person. The fast flow of lights increases a person's mental speed, and it increases it so much that angels show up in front of him and he witnesses his spirit traveling in the realm of the unseen.

Do the last day of Sha'baan the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said:

"O people, you are about to receive a great and blessed month. This is the month in which one night is better than a thousand months."

During this month God has made fasting incumbent upon His servants. The Holy Quran was revealed in this month. The other heavenly Books were also revealed in this month. Heavenly scriptures were revealed to Hadhrat Ibrahim (a.s) [Abraham (a.s) on the first or third day of Ramadhan. Zaboor ['Psalms of David'] was revealed to Prophet Daud (a.s) ['David (a.s)] on the 12th or 18th day of Ramadhan. On the 16th day of the same month the Torah was given to Prophet Moses (a.s) and on the 12th or 13th of this month Injeel [The New Testament] was given to Prophet Jesus (a.s). In short, the month of Ramadhan, in which the Holy Quran was revealed, is a month full of greatness excellence and wisdom, and it cleanses and polishes human consciousness. When a person stays hungry and thirsty only for the sake of Allah, his spirit soars upward into the vastness of heavens and touches its ultimate heights.

Fasting is a form of worship which was made incumbent upon the people of all of Allah's prophets, on whom be peace. Allah the Exalted states:

"O ye who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you so that you may become righteous."

[Holy Quran chapter2: verse183]

This is the blessed month in which Hadhrat Jibraeel (a.s) [angel Gabriel] recited the Holy Quran to the most honoured among prophets, the Seal of Prophets, Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and would in turn listen to the Holy Quran recited by the Holy Prophet(saw)

You should also recite the Holy Quran, slowly and wit understanding. This act makes the bond between Allah and His servant stronger. Open your hearts and help the poo the widows, the orphans and the destitute. Allah's Prophet (a.s) who was the personification of generosity and beneficence gave all the more generously during the month of Ramadhan.

Come let us pledge that following the blessed practice of the Holy Prophet (saw), we too shall help our poor brothers in every way possible.

Meditation in the Cave of Hira

The mention of human consciousness and its evolution forces us to recognize that the state we are in or the position that we hold today is attributable to our ancestors. When Adam, the honoured ancestor of humankind, was thrown into this world, he was in a state of awareness which today would be comparable to that of a newborn baby. The instances of the life of this child (Adam) turned into moments. Moments changed into seconds. Seconds became minutes. Minutes disappeared into hours. Hours adorned the cloak of day and night. Day and night took the form of years. Years saw their end within centuries. And so eras and ages came into being.

As Adam's consciousness awakened, the need arose to sustain life - to do something, to eat something, to cover up. As the demand to fulfil this need grew more intense, tenderness was born. This tenderness started to flow from the eyes. To halt this surging flow, Angel Jibraeel(as) ['Gabriel'] descended from the heavens and so addressed Adam:

"O innocent person, crying and lamenting will not do. You have wronged your own self. To pay the consequences, you must obey the principle of giving something in order to gain something, and only thus shall you obtain for your needs. Rise up and pay for your disobedience by working the land and thus gathering your food."

Qalander Baba Auliya" states that,

"I have seen such examples where Angel Jibracel (as) walked ahead and Adam slowly walked behind him following his footsteps. Hadhrat Jibraeel" stood on a parcel of land and said, "This is a field, sow seeds in it and give them water so that they grow. Eat and drink!"

Adam quickly walked up a few steps and said,

"Establish a boundary here."

Hadhrat Jibraeel(as) said with much sorrow, "O what disappointment! Alas, you have sown the seed of greed in your progeny. Why could you have not understood that Allah has declared the entire earth your property!"

The first evolution of humankind took place as it learned to sow the earth. As thorns grew from the womb of the earth, Adam consciously felt the sting; as flowers bloomed, his mind soared to the peaks of heaven in a state of complete self-abandon.

Flowers and thorns within their selves are a reaction of the senses. Reaction is an indication of one's way of thinking. If the way of thinking includes faith, belief, and [correct] observation, Adam's progeny will live in peace. If the way of thinking includes disbelief, suspicion, and shortsightedness, life will become a bed of thorns, miserable and unbearable at every moment.

Humankind is proceeding along the heritage left to them by their father, Adam. Adam disobeyed; his progeny thus received the inheritance.

Salaat

A very learned and scholarly person, with a long beard and an attractive face, came to visit me. During conversation, discussion turned to hadith [a saying of the Holy Prophet (saw)]. The aforementioned gentleman said:

"It is stated in a hadith that the pen has dried up writing about what is yet to happen. Now if the pen has dried up then it begs the question as to what is spirituality."

Morning comes every day. The atmosphere in the morning stays constant according to the season. But we take every morning to be a new morning. Night comes. We sleep in the same home, in the same room, in the same bed, and in the same sheets, yet we think that every night is a new night. We eat when we feel hungry. Bread constitutes our diet, yet every time we eat it we take it to be a new loaf of bread. Are we not living a life of deception? And if one's entire life is a deception then what value if any can be attached to the extravagant claims to spirituality? The nation is inactive as it is; yet you are preaching of even more inaction.

Commentating on this hadith, Abdaal-e-Haq Qalander Baba Aulliya (r.a)' has stated:

"There is a book that has already been written. In other words, this book is the past (i.e. a record). There are different ways to read this book. If the book is read from the beginning, in order and in continuity, i.e., first word and then the second word, first line and then the second line, first page and then the second page—if this is the way the entire book is read then this is the method of reading which applies to wakefulness (consciousness)."

A person's conscious experience is that a day passes, then the next day passes, a week passes, then the next week passes. Similarly, months, years, and centuries pass in the same order and in the same way, i.e. they pass one after the other. After Tuesday, Thursday does not arrive until Wednesday has passed. The month of Shavvaal does not arrive until Ramadhan and the other months prior to it come to pass. This way [of thinking] is the conscious way that is present in man (bound by the confines of time and space). This approach is called wakefulness. And when this conscious approach transports to a different page of the book it becomes the subconscious approach, free from the confines of time and space. In simple words this can be stated thus: The same approach alternates between two compartments and this alternation and shifting of thought is what our life is. In light of these facts, whatever there is, has been written in a book. The book is eternal and eternity has become the past. As far as the concept of sin and virtue, or goodness and evil, is concerned, this is the process of giving meaning to information. The thing that is good is also bad. A man establishes salaah, but if he remains unaware of the reality of salaah according to the Holy Quran, (which is the establishment of a connection and a relationship with Allah the Exalted), then [such] salaah becomes the mean of his annihilation and destruction.

The interpretation of salaah is that it brings a believer into the realm of the unseen. The general observation, however, is that it is difficult for people to find even the presence of heart and mind in salaah, let alone, gain an awareness of the unseen. As soon as a person stands for salaah and recites the intention for salaah he is overwhelmed by the onslaught of thoughts.

Abdaal-e-Haq Qalander Baba Aulliyah(r.a) says that the spiritual interpretation of "the pen has dried" is that the past rules over the universe and, since man took the responsibility of the trust upon his shoulders, he has accepted the responsibility to be filled by the past. The past is a saying of the Holy Prophet(saw) that,

"Do not speak ill of the times; Allah is time."

Everything has already happened in eternity" does not mean that Allah the Exalted has bound or restricted humankind [to a prewritten script]. In fact, within the book that has been written in eternity, not only are the two paths, of mercy and of pain, mentioned, but it has also been given the freedom to choose between either of the two paths. The writing in the book states that, 'Two paths are available to a person —one leads to mercy, the other ends in turmoil.'

Spirituality is necessary because there is no other way that can introduce man to the past (i.e. the book written in eternity).

Inheritance

According to the laws of nature, everything has an identity and a personality even if it is a thing that we consider intangible or invisible and deem it insignificant.

In this world, it is man's wishes and desires around which his actions revolve, and generally these desires are limited to his body of flesh and blood. According to [nature's] law these desires and wishes also, possess an identity. The yearning for wealth, honour and prestige also constitutes an identity. The desire for popularity, distinction and exaltation also has an identity. The want of compensation and reward is also not without an identity. It should be made clear though that there is a big difference between the fulfilment of needs and the attainment of desires and wishes.

When man makes it a purpose of his life to fulfil a desire, he in fact takes upon the identity of that desire. If man's goal is that of [selfish] personal gain, he as a consequence becomes a prisoner of the mortal body, where it is claustrophobic, suffocating and dark. He remains confined within the limits of this personality and cannot escape. Like a prisoner locked inside a dark jail cell, he loses contact with the vast and expansive world filled with beauty and colour.

The shell that is formed when precedence is given to one's own self in one's actions breaks one's relationship with the timeless realm that is unconfined by space. 'Such a person' thinks, comprehends and feels with a limited scope. He can be likened to a silkworm whose circle remains confined to the silk cocoon and oblivious of the outside world it remains busy in strengthening strands of silk until his weak and frail body gives out.

The prophets(as) of Allah understood that this universe is established upon a limitless and transcendental Identity. They made that Being the centre of their actions and surrendered their own selves, and handed themselves over to that limitless Being. They saw and recognized everything in reference to that Great Being and removed themselves from the middle.

As a result, their own selves and their desires were nullified and they became the manifestation of the wishes of the Greatest Creator. When the mortal body and the shell of desires no longer remained the focus, divine spirit within the mortal body became manifest and became a beautiful and glorious sight to behold. What was hidden became prominent, and the unseen became all present. Confinement was overtaken by limitlessness, and fear and despair were replaced by happiness, joy and contentment of heart and mind.

Even after the Holy Prophets(saw)—who was the last and the greatest prophet of the ages, and the recipient of Muqaam-e-Mahmood ['the desired/lofty status' of nearness to Allah] — such holy personalities have been present in all ages who nullified their own selves in the love of the Holy Prophet(saw) and who brought a complete death upon their egos in the obedience the Holy Prophet(saw) and who brought a complete death upon their egos in the obedience of the Holy Prophet(saw).

When these personalities showed up among the masses, people were drawn to them like moths to flame, despite the fact that they possessed neither wealth nor any other [worldly] means of enticement. These personalities served God's creation in any way they deemed fit, without consideration of compensation personal or personal gain, and stood before the people as beacons of truth.

How strange it is that those who spent their entire lives in the pursuit of their desires and in the accumulation of worldly comforts and pleasures around them could only keep company with their life's possessions but for a few days, leaving it all as inheritance for others. After their death, even their names were forgotten.

On the other hand, there are those pure souls whose names are remembered [with such honour] even today that heads bow in their love and reverence. As long as those personalities were present among the masses, the anxious of heart and desirous of peace paid homage to them, and when those souls departed this world, their identity continued to live among the people. This is because they had put aside all personal needs and selfish interests and vanity. The sticky web of wealth had not been able to entangle them in its clutches. Those blessed souls had realized that it is not possible to attain God before casting death upon oneself.

Conquest of Space

Even in this materialistic, tumultuous, insecure, discontented, and fearful age devoid of spiritual values, such pure souls exist in whose hearts is alight the mission of Allah and His prophets(saw). May Allah's mercy be on those who have taken Roohani Digest ['Spiritual Digest; name of publication'] It om home to home in order to spread the teachings of the Prophet(saw) who was mercy for all the worlds. In mosques, in shrines, in gatherings, in libraries, and in their own living rooms as well as their friends', they have illumined the hearts of others by introducing them to the pure and spiritual writings of this digest. It is a result of your sincere efforts, sacrifice and passion for the religion of Allah that within the short period of a few years your Roohani Digest has become the means of spreading the Paighaam-e-saeed ['auspicious message'] of the Holy Prophet(saw) and his saintly successors. We, members of the administration, as well as the readers, are thankful to the honourable leaders and scholars who are busy in its publication and who mention it from the pulpit of the prophet(saw) and read passages from it in gatherings held for the sake of goodness and explain that the purpose of man's life is to gain awareness of his spirit.

With the precious suggestions of our readers, we want to make such interesting and thought-provoking additions which would reveal to the ailing humanity that the Holy Quran is a document full of scientific formulas. If we ponder its holy verses, we can successfully attain such a station in the conquest of space where the scientists have not been able to reach even after spending billions upon billions of dollars,

According to the Holy Quran, conquest of space is our inheritance. Prohibitions have been placed on it however, hiding it behind thick curtains. Our continuous effort is that we prepare minds and gradually bring that [knowledge] out in the open which would enable us to stand prominent and superior in all the universe in the capacity of "fil-ardhi-khalifah" ['vicegerent in the Earth'], and according to the law of Allah the Exalted, enable us to establish our rule upon the Earth well as the heavens.

You are requested to continue to introduce these spiritual writings more and more. Offer the digest to the learned people. As for those brothers and sisters and the elderly who are less educated, read to them the digest yourself. Help Allah's creatures in their problems and difficulty. For worries, troubles, problems and treatment of incurable diseases, inform me where I may be needed. By the grace of Allah, we will all be triumphant as we stand in the blessed shade of the benevolent and merciful Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him.

Enslaved Nations

Allah the Exalted states that He does not change the condition of such nations that do not themselves want to change their condition. As a nation, we have lost sight of the laws created by Allah the Exalted and have limited ourselves to the concept of reward and punishment. We have limited ourselves so much that we have become completely oblivious of the creative formulas. The Holy Quran is ours; Allah is ours. Allah the Exalted states in the Holy Quran that, 'We have made subservient to you the earth and the heavens and whatever is in between; we have made the sun subservient to you; we have made the moon subservient to you; we have made the stars subservient to you.' While we are so oblivious of it all that we have not even given a cursory glance towards this process of conquest. The Holy Quran is ours and it states loudly and clearly that within iron are many benefits stored for mankind. Obviously, the Holy Quran is saying that, 'look for these benefits which Allah the Exalted has placed within iron and when you find these benefits they will in turn be beneficial to Allah's creatures, and thus you will receive honour and respect among Allah's creatures.' Allah's law stands true in its place. Those who looked for the abilities of iron gained respect on the national level; and we who ignored the teachings of the Holy Quran, have been disgraced. Salaat [Obligatory prayer], Fasting, Hajj ['obligatory pilgrimage to Makkah'] and Zakaat ['obligatory monetary donation'] are important in their own place; obligatory, and necessary. This is because fulfilling these acts of worship strengthen the spirit, and the spiritual abilities are activated and awakened, But here the situation is completely reversed in that there is no awareness at all as to whether spiritual abilities even exist among us or not. The reason for this is that we do not possess the quality of reflection. We act, but we pay no attention to the reality and purpose of that action. When a servant of Allah, who has been bestowed ilm-ul-yaqeen ['faith based certainty'], reflects upon the Holy Quran, he is able to see, before him the history of the rise and fall of nations, and he observes that the rise and fall of nations depends upon the fact that the nations that reflected upon the words of Allah the Exalted became victorious, and nations that refused reflection became enslaved. What a tragedy it is when we see that within the progress of present-day science all those formulas are at work that were left behind by our ancestors and which were our inheritance, but since we did not pay any attention to that inheritance, others benefited from them while we became a backward and beggarly nation.

Sense of insecurity

In today's sitting, come let us ponder life and the nature of its demands. It is a daily observation that life proceeds along a chain of demands. Needs arise within us and we fulfil them. When we feel hungry, we seek food to eliminate the hunger. When we feel thirsty, we look for water. We eat food, and we drink water. In other words, we fulfil the demands that arise within us. This gives us satisfaction and we become content.

If we ignore a demand, our mind remains perplexed by it, and it keeps reminding us that the need has not yet been met. This causes unrest within us. Worry and anxiety take hold of us. We are not able to do anything with focus and concentration. Our attention becomes more and more distracted.

This is true of all needs and demands. To eat and drink, to be happy, to love, to earn a living, to raise and educate one's children to exhibit selflessness and love, to help others, in short, every action of life, is the result of one need or the other. These needs arise within every individual of this world, and each individual, somehow or the other, at some point or the other, sooner or later, fulfils these needs and gains contentment.

Just like demands of the body, human spirit also has its demands. The demands of the spirit prod human consciousness in a similar fashion: to awaken the realization that these needs should also be met. Spiritual demands and their fulfilment are much more important and far more consequential than the fulfilment of physical demands. Their consequences are far more momentous than physical demands, and their fulfilment brings about much greater peace and contentment, such that one reaches a point where one forgets all worries. A feeling of blissfulness and pleasant intoxication permeates one's mind. One is surrounded by happiness and the elements of happiness, which drive away all worry and grief.

Of these spiritual demands, the most important and the most basic demand that arises within man is one that brings about the realization within man that he must contact his Allah, and that he must attain that joy and happiness which is certain to result from this nearness. Human spirit pines to achieve this happiness and joy. Alas, man has thrown into the recesses of his soul that [frame of] mind which informs him of these demands and the importance of their fulfillment. Man considers his all, the temporary demands of this material life which is but of a few days. The body is mortal and the joys and sorrows related to the body are also temporary. Everything connected with the material body will die when the body dies. But spirit is everlasting. Thus, all that is related to the spirit contains within it the aspect of eternal life. The happiness that arises by the fulfilment of spiritual demand assures everlasting comfort and joy.

But the tragedy is, as we have said, man has forgotten the importance of all this and has moved away from his spirit and has become oblivious towards the fulfilment of spiritual needs. His spirit, however, still attempts to bring his attention towards the fulfilment of these needs. Man may give it whatever meaning he wishes, he may accept it with whatever interpretation he may, but its existence cannot be denied. When, even upon the continual warning of the spirit, we fail to fulfil [its demands], the reaction of the demand becomes apparent. This is the same reaction which also arises when physical demands are not met.

The condition of this reaction is much more severe than that of the prior reaction that has just been mentioned. At times one feels this reaction as mental chaos, and at times one processes it as dissatisfaction and lack of peace. At other times, one perceives it as a feeling of insecurity. But all of these are the side effects of an unfulfilled spiritual need. And that need consists of the human desire to draw near to Allah the Exalted and so attain his true status which he had rejected in the past, and thus be protected from all worry and grief.

Thus, it is necessary for all of us to carry out the practical step, which is of meditation ['Muraqabah'] in order to fulfill our spiritual needs. May Allah the Exalted guide us! Ameen

Light

Dear friends—Travelers of the realm of the unseen and Witnesses of the omnipotent presence of God—Admirers of spirituality!

When lowliness and loftiness are mentioned, discussions turn toward the analysis of what is lowliness, and what is loftiness or exaltation. The stories of nations' rise and fall tell us that nations that employ thoughtfulness, reflection, and mental inquiry are the ones that hold an elevated status. And nations whose conscious is devoid of reflection fall to a status of lowliness and disgrace. It was to witness these scenarios of lowliness and elevation that nature provided for me such resources that from my poor and underdeveloped country I flew through the vastness of space to reach London. I am sure it was nature's intention that my experience in the path of lowliness and loftiness be elevated.

I am basically from an educated and learned family where lowliness describes a person who is neglectful of his salaah and fasting etc., whereas loftiness describes one who is engrossed in gathering reward for his virtues. In the world that I am in talking of now, I did not see anything that showed concern for the concept of reward and punishment. But I saw them more well off, more organized, and more humanitarian than my own nation. So much so that if a person is unemployed there, he gets enough allowance that he can easily live with all the amenities of life. Their standard of living is such that cannot be imagined by even the richest of men in a poor underdeveloped country. They have access to every such thing that can possibly be of use in human life. Their academic progress is at such a level that, within short periods of times, new inventions are brought forth. But what they lack there is the peace of heart and mind. There are few among them who sleep without medication.

The point to ponder here is that the developing and the underdeveloped nations also are deprived of the peace of heart and mind, despite the fact that they have piled up billions upon trillions of virtues on their side. But they are devoid of that light which turns into happiness and joy and runs in the blood of the human body. It is seen that the person possessing the largest store of virtues is the farthest away from peace. There is an aridness which clings to the body; a permission that holds us in its monstrous clutches. We have seen the upholders of virtue here, as well as there. The condition there is much worse than here. The curse of sectarianism [here] has reached such a low that policemen, intoxicated with alcohol, even enter mosques wearing shoes and with dogs alongside them, and shut down the mosques. Each person insists that he is righteous, while those of the other sect deserve to be killed. This is the condition of poor underdeveloped countries.

The condition of those nations that boast of their progress and consider themselves superior is not much different than this. This is the nation that for the sake of its selfish monetary profit has disfigured this beautiful world. It has fogged what were once beautiful starlit nights. It has polluted what used to be the intoxicating and magical morning breeze with poisonous atomic fuel. This is that elevated nation that has stolen the smile of the flowers. Songs of the birds that once lifted the spirit have now turned into heart-wrenching sonnets. Science and technology has thrown man into the abyss of insecurity. For humanity suffering from pang of insecurity, moonlight has lost its charm and sunlight its beauty. Who does not know that atomic experimentation, fumes of petroleum and diesel, and burnt debris from jet planes, has poisoned the atmosphere to such a degree that each breath that man takes is toxic, and this toxicity has turned man's life upside down. Nerves have been shattered; the mind has lost focus; the heart is ever inclined to sink. The weeping, ailing, and agonizing nation, hiding behind the illusory curtain of progress, realized that its wellbeing lay in escaping from the monstrous hold of insecurity, but in this escape as well, the greedy and selfish genius mind grabbed it in its clutches like a hunter seizes its prey. And the progressive man of this age, in order to escape this sense of insecurity, invented such narcotics as heroin, LSD, rockets, marijuana, and mandrax, and thus the common man, in order to escape one problem, became entangled in thousands of others.

This entire conversation boils down to the conclusion that as long as a commercial mind operates within individuals, humankind will never be at peace. The developed nation is suffering punishment because its progress is based on selfish interest. Each progress is a means to accumulate more wealth. Undeveloped nations are suffering from problems because no action of theirs is free of commercial needs [and mentality]. They remember Allah with the same intention of profiting themselves, though Allah does not approve of this way of thinking. Allah the Exalted states:

"Those who conceal Allah's revelations in the Book, and purchase for them a miserable profit- they swallow into themselves naught but Fire; Allah will not address them on the Day of Resurrection. Nor purify them: Grievous will be their penalty." [Holy Quran ch2: v174]

It is obvious that burning coal within one's belly is an agonizing punishment, which is this same grievous punishment which at times takes the form of anxiety, at times restlessness, and at times it turns into a sense of insecurity, every moment taking us deeper into the world of fear, casting upon us the enchanted spell of death.

Songs of Love

It is said that this world has gone through the cycle of destruction and repopulation time and again, or according to better estimates, 16 times. This world so beautiful, adorned with enchanting greenery and colourful flowers, with its ice capped mountains and waterfalls glimmering like pearls, basking in warm rays of the sun and bathed in enchanting light of the moon, is yet again standing at the brink of death, shaking with fear, as 40,000 atom bombs have the world as their target. Springs that flow from within the earth, minerals that have shown man the path towards progress, the system of gravity, all, regrettably are awaiting their destruction at the hands of their sons. The earth that has raised us, that earth, that world, stand perplexed as to why mankind is bent upon destroying the earth—what crime has the earth committed to justify such a punishment! Man has received so much from mother earth. The thumb-sucking infant reaches his youth and enjoys the pleasures of adulthood, resulting in the joyous flourishing of the earth—is this not a favour bestowed by the earth? What ungratefulness is this that children are bent upon rendering barren, and destroying, their mother's womb!

The creator of the universe had made this world a cradle of love, happiness, joy and selflessness. Even today, everything in this world provides joy and happiness to those who can see. Beautiful birds of so many colours, landscapes affirming the rise and ebb of water, the loftiness of the mountains, the elevations of the sky, the beauty of the flower's starlit nights, bright days, love glistening in the eyes of one's mother, the cooing of a baby, the purity of one's sister, the sincerity of one's brother, the love of one's father, these are all indeed means of joy and happiness for mankind. Just like mother, the earth also wishes that its progeny live a joyful life; that it not turn the earth into hell; that flowers be cultivated upon it, and not burning embers.

Who is Allah, the being whose love for [mankind] is greater than the love of 70 mothers? Allah is love, Allah is joy. Allah not only created the universe, but in order to sustain the universe and perpetuate happiness and joy, He created man and laid the responsibility of the auxiliary creation upon the fragile shoulders of women. Within the heart of women and within their every pore, He infused that love which is His own attribute. Allah, the Creator of the universe, made women the medium of creation, and along with creative abilities He transferred into them one seventieth part of His love so they may become mothers and establish Allah's creation, and tend to that garden which, when it flourishes and blooms, gives Allah the greatest joy.

My sisters, my mothers, and my daughters, this world is populated and flourishing because of you. Your greatness is apparent from the fact that the system of creation is established through you. You are the means of creation of every such personage who, in light of the laws of Allah, has tried to rid this earth of grief and misfortune. That includes great thinkers, as well as God's prophets and their friends, aulia-Allah ['friends of Allah'].

The beneficence and the greatness of women is of such a caliber that Allah's beloved, Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was raised in the comforting embrace of a mother, and it was a mother whose milk nourished and developed the conscious of the Holy Prophet(saw), and it was that conscious that delivered the commandments of Allah to mankind. Who does not know that it is a mother's milk that tins in the body of every national reformer!

What a travesty it is, that under the illusion of scientific progress, plans are underway to steal your children. An Influential group from among the scientists wishes to turn castles of joy into ruins. [It wishes] that streams of love run dry, and that the moral and social constraints that exalt man to high stations, be annihilated and brought to the ground.

A few selfish and wealthy capitalists have made the acme of human intelligence a means of accumulating wealth into their own reserves. Indeed, surgical heart repair is a great feat of medical science, but a single operation on the heart costs thousands of dollars. What portion of the population would be able to spend such an extraordinary amount of money in quest of life for an ailing heart? The ability you had developed in your beloved children, nursing them with your own milk, has now turned into commerce. Silver and gold have increased in value, whereas man's value has depreciated.

O my mothers, my daughters, women who give colour to the creation of Allah! Now you have a dual responsibility. The law of nature wants to include you in its kingship. You should instill this notion deep into the hearts and minds of your children that the world was created to remain established. This world is a cradle of joy, music and song. Establish this way of thinking in your children that Allah is all love, and He wishes that songs of love be sung in this world. If our mothers, our sisters, and our daughters, transfer the way of thinking of sincerity, love, and selflessness as taught by Allah and his Prophet(saw), the clouds of fear and terror would be lifted away from the world. The society would be reformed. The intelligence of those who consider wealth their all will tarnish, and once again humankind will march towards their destination, finding that world which is joy, happiness, delight, and love.

Masterpiece Image

Imagine that you are an artist, and employing all your skills as an artist you paint a picture. This picture is the masterful product of your entire life's efforts. After completing the picture, when you look at it, you yourself fall in love with it. You also desire that when others look at that picture, they praise it.

You may have seen such living images that looking at them one gets the impression that at any moment the image will step out of the paper it is on and start to talk.

It wasn't too long ago—twelve years perhaps have passed since then—that I was free of all thoughts. I had achieved focus to the level where a person can concentrate on a single point and becomes oblivious of his surroundings.

My thought took a turn as features of a very beautiful picture printed in four colours in the newspaper entered [the mind] through consciousness and reached onwards to the computer of subconscious mind. As soon as thought took this turn, *will* was activated, and the will desired that the features of the picture adorning the pages of the newspaper—the beautiful eyes, lips that were as beautiful as flower petals, the charming face, a delicate nose with hues of red sunset, in short captivating head to toe—that the person through whose mind all this transferred onto the paper, nature has bestowed creative powers within that person.

This thought activated the creative abilities in me given by Allah the Exalted, and the picture walked out of the paper and stood in front of me.

And just as it had come out of the domain of the paper, [the picture] walked on its feet and dissolved back into it.

This observation reveals the fact that drawings on paper, be they facial features, decorative designs, beauty, attraction, of charm are all, living. And when creative powers focus on a point and turn into will, these artistic sketches take shape and form and become a body.

When an artist creates a masterful painting, in reality, it is the creative formulas within him that have been activated and manifested. This artistry has been performed by an artist who himself is a creation.

Allah the Exalted is also a Musavvir ['the Fashioner']. He fashions are such as invite His own praise. Allah the Exalted states

**"Allah is He, Who has created a picture in the
mother's womb; Holy is He, what a picture He
has created!"**

If an artist is asked to break apart his painting, to destroy its features, or to tear up the paper or canvas on which has made the painting, nothing will be more heartbreaking and painful for the artist than this. He will never allow his masterpiece to be ruined, and he will never like it if his masterpiece is vandalized and destroyed.

Allah has created a picture—a picture that is matchless and unique in its balanced proportions, its colours, its attraction and its beauty. This picture can see, and hear, and speak, and feel, and lighten the burdens of others. If a person intends to blemish this picture and wants to ruin it with his injustice and ignorance, then indeed this act would be displeasing to the greatest of all artists, Allah.

It has been stated in all heavenly scriptures that Allah the Exalted does not forgive [transgressions against] huqoo-ul-ibaad ['rights of the people/servants of Allah']. When we mention huqoo-ul-ibaad, firstly the individual has a duty towards himself, as he is firstly himself a servant of Allah.

In today's advanced age, which according to heavenly knowledge can indeed be called the age of decline, and which is fostering insecurity, lack of peace, anxiety, and complex problems, each individual is disregarding his own rights and is destroying his body and spirit in order to collect more and more wealth. As greed of this world and lust for wealth continues to increase within man, so do contentment, joy and peace of mind continue to decrease. This deprivation of contentment and peace of mind forewarns of mental chaos, agitation and stress. Mental stress produces a prevailing sense of fear within man. The presence of grief and fear in life makes the image of man grotesque, making it disfigured and unseemly.

How unfortunate it is and how foolish that man is destroying and wasting the beautiful image made by Allah the Exalted. God has not made gold and silver in order for these precious metals to consume the entire being of man. Gold and silver is made for the purpose that man may utilize it and add beauty to the picture painted by Allah. But the misfortune of present times is that man is bent upon proving that it is not the gold and silver which has been created for the use of man, but that man has been created to be sacrificed at the altar of gold and silver. It is the way of thinking which the Holy Quran denounces:

"And those people who collect gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of Allah are given the tidings of a painful punishment for them."

[Holy Quran ch9: v34]"

Is it not punishment enough that Allah the Exalted desires that man may live for hundreds of years and play a role in the beauty of nature, yet man spends his night and day in work, going after the acquisition of futile worldly pursuits, tired and exhausted due to his own will and intent, bent upon reducing his age to the shortest possible span, whereas this progeny of Adam and Eve is aware that all the wealth that has been accumulated by burning one's own life as fuel will one day be taken away by death!

Three Friends

Seeking refuge from heated gusts of wind, we pulled thick curtains over the doors and windows of the room to create shades, and only then did we find some relief. And in this dark, shaded room, as blades of the fan started to move, coolness set in and created a dazed and intoxicated feeling. At the time it was the four of us, friends, present in the room. One person was reclined against the sofa. The other person was sitting uptight in a Buddha pose, staring into space, lost in some thought or the other. The third person was busy reading a book. And the condition of the fourth person in the room was such that he had only but a cotton wrap ['lungi'] around his waist. The atmosphere was as if the ambience of the room had come to halt at a single point. Although the four gentlemen were seated in their separate ways and were engrossed in their separate thoughts, they had one thing in common—what was common between them was that their eyes were twinkling with reflection. One from among those four initiated the chain of conversation.

"Friends, what is the definition of friend, and who is the best of friends?"

The person seated in the Buddha pose staring into space was startled by this question, and he said: "A person's best friend is his own heart — the one who comes to understand his own heart, and sees his own image inside his heart, becomes aware of the friend. That is, becomes his own friend."

The third person who had been busy reading, took his eyes off the book and asked, "How is it possible to become one's own friend?"

The gentleman sitting on the sofa also joined in the conversation and said, "It is possible for a person to become his own friend by gaining awareness of his heart. As long as we consider life to be only a means of fulfilling physical needs we remain at a distance from our heart and soul. Once when we start to think above and beyond the physical needs, doors [leading] to spirit and spiritual realities open upon us."

The topic was so complex that all four gentlemen present in that cool dark room started attending to the issue with their intellectual energy. The question that arose was: 'What is the difference between the heart and the spirit? And in the absence of a body? how meaningful would remain the needs of the spirit? And in the absence of a spirit the body has no worth whatsoever. How plausible is it to say that the relationship between the heart and the spirit is the true relationship while the relationship with the body is mortal and unreal, even though we become aware of the body first and the spirit afterwards; also, our knowledge of the spirit is merely academic and not observational, whereas the body holds an academic as well as an observational presence?'

The person clad in the lungi brought up something far-fetched. In a loud and echoing voice he said, "Existence of the body is dependent on the spirit; the spirit is not dependent upon the, existence of the body. And this is proved by the reality that in the absence of the spirit, man is nothing but a corpse. As long as spirit is connected to the body of flesh and blood, the physical body remains active. This body of flesh and blood is able to see, and hear, and touch, and speak, and it is able to feel the waves of heat and coolness. But if the spirit breaks its connection with this body of flesh and blood, the physical body neither hears, nor speaks, and neither does it feel. In the presence of the spirit, a person feels even the slightest prick of a needle point upon his body, and in the absence of the spirit a person would not feel a thing or have any power to defend even if his body were to be chopped in little pieces with a large cleaving weapon. This process of life proves that the reality of a person is his spirit and not his body of flesh and blood. If a person is aware of his heart and his spirit, he is a friend to himself, whereas if a person considers his body of flesh and blood to be his all, he is an enemy to himself. The heart becomes an enemy to the person who has no concept of a spiritual life within him. If a person wants to employ his heart for a foul job, the heart refuses to serve him. It traps the person in materialism, confined by time and space. And if a person seeks from his heart the path to his soul, the heart, like good and sincere friend, directs him towards the spiritual relationships. And the heart not only tells him, but shows him, the spirit is pure, while the body is foul. It is revealed to the person that all the happiness associated with the body is temporary like the body itself, and since the spirit itself is perpetual joy, those of spiritual inclination remain happy. The shadows of fear and grief run away from them. This material world—the world of the bodies of flesh and blood is a world of dualities: Happy at one moment, and sad the next moment the cause of our disgrace. In this materialistic world of duality, we will not be able to understand anything till we understand the contrast of joy and sadness, honor and disgrace, coolness and heat. Unless I am aware of what disgrace is, I will not be able to comprehend the meaning of honor. Unless I have suffered through severe hardships, I will not be able to understand happiness. To pass through this contradiction, one must free oneself from the duality of this material world. When a person passes through the duality of this materialistic world and becomes a student of self-awareness, he looks upon each object with the same perspective, whether it is pebbles and stones or whether it is gold. And as long as a person is unacquainted with the knowledge of self-awareness, his heart remains restless and anxious. To remove the anxiety and restlessness of the heart one must adopt a specific way of thinking, and this way of thinking is the free way of thinking."

The person clad in the lungi said, 'this free way of thinking is actually the conscious of a qalander ['spiritual free thinker, untied to conventions']. The qalander conscious shows us the way to strengthen the ties of friendship with our heart. And that way is [realization] that [in this world] we have neither enemies nor friends.

We are our own enemy, and our own friend. When the qalander conscious comes into action a person sees the entire universe as a stage. On this stage there are some who are fathers, some who are mothers, some are children, some are friends, and some that are enemies, some sinful, and some who are pure. These, in reality, are the different personas of those who work on this stage. When one character from among these, or when all of them, step down from the stage, the magic of the duality of the world breaks and they all become one.'

Saintly Faces

As the qalander ['saintly free thinker'] conscious awakened, it met a 'knower of secrets' in the realm of the unseen and omnipresence of God [ghaib-o-shahood] Though this 'knower of 'secrets' was not composed of a body consisting of a bony skeleton covered by flesh and blood, yet in his transcendental body he appeared solid, and as the hands composed of flesh mid blood shook the transcendental hands that had no flesh, no discernable change was felt in their touch. As mind became compatible with the solid transcendental body, consciousness became familiar with that 'knower of secrets'.

The question was asked: Who is Allah the Exalted, how is He, What does He do, and where does He live?

Lashes that were covering the half open, dazed eyes of the knower of secrets moved, and the smile on his lips as well as the look of knowledge and inspiration upon his face deepened. Upon my question, that 'man of knowledge and awareness' posed a question: "Allah is He who after raising the heavens has established balance between them. The question is, 'do you know yourself?'"

Obviously, I did not have an answer to that question.

The knower of the secrets' said, 'Look at the Earth from the elevation of the sky!'"

I saw that a tiny seed was placed upon the earth. The earth, impulsive with maternal instincts, secured the seed within her belly and transferred her creative abilities within that seed. I saw that a tiny seedling sprouted, or one can say that two fine layers of the seed arose as two delicate leaves. The roots were so weak that they were not able to get their nutrition directly from the earth. This tiny plant was obtaining its nutrition from the two tiny leaves that had come out of the seed. Gradually the roots grew strong enough to obtain nutrition directly from the earth. As soon as this ability developed, the two tiny leaves that had come out of the seed fell to the ground. Now the plant began to obtain its sustenance directly from the earth. The process over days, months, and years, turned those tiny roots into a large and strong tree—a tree that was able to obtain its nutrition from the earth, and to draw vital sustenance from the surrounding light.

When a human being was transferred to the belly of mother, the same creative factors appeared in the process of his birth. Within the mother's belly the human found neither bread, nor fruit, and no conveniences of a kitchen. The digestive organs were so weak that the human could not afford to partake of such food. The creative ability within the mother filled the mother's breasts with a pure, digestible, and delicate nutrition—milk—and as the baby was born, springs of milk gushed out, and when milk was no longer needed, the springs dried up.

This is a system that has been going on from eternity and one that will continue to go on forever. The man, the 'knower of secrets,' focused his dark intoxicated eyes upon me. I saw that waves were coming out of his eyes and entering into my mind. As the absorbed waves filled the mind entirely, they overflowed outwards. These waves had the appearance of a liquid. Upon reflection, it became clear that these waves were water. The 'knower of secrets,' placed the index finger of his right hand between the two nostrils at the base of the nose. It was shocking beyond belief to see that the base of everything in the present world is water that flows through a pipe between ascent ['sa'ood] and descent ['nuzool']. It is the same water, which in the belly of the mother, changes form and becomes nutrition for the baby through a tube. Then the same water turns into milk; and on a mango tree it turns into a mango; on a berry tree it turns into a berry; on an apple tree, on apple; and on a banana tree it becomes a banana. That is, it is the same matter that on different trees manifests itself in different forms. The same water at times becomes a flower of a single colour, and at other times becomes many colours within a single flower.

It says in the Holy Quran:

**And it is that holy and blessed being that sends
water from the heavens, and from it creates so
many varieties of fruits, and so many types of species.**

[Holy Quran ch7: v57, ch50: v7]

The same water makes a shell beautiful by giving it beautiful features, and the same water makes a shell unsightly. Even this limited aspect of the activity of water is so deep and complex that to understand it, is in fact, to gain insight into the system of the universe.

Those who ponder this system of creation come to realize that the universal creative program is bound up in a single relationship. The difference is that only two species from the present world, man and jinn, have the ability to understand this system. Other species lack the capacity to understand this system because they had refused to carry the weight of the trust tiered by Allah, whereas, man has the ability to understand this complex system because he had accepted the offer to keep Allah's trust. The Holy Quran explains this as follows:

**And we offered our trust to the heavens, and
the earth, and the mountains, but they all
announced that, 'we do not have the capacity
to carry the weight of this trust,' and man took
upon this trust unthinkingly. Indeed he is
unjust and ignorant.**

[Holy Quran ch33:v72]

Ignorance and injustice lies in the fact that man has in his possession that trust of Allah from which the entire universe is deprived. Allah the Exalted states in chapter *Al-e-Imran*:

That day shall arrive when some faces will become illumined and some will turn dark. Say to those whose inside is dark that you rejected the commands of Allah after you had believed in Him; now suffer the punishment of this evil doing. And those who after accepting the trust of Allah the Exalted, kept Allah's approval above everything else, their faces will be illumined and on them will shower the eternal blessings of Allah.

[Holy Quran ch3:v106-107]

Adam and Eve

When God pours ladles full of sunshine upon the ocean, the ocean sends droplets of water to spread that sunshine into the expanses of the atmosphere. There, according to a process these droplets of water become clouds that shower upon the earth, irrigating the entire earth. When Adam was thrown upon the earth, he lamented, 'how will I meet my nutritional needs?' Allah said, 'We have made the earth a reservoir of resources for you. Open up the belly of the earth; you will be provided for all your needs.' With the blessing of his Lord adam dug the earth, and therein he found all things necessary. The essence of the story is that as a person sows, so does he reap. Adam and his wife, Eve ['Havva'], were living a carefree life of luxury in heaven but, tired of the monotony, they committed a mistake and, as a consequence, heaven rejected them. Indeed, heaven is a composite of a certain character, and when this specific character broke apart, earth became the abode of Adam and Eve.

This world is a world of duality. No character of the earth is free this duality. The fluctuation of the weather between hot and cold, happiness overshadowed by sorrow, sorrow being overpowered by happiness, honour followed immediately by disgrace, health, sickness, love and hatred, night turning into day, and day becoming night—all of these dualities are the contrasting faces of each character. If this contradiction within the life of duality is not understood, it is not possible to understand at all.

Unless I understand what disgrace is, it would be a futile attempt for me to understand honour, in the same way if I do not understand what hardship is, any talk of happiness would be meaningless for me. When we ponder this world of duality, only one conclusion arises: that duality is rooted in the body. As long as bodily incentives and activities are present, duality is present. Happiness and sorrow, health and sickness, heat and coolness, love and hatred, selfishness and sincerity, all are related to the body. The body itself is based upon duality: One body made up of the particles of the earth; the other made of the lights of the heaven. The body made of the particle' of the earth is the physical body, and the body made up of the lights of the heaven is the spiritual body. Man spends his life alternating between his physical and spiritual body. To escape from the physically constrained thoughts, it is not the material body that one needs to abandon, but material' thoughts. The physical body must be trained so that it can accept [the presence of] these dualities at the same time. The duality of happiness and sorrow is only due to the material body. But if the qalander conscious activates within a person, all the dualities, though remaining present, lose their meaning, and, temporarily, they can even be eliminated. In each

instant of his life, man may be subject to confined perceptions. Yet man may also be free within his confined perceptions. In such cases, impressions of sadness and grief do not affect him. He does not remain happy either, as the other face of happiness is sorrow. His eyes are not attracted to the glitz and glamour of the resources adorning the earth as far from it all, very far from it indeed, the glory of heaven stands before his eyes. Just as here, confined within matter, he eats bread, in the same way, it is easy for him to free himself from this matter and partake of fruits from the gardens of heaven. When an individual gains awareness of the duality and becomes complete in self awareness, a new path, a new way, a new style of living is revealed to him. Such a pot is called a free man, possessing a qalander conscious. A free man looks at all things with the same perspective, whether it is stones or whether it is gold. When the free man realizes that he is not just the material body, he no longer considers his material needs [the purpose of] his life. He has a higher purpose of life before him, and with body and soul he is able to observe that this life is temporary and merely fiction. His heart remains peaceful. It does not become chaotic by the affects of the material world. He is pleased with the material glow and glitter, but this glitter does not become an attraction ha him.

In the eyes of the free man who possesses a qalander conscious, sincere friends and enemies, those who are jealous and envious, the righteous and the sinful, the selfless and the selfish, biased and the unbiased, all become the same in significance. He realizes that we are all living beings and this universe is a stage for the living things. Each individual within the universe is fulfilling his role. The universe, in fact, is like a large drama production in which each individual performs his character and exits.

The universe is one; its dramatic characters are various. One meter is the oppressor, the other the oppressed. One has the responsibility to spread the message of peace, while another has been appointed to advocate violence.

Just as a single film [or movie] can be seen on thousands of screens, in the same way, images of this universe are being displayed by loh-e-mahfooz ['divine tablet recording the activities of mankind']. Each earth in the universe is a screen. When qalander conscious awakens, the entire universe appears as film [or a movie] and the billions of earths in the universe appear as screens. The eye of the soul shows to the physical eye that whatever happens on the earth, such as its agriculture, and the continuation of generations following ceremonies of marriage, happens in exactly the same way upon all the other earth in the universe.

Accountability

Prophet Jesus, peace be upon him, was travelling from one city to another for the purpose of preaching when a cleric met him on the way and greeted him thus: "O man of God, I desire your companionship on this journey."

While walking, as the two travellers grew tired and the sun had also reached its peak, the cleric suggested that in order to seek protection from the heat, hunger and thirst they should spend a while under the shade of a tree. So, Prophet Jesus' and the cleric stopped to rest under a tree. As the tree gave them protection from the blistering sun and as their nerves settled, the cleric respectfully suggested: "Come, let us eat." Prophet Jesus(as) and the cleric unpacked their meals at the same time. The cleric saw that Prophet Jesus(as) had two pieces bread on his spread, whereas the cleric had three. The cleric said to Prophet Jesus(as) that "I'm older in age than you, and we need water with our meal [so you should be the one to fetch it. "As Prophet Jesus left to fetch water, the cleric quickly finished one of his three pieces of bread. When Prophet Jesus(as) had fetched the water and both the travellers were about to start their meal, Prophet Jesus(as) saw that the cleric had only two pieces of bread on his spread.

He asked, "O person, you had three pieces of bread, where did the one go?" The cleric said, "You are mistaken, I only had two pieces of bread."

After the meal, the cleric lay down for a nap and fell asleep Prophet Jesus(as) got up and made three piles of sand. He blew upon them, and they turned to gold. As the cleric woke up he was surprised to see the three piles of gold at a little distance in front of him. His voice filled with surprise and incredulity he asked Prophet Jesus(as), "Whose gold is this?"

Jesus" replied: "One is mine, the other yours, while third belongs to the person who ate the third piece of bread."

Instantly, the cleric blurted out, "It was me who ate piece of bread." Then a little while later he requested, " Your holiness, you are a Prophet of God—what concern do you have for worldly wealth! Why don't you give the third pile [of gold] to me as well?"

Jesus' said, "There is one condition. That is, you should cancel the agreement we had made to travel together so that I can go my own way."

The cleric said, "That is fine—you may go on. I shall travel alone."

The cleric said, "That is fine—you may go on. I shall alone."

Prophet Jesus(as) placed his blanket on his shoulder and left the spot by the tree. He had not gone far when, suddenly, three men appeared. One from among them called out to the cleric in a loud voice, "O person, what are you doing here? Are you here to usurp what is rightfully ours?"

At hearing this, the cleric started to reproach the man, but when his reproach was not heeded, he started to beg and plead. The three men, however, argued that there were of them, and likewise, there were the three piles of gold. As the cleric started to cry and wail, the chief among three men said, "There is one way that you can take one of these piles of gold."

Having no other choice, the cleric agreed [to settle for one pile]. The agreement they settled on was that the cleric would go to the market and fetch them food, and not warn the authorities about them. The cleric, after buying food from the market poisoned it so that the three thugs would die after eating it and so that he could gain possession of all that gold. On the other side, one of the three men came up with the plan that they should kill the cleric as soon as he would bring the food. The result was that the cleric was murdered, while the three Hell died [shortly] after eating the [poisoned] food.

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When we reflect upon our society, our mind, negating time, travels 37 years back into the past. One day, during 1947, I was settled in a large and expansive mansion in the Patiala district of Eastern Punjab. There was chaos and uproar all around. The sound of bullets fired from machine guns had suspended consciousness and weakened the nerves. Those leaving their homes were thrown into the clutches of death. Fire was set upon the houses of those who had chosen to remain in their homes. Nature planned it so that after being relieved of seven days' misery of hunger and thirst and confinement, members of the mansion I was in] were cast out of the house. In order to go from this side to the other I had to walk across a road. After pausing for a moment, and waiting, not in the realm of dream, but in full consciousness, I wished to cross the street in such a way as to avoid stepping on the corpses [that lay on the ground]. But the road was filled with corpses and I had no choice but to walk on my toes, passing over the dead bodies to reach other side of the road. Blood flowed from rooftops. Drains and gutters were filled with bloody water. Children were crying. Women, cast out of their homes and unveiled, presented a horrific spectacle. Heaps of wealth and bundles of currency had become cheaper than dirt.

As the sun rose on the 14th of August, it carried in its rays a message that, 'today a nation having gained its independence from another nation will establish a state that will promote the welfare of its people.' Nature opened up its treasures upon the nation that had been hungry and in tatters so that, that nation would not have to complain of the scarcity of resources and so that no one would be able to interfere in the welfare promoting works of that nation.

One generation has passed away. One generation having reached adulthood is moving on towards old age, and another generation is reaching adulthood. Angels had been inspiring all three of these generations, but as nature's blessings became more and more abundant, the nation became more and more greedy for material possessions, and today this greed has become a cancer upon the existence of this nation.

The history of the rise and fall of nations tells us that only those nations that remember their past, and that are accountable for their present actions, can continue to survive.

Camera

God the Lord, is that being who is present in the heart of every person. Just as it is not possible to imagine life without heartbeat, in the same way, it is not possible to imagine a heartbeat without God. God is a friend to all, and is the kind of friend who remains with us in all [the stages] of our lives—in the cradle, in childhood, in adulthood, and in old age.

As the mother accepts creative fluid from the father, the two liquids dissolve into each other and a body comes into existence. This body forms and grows according to its mother's body, and when bands of muscle tightly tie deep layers of flesh upon the bony skeleton and plaster it with the adornment of skin, the body is complete. This finished body is given protection within a confined room to safeguard it from hot winds and cold breezes. In fact, to nourish this body, the blood from the mother's body is run through the veins and arteries of this [tiny] body through a tube. This preparation is so thorough that, before this body leaves the confined room, reservoirs of food are stored for its nourishment within its mother's breasts. This generational process is an ongoing, continuous, and common process not only within man, but also within cats, dogs, lions, goats, camels, cows, horses, elephants, and other mammals. No doubt, within the transfer of this liquid matter, lies the secret of creation.

After spending a life of joy and sorrow, death descends upon the body. Then the same body manifests within the body of a mother and a father, entering the back of the father womb of the mother, and in this way new faces and continue to come into being.

If we ponder upon the generational process of the species, the secret that is revealed is that, despite similar traits, each species has its individual identity. The ability to hear, feel, see, and the demands of hunger and thirst are common in all, but still each species and each individual of the species is different from all others.

God, our friend, has been supporting us with such continuously that our identity as a nation [or an ethnic group] remains intact. Despite the fact that the process of birth is the same for all, every being in the universe has its own identity. At the end of our life of joy and sorrow, when mother earth takes us in her embrace, and our material existence dissipates, our God, our friend, gives us life in another world against the generational process. This process of life and death has been established from the beginning of creation and it will continue to go until the end of time.

I, Khwaja Shamsuddin Azeemi, became the manifestation of 'kun' ['be'] in eternity. The [video] camera of loh-e-mahfooz ['divine tablet that records all human actions'] captured me in film and this film was displayed on the screen of barzakh ['realm between death and re-birth']. As the projector barzakh displayed this film of Khwaja Shamsuddin Azeemi, the machine of generational process showed the film on earth according to a set process. The earthly camera recorded on film each movement and every action of Khwaja Shamsuddin Azeemi. And when this film was complete, it was transferred onto the screen of aalam-e-airaaf ['place between heaven and hell']. From aalam-e-airaaf this film could be seen till hashr-o-nashr ['Day of resurrection/ Judgment Day'], and from is hashr-o-nashr to heaven and hell. Who is it that runs and protect such a consistent system? It is God, our friend.

We must consider, with sill seriousness and with patience and grace, what the factors are that are working behind life and death and the ongoing changes within the body. Why does this process continue? Why have we not become independent and established within ourselves? Can we stop the process of continuous changes within our body, and can we gain an eternal existence? And, is it possible to rid ourselves of the going changes in body, mind, and consciousness. We must reflect as to why, along with the change of night into day, and day into night, we change as well.

To find this out, we must recognize our friend, God. And when we become acquainted with our true, pure, and ever-loving friend, God, this unending process of interchange will come to a stop at a single point.

When a child is young, he loves his parents, then his siblings, and as he grows older he starts to love his extended family, society, sect, nation, and humankind. Despite this, he is not satisfied. The thirst to love remains within him. Today's child, even as he reaches tomorrow's old age, remains thirsty. And this thirst is not quenched until he finds out who the true, selfless, and glorious beloved is. All of love's thirst is quenched when we finally see our friend, God, with the eyes of love. Then what happens is that our love turns into light, or an air wave -a wave which reaches around the entire world and spreads the fragrance of love.

Qalander conscious guides us in this path, so just as our friend, God, loves us and loves all [the other] creatures present in the universe, so should we love His creatures. Just as our friend, God, helps out creatures, so should we serve His creatures.

Qalander Baba Auliya (RA)

As worshippers exited the mosque after offering Friday prayers, there stood a person distributing religious literature. People were showing such impatience to get their hands on that literature, that it seemed as if it was candy that was being distributed. A book came into my possession as well. As I stated to leave, a friend called from behind and said, 'Come, let us sit somewhere. We can debate over this religious booklet.' I said, 'brother, I'm but a humble servant—what business do I have arguing and debating! My creed is to serve humanity and God's creatures. The one who serves does not get caught lip in controversial issues.' But upon much insistence of the friend, the two of us sat down in a restaurant. The friend said, 'Religion is merely the name of restrictions—do not do this, and not do that. And these restrictions are attributed to a being that cannot be seen. And you call this invisibility ghaib [the unseen]. I tried to excuse myself from this situation and said, 'my brother, religion and ghaib, both of these topics have to do with belief, and belief is not complete until it becomes observation. And as far as that Being is concerned that is related to religion and ghaib—that Being has the power to manifest itself as an observation whenever it pleases.' As much as I had wanted to avoid it, the debate had started, and I recalled something that had been recorded, of Qalander Baba Auliya (RA).

Abdaal-e-Haq, Hasan Ukhra, Muhammad Azeem Barkhia, Qalander Baba Auliya (RA) states:

In spirituality, the concept of existence without the presence of matter has a particular significance, and the concept of existence without the presence of time is also mentioned. All fields of knowledge that have come under discussion until now and that pertain to spiritual values...within all those fields of knowledge, the universe, which has significance within the observed manifestations, is of secondary importance. First, it is the hidden and the unseen which is contemplated, and it is the hidden and the unseen that one tries to understand. If the hidden and the unseen become easier to understand, then questions such as, 'how do physical manifestations come into being,' and 'what are the laws that pertain to the existence and creation of physical manifestations' ...all these issues start to unfold within the mind, and thought perceives them in the same way as it does the many other experiences which occur within a person's life from childhood till the age of consciousness.

There is an affinity towards a particular thinking in them. Allah the Exalted has called all such things, which pertain to the unseen, by several names in the Holy Quran. The prophets have mentioned these names and have presented their attributes before the people.

The Books prior to the Holy Quran also shed light on these matters, but within those Books this matter is discussed only sporadically. The greater details are found in the Holy Quran. When one ponders the details contained in the Holy Quran, one realizes that the unseen has more significance than the physical manifestations. It is essential to understand the unseen. What is called religion or faith is based on the unseen. Physical manifestations are also mentioned within religion, but they hold secondary significance. It has never been given primary importance in any age. The material world may wish to give it as much importance as it desires, but gradually they have also started to think along the same lines. For example, the present day scientists have also been forced to give precedence to the unseen. First they assume a thing. After they make an assumption about a thing they start to deduce its consequences, and once they have deduced the consequences, they declare that all such things are real, necessary, and certain. Just as in the 20th century, it is the role of the electron that is under discussion. Regarding the electron, the scientists hold a singular opinion that, 'it simultaneously behaves as a particle and as a wave.' What needs to be pondered is that a thing, which is merely an assumption, operates in two different ways, and this activity is believed to exist with certainty. Along with this, they also say that neither has an electron ever been seen by anyone, nor is there a possibility that anyone will ever see it in the future. But despite this, they consider the existence of the electron to be as solid reality as any reality which humankind has ever thought of or experienced. Obviously, it is only an assumption that is in their minds, and from that assumption they get to such a conclusion, to such a stage...a stage they declare to be, of inventions and of extreme importance and of success for them. They start to introduce this important stage to the human populations. It often happens that after a few years or after a longer period of time, they reject what they used to present as the truth. After rejecting that, they bring up various new formulas, and they start to rove these formulas the same status of truth that for years, to an extent, they had given to any of the now rejected "truths." It is obvious that the unseen world holds precedence for them, even though they are materialistic, and call themselves the admirers of the material world. Even for a moment, they are not willing to admit that the being of Allah the Exalted or the realm of the unseen is a possibility, or that it has any significance, or that it means anything, or that it is acceptable, or that it is inappropriate to overlook it. Such concepts, which can be called materialism always surround them, and whenever the unseen is mentioned to them, they always have the same demand: They say that, 'as long as we are not shown a demonstration we cannot get to know it, nor will we believe that the unseen can be informative,' or that, 'we are not willing to give any place to the concept of the unseen, or make any mention of the unseen, in the world of science.' In any case, however they may say that this it is just a style of thinking and a manner of expression. But in the practical world, and in the practical stages of reflection, they are in the same position as that of a person who believes in the unseen and presents the being of Allah the Exalted, and who

believes in all the agencies which Allah the Exalted has mentioned in the Holy Quran, and in those agencies which constitute the conditions of faith and which have influence over any person who believes in Allah. And he considers all these agencies and all these beings to be such a solid truth as a materialist would consider, a stone or a mineral, or any other such physical manifestation which always remains in front of their eyes, and that which they touch, taste, and understand, and regarding which they say that, 'it has an alternation, a balance, an amalgamation, an effect, and a strength.' And this is how they mention everything they see in the material world, and they believe in those things in a particular way. In other words, what I am saying is that just as a devotee of God has faith in the unseen, a devotee of matter has faith in the material world. Neither can a worshipper of God do without the belief in the unseen, nor can a worshipper of matter fare any better without his belief in matter. Both have their own style. And what they have in common is that they have belief and certainty regarding that style. And it is this faith and certainty that they call life. Actually, what should be said is that no life is possible without faith and certainty, whether it is the life of a worshipper of God, or the life of a materialist.

The Spiritual Eye

Allah the Exalted is an existence; a being—an indivisible existence: a transcendental being. This indivisible existence and transcendental being wanted to be recognized. For recognition, it was necessary that, besides this indivisible being, there should be numerous other beings. The indivisible being, and the transcendental being gave form to the plan in his mind, and said kun ['be'], and all that is present was rated as a family.

In [spiritual] observation, the eye of *fatah* ['opening'] sees that this entire family of Allah is confined within a point [*nuqta*]. Just as when one looks into still water, one sees one's own image in the water, in the same way, looking within this point one sees that all individuals of the universe are linked, joined, and attached to each other. Within this point are humans, as well as angels and *jinn* ['hidden beings living among humans']. [Also present within this point] are inorganic matter [minerals etc.], plants, and animals. Their present form is such that within each individual of each species, there is present a bright point, and within this bright point reflects the entire universe. That is there is goat within man, minerals and plants within goats, angles within minerals and plants, and the *jinn*, the heaven and the earth, all are present in a combined form.

After, the second glance of *shuhud* ['spiritual observation of the omnipotence of God'] is *sair* [walk/stroll'] The eye of *sair* sees that this entire, combined, program is imprinted upon *loh-e-mahfooz* ['divine tablet of recorded information'], and with the power of manifestation of the Creator of the universe, this program, imprinted upon *loh-e-mahfooz*, is being displayed upon many earths (screens). Almost 11,500 species and their individuals, in numbers beyond human enumeration, are the mechanical parts of the universe. This universal machine moving in a circle. Its movement initiates from the invisible existence, and terminates at the transcendental being. If you wish, you can find a corresponding example of this within any machine of the world.

Now have a look at the watch tied on your wrist. It is a machine made only of a few parts but it hides within it secrets of nature. Within the watch a lever, a spring, and gears can be seen clearly. But it is with their mutual action and cooperation that a never-ending process of motion continues. One [part of the machine] is moving back and forth, another in a circle and still another continually increases in size. The life of the watch depends upon the many different movements occurring simultaneously. On the surface it is not clear as to why these strange movements are taking place. After concentrating on this process of movement for a little while, the eye is able see the secret that lies beneath. The [forward] motion and the [subsequent] return of all the parts, repeatedly and in a cycle is in fact a singular motion.

The dial [or 'face' of the watch] contains the hour, minute, and second hands. The second hand moves fast, fast enough that our eyes are able to detect this movement. The minute and hour hands are also in motion, but limitations of our vision do not allow our eyes to perceive this speed or movement. After some time of looking at these hands, we realize that the process of motion continues. Within this system, if even a single part's performance is affected, or for some reason its movement stops, the process of motion [of the entire watch] will come to a halt.

The factory of nature is also composed of mechanical parts. The sky, the earth, the trees, the mountains, the land-dwelling animals and the birds, the insects, the angels, the jinn, and humans are all parts of this grand system, and it is with their cooperation that the organized system of movement runs its course. The principle of nature is the same for each species, each individual, and each particle. However, man is such a part of this machine that he is aware of the machine's mechanism. The other creatures have no choice but to move within this machine merely as mechanical parts. It is this knowledge of the mechanism which Allah the Exalted has declared as trust.

This topic has been written in light of four verses of the Holy Quran, and a hadith-e-qudsi ['saying of the Holy Prophet(saw), narrating Allah's direct words']:

His work is that when He intends something to happen, He says be, and it is. (The Holy Quran [chapter 3: verses47])

That great and exalted being is Allah who has created you from a single soul. (Holy Quran [chapter 7: verses189])

Everything is from Allah, and towards Him will it return. (Holy Quran)

I offered my trust to the heavens, and the earth, and the mountains. They all refused saying, 'We cannot bear the burden of it. If we take on this trust, we will be destroyed into little particles (our conscious will be scattered).' And man took on this trust. (The Holy Quran [ch33: v72])

I was a hidden treasure, thus I created with love, so that I may be recognized. (Hadith-e-qudsi)

Consciousness School of Thought

As we analyze the months and years of life, we see that life is a machine made up of billions upon billions of mechanical parts. Just as any man-made machine depends upon energy and fuel [in order to function], in the same way the machine within the human skeleton also depends upon energy and lubricants [for its function]. Just as a machine made of wood, Iron, or some [other] metal is useless without fuel, similarly, if the human machine is not fed, each one of its parts becomes Inoperative and useless.

What an interesting spectacle! Man says, 'my heart' "my brain" kidneys.' An unseen energy is operating the heart, the brain, and the kidneys, and along with these basic parts, billions and billions of other parts (cells) are automatically in motion. But man is so short-sighted that he is neither able to see, nor hear, the machine that operates within him whether it operates loudly, or convulsively, or at a fast or a slow speed. If the invisible process of energy that operates the machine breaks, man is unable to restore it.

The work of energy is to burn itself and keep the machine in motion. If the expenditure of energy is moderate, life is prolonged; if energy is wasted, the flame of life starts to dim, and after flaring up once, it is extinguished.

Flames of fire are of two types. One type of flame causes everything to burn down to ashes, while the other type of flame causes life to run within everything. When man nourishes himself with the lights of khair ['goodness], these blazing flames become for him like flowers and orchid, whereas, when man chooses for his consumption that which comes from shar ['evil'], these flames push him into the of hell.

What are goodness and evil? These are two styles of thought. If one's way of thinking consists of servitude to Allah and love of Allah, then this is goodness [' /chair]; if one's way of thinking consists of loving another instead of Allah, then this evil, ['shar]. Goodness is self-sustaining ([through] the glorious God), whereas, evil is established upon Satan. The definition of goodness is that, it is what Allah likes, and evil is that which Allah does not like.

In today's sitting, come let us study, not the universe, but a mechanical part of the universe—the human being.

Before entering into consciousness, a person is not aware the kindness of the father or the maternal love of the mother. As soon as he enters the school of thought of consciousness a new zeal and a new passion is awakened within him. He pays attention to the creative abilities within him. And these creative abilities, eventually, bring him towards a point —a point which itself initiated from new creations. When a person enter this point, within him bursts the fountain of the father's kindness and the mother's maternal love. As a result, he constructs a living image just like himself. This image is also a mechanical part of the human

machine and to feed this part, an automatic system operates continuously. Man searches for resources to keep this image alive and in motion, and in that search for resources, he goes so far away that consciousness itself revolts against him.

Allah the Exalted has called this image, children, and the resources, wealth. According to the saying wealth and children *fitnah* ['mischeif/trial'] for a person. How strange is it that Allah the Exalted has called wealth and children *fitnah*, yet man with all his energies and all his abilities and all his intelligence is moving closer and closer to this *fitnah*.

Keep in mind, everything that is temporary, is not real, and what is not real cannot attain nearness to Huq ['the Truth']. Whether it is wealth or children, these are temporary and unreal images. When man turns these temporary and unreal images into the purpose of his life, they all becomes for him a hardship and *fitnah*.

Ma'ee Sahiba

Tall, with rosy cheeks and beautiful eyes, lips like petals of a flower, an attractive face on a graceful neck, hair like strands of silver, fragrant, and walking ever so gracefully, a Ma'ee sahiba ['an elderly lady'] came to visit. As she stepped into the room, there was a flash of light, and colours of the rainbow spread before my eyes. Ma'ee Sahiba gazed at me with hazy every and said, 'Son, I had a desire to see you; that desire has been fulfilled.'

With eyes wide open in surprise and a mind still not focused, I asked, "What is your name? Who are you? And where have Ali come from?"

With an angelic smile she said, "I have two names. One name Imaginary and fictitious, and the other name is opposite to Imaginary and fictitious conscious."

I had never heard such a definition of a name. With surprise and inquisitiveness, I asked, "Can names be unreal too? Are same not means of identification!"

Staring, in space in a rather strange way, she said, "When was your name given?"

I respectfully replied, "When I was born."

She laughed and said, "Are you still the same person who was born then? Hasn't every single part of your body changed? Haven't you come out of the cradle and now run around? When you were born, were your hands as big as they are now? And what is your opinion regarding your height and weight?"

Feeling foolish and embarrassed, I remained silent. As curiosity goaded again, I asked, "Who are you?"

She said, "I have two types of existences. On one existence, death befalls at every moment and in every instance, and within the same moment, a new body is formed. This existence of mine is, at every moment, death, and at every moment, life. My other existence is one upon which moments, hours, days, months and years, have no effect. It is neither born, nor does it die."

At hearing this talk of [spiritual] secrets and symbolism, it occurred in my mind that she must be a very learned and scholarly person...or a manifestation of marvels ['mazher-ul-ajaa'aib'] As soon as this thought entered my mind, Ma'ee. Sahiba said, "No son, I'm not a learned or scholarly person. I cannot even write a letter. I am a daasi ['servant/ devotee'] of Khwaja Ghareeb Nawaz (RA)."

"You are a daasi of Khwaja Ghareeb Nawaz (RA)"? Where is your residence?"

"Son, residence depends upon one's station. I have two k of stations in life. One station is closed within time and space I feel imprisoned and confined within this status. Even a few miles of my journey, I have to rely on resources. My other status is one where I'm not dependent upon resources [where] resources lay under my command."

Hearing this conversation about time and space, my condition grew akin to that of a 60-year-old farmer who is being explained the atomic formula.

When Ma'ee Sahiba saw that the child had become nervous, she came forward a few steps and kindly put her hand over my head. As her gentle hand was still on my head, children loudly began to call out [in excitement], "Daadi Amman [paternal grandmother] is here, Daadi Amman is here!" Daadi Amman" embraced her innocent grandchildren and showered them with prayers.

The older daughter put her hands around her neck and said, " Daadi Amman" tell us something about your life?" Ma'ee Sahiba was quiet for a little while. Tears started to flow from her eyes, and she started her life story thus:

My name was Jayoti. I was probably 14 years old then, when my parents arranged for my marriage. I was still a bride when my husband passed away. My in-laws started exchanging views on performing my sati ['old Hindu custom of burning the widow along with her deceased husband's body']. When I happened to chance upon [their plan] I left my in-laws' house in the dead of night and came to my parents' home. My mother embraced me. My father, however, was a religious man; he did not like me arriving in that fashion. When most of the night had elapsed, my mother secretly got me out of the house from the back door. I ran and I ran until sun started to rise from the horizon. I laid myself down between some shrubs and trees all day, crying and sobbing, lamenting my fate. As sun hid its face back into the night, I started running without any destination in mind. With bleeding feet, a weak and frail body, and a dry mouth, somehow or the other, I reached the shrine of Khwaja Ghareeb Nawaz (RA). I was

so overcome with fear and terror that I entered the tomb, locked it from inside, and lay there with my arms around the grave of Khwaja Sahib (RA). I entered into such a state of peacefulness as if I was a girl two or three years old and the grave of Khwaja Ghareeb Nawaz (RA) was my mother's lap. Here, I was filled with this blissful experience, and there, outside the tomb, people were banging on the door and screaming that "a madwoman has entered [the tomb]." The people kept yelling and screaming and pounding on the door, but I was in an entirely peaceful state. [What they were doing] did not affect me at all. Eventually as I was completely relieved of [my earlier fear and anxiety], I opened the door. I was then given the assignment of sweeping the floor there. As Pakistan was created, I fell in love with a woman just like me, and came to Pakistan with that lady."

The younger daughter said, "Daadi Amman, who gave you the address for our house?"

Ma'ee Sahiba gave a loud and hearty laugh and said, "Daughter for the person who has found his true Master, it is not difficult to find any address, any destination, or any location."

God be praised! What a blessed day it was, for holy light showered like rain the entire day. Lights of so many colours shone out of all parts of the house. It was an atmosphere which could only be felt, and not described. At night, at the time of departure, I paid homage to Ma'ee Sahiba. I took her beautiful, ever so soft hands, kissed them, and touched the, with my eyes, and said with an overwhelmed heart, "Ma'ee Sahiba, please [honour me] with some advice."

Ma'ee Sahiba, all of a sudden, started looking towards the sky in such a manner that her eyelashes did not move any the movement of her eyeballs came to a standstill. It seemed as though her brain, both were focused upon an unseen point. All of us, in a state of rapture, kept staring at the completely absorbed and enlightened face of Amman ['mother/ grandmother/elderly lady']. A loud voice sounded, "Son!"... Her Shahadah ['Index finger of right hand'] finger moved, and with hand raised towards the sky, her tongue uttered these words..."Son! When the Lord is pleased; all are pleased."

Eternal Life

Beyond the world of thought, on the other side, as spirit travels through the world of barzakh ['realm between material kind spiritual life'] and manifests itself in the form of a child, the first teacher of the child is she who cleanses and bathes the child and wraps him in a snow-white cloth. After that, it is the mother who takes over the responsibilities of a teacher. The maternal instincts of the mother first give the child the concept of cleanliness. Along with the ongoing process of cleanliness, the mother invokes upon the surface of consciousness of the child, the concept of the father. As this impression gets stronger, within the tiny cells of the child's brain, images are reflected of the paternal and maternal grandparents. And then along with the mother, the father as well as other close relatives in the family, assume the role of the child's teacher. The style of thinking of the child begins to take on the characteristics of his or her teachers. The depth of a child's style of thinking determines his personality. If members of the family display characteristics of arrogance, disdain and a superiority complex, If the child also accepts within him the influence of these traits. If the young and the old of the family are personifications of sincerity, love and selflessness, the emotions of sincerity, love, brotherhood, gentleness and forbearance arise within the child automatically. After burning in the kiln of a style of thought, man can burn down to ashes, and after burning in the kiln of .1 style of thought, man can become flawless, as gold become after being smelted.

My childhood is an entire tale within itself. Not a fictional tale, but a tale with real characters. When I was born, it was a very distinguished personality who chewed a piece of date to put in my mouth [as a blessing and birth ritual]. As I grew up, I was placed in a religious school. The teacher who taught me the Holy Quran was not only a stranger to aesthetic beauty ['husn-e-jamaal'], but all he possessed of the inner beauty of character [husn-e-akhlaaq] was [apparent in his style of teaching that centered on] inflicting brutal corporal punishment Amid regular beatings and injured bones, the blessed words of the Holy Quran, which had been deprived of meaning and context [by the teachers], imprinted upon the pages of my brain. Also, the environment within which I was reared was one where talk of religion was predominant. One's clothing and appearance was highly distinctive. The atmosphere of the home was such that my mother was consumed with fear. She had no significance of her own. She was a machine that kept on running on some undetermined fuel. At times this machine would be hand grinding wheat between two parts of a stone mill, and at times this machine would be thrashing paddy in a wooden mortar [to separate husk from the rice].

This machine walked about in the house in such a fashion as if it was her job to keep running all the time and to keep working at one thing or the other at all times. Due to the kindness of my mother, I was fed with a golden spoon, but looked upon with the fierce eye of a lion. What is the eye of a lion? When a lion looks at one with his fierce bloody eyes, all that has been eaten vanishes away, and nourishment that had been stored for years is immediately consumed. The level of certainty among the 70-, 80-, and 90-year-olds was such that when it was said to them that 'you are heaven bound,' it was as if they had just received an electric shock. With imploring eyes and a pleading tone, they would say, 'may God make it so that what you are saying turns out to be true.' They did not have even as much certainty in their worship and religious exercises as a common man has with respect to another common man.

Being raised in this atmosphere of uncertainty, I reached that level of consciousness where a person makes certain decisions about himself. He starts to understand that the past is not everything; that future is also a necessity. Coming out of this time of uncertainty, I started searching for paths of certainty. The thought occurred in my mind that certainty will be found where there would be no fear. The wealth of certainty will be found where there would be no grief. Long story short, years passed in the search for such people who were free from fear and grief. Only one criteria [for the right group of people] lay before me, that, 'Allah's friends neither fear nor grieve.' From the age of 17 years till the age of 26 years, I remained busy in search of such a friend of Allah, who according to Allah's announcement, neither feared nor grieved. I saw miracles performed and heard stories told of kashf-e-jal and kashf-qabr. I came in contact with such men, whose single gesture brought spirits before the eyes. I met people who exuded such holiness that each and every moment of their lives were imprinted with the pure Islamic Law, [' Sharjah]. But I had not been able to reach such a person who was free from fear and grief. When my heart filled with tenderness, eyes remained wet with tears, and my mind inclined towards concentration, the promise of Allah was fulfilled.

"And those who strive for Allah; Allah guides them in His ways."

[Holy Quran ch29: v69]

What blessed fortune! I [finally] found a free man—such a free man upon whom the dark clouds of fear and grief never cast their shadow. Peace, contentment, and joy showers upon those who had been grieved and fearful, as they sit in the company of such a person.

This free man is Qalander Baba Auliya (RA), may Allah have mercy on him, whom nature has lovingly taken within its embrace. This free man, having placed me within the kiln of a style of thought, destroyed all those idols which I had inherited from my environment—the idol of uncertainty, the idol of the fear of hunger and poverty, the idol of the fear of death, the idol of honour and disgrace. The fictitious world inside me was turned upside down and such a Pa-

tern of certainty was created where the eye does not see anything besides Allah, where the heart does not feel anything hem Allah, and where knowledge without practice is ignorance where uncertainty is shirk ['associating partners with Allah], and where certainty is eternal life.

The Past and the Future

As we analyse life, only one reality emerges before our eyes, and that is, every son of Adam and each daughter of Eve desires to live his or her life happily, but the materialistic view of life always leaves him or her disappointed. This is because each and every moment of our life is temporary and ever changing. From the physical and materialistic point of view we do not even possess the knowledge of what real happiness is, and how it is achieved. To gain awareness of true happiness, it is essential that we find our base and origin.

Even when we were nothing, we were still something, because 'not being anything' negates our existence. Our physical life starts in the mother's womb. There matter, having passed through a specific process when it reaches its peak, a living image comes into existence out of nothingness. This image is raised and trained in such a way by its environment that it does not learn what real happiness is and how this true happiness can be achieved.

In order to embrace true happiness, one must first realize that life does not depend upon the body alone, but upon that truth which itself has created the body as its garment. After birth, the second stage of life that comes before us is where each Moment [that we live in] that dies, and the death of one moment becomes the cause of the next moment's birth. It is this moment that at times changes into childhood, at times into youth, and still at other times into adulthood, and at Times into old age. The way we can reach this truth is by realizing that the living and awake image is not a body but a conscious. Our difficulty is that we cannot entirely call it consciousness either because consciousness is that means of our identification upon which the entire building stands. We also know that as the body dies, the material foulness and impurities end, but we also know that as the body is terminated the conscious does not die, but is instead transferred into a different world.

In all the religious books that are present, one thing is mentioned again and again, and that is, 'man is not merely a physical body, but a conscious.' When we mention life starting from the belly of the mother until death, we realize that consciousness that had its base in the belly of the mother...that consciousness reduces from one end and increases at the other. As the conscious continues to decrease, man recedes into the past; as the conscious continues to increase, man progresses further and further into the future.

The increase and decrease in one's consciousness is what determines one's age. One period of consciousness is called "childhood," the second period of consciousness is called "adulthood," and the third period of

consciousness is called "old age." Eventually, the conscious that remains and continues is the conscious that has sustained this material life, and the conscious upon which this body is progressing through the stages of evolution.

When we study ourselves, we say that we have a limited and mortal body, and this is the identity of our life. This body that we see has foulness, filth, putridity and decay as its components. The roots of this decay lie in the fact that each person thinks that, 'I am matter, and I am born of this material world,' This limited point of view confines man within a certain state, and each person entangles himself within the limiting and confining web, and thus the foundation is laid for a limited and confined point of view. Each person dwelling on the earth, when refers to himself, says, 'I am a Muslim. I am a Hindu. I am a Zoroastrian. I am a Christian,' whereas no name can be given to the spirit. Light is light wherever it exists whether it is in the Arab world, or the non-Arab world, whether it is in Europe, or whether it is in any part of Asia.

Allah's system is established in such a way that wherever the message of Allah came, it still exists through its words. For the Christians, the words of the Bible hold the status of religion, and for the Muslims, it is the Holy Quran that establishes religion; Hindus worship the words of *Bhagavat Gita*.

All heavenly Books are, in reality, those voices of the honoured servants of God, which have become light and have spread throughout the world.

The Earthen Cage

Who does not know that life is nothing but the past! The Intellectuals and the thinkers divide time into three parts—the past, the present, and the future. The past is the time that has gone away, the present is the time that is present now, and the future is the time that is yet to come. But when a person possessing consciousness analyses life, he sees nothing but the past, whether this analysis is [derived from the study of] physical needs, or from a psychological perspective, or from a religious point of view. When we mention the birth of a child we say that, 'the child was present somewhere, and now he has been transferred here into this world—beautiful, healthy, and full of exquisiteness.' When an adult is mentioned, that also connotes that 'yesterday's child is present today in adult form.' When we speak of intelligence, and consciousness and experience, and say that 'this elder's experience spans across a period of 60 years,' with that too we are implying that 60 years of that elder's life are buried in the past. When the human species mentions its ancestors, then also it is said that the human conscious has progressed gradually. There was a time during the Stone Age when man was living a life of 'self-inflicted confinement. Then a time came when he learnt the use of fire. Taking another leap, he entered the Iron Age. The civilization of iron and various metals was declared the Inheritance of humankind. After stepping into the valley of Knowledge and consciousness, the pattern of reflection was set within man. That was named as the [age of] Modern Civilization, or Scientific Progress. Whether it is the ancient history of 100 billion years ago or the scientific knowledge of today, it is all based on documents (record), and this entire record is the past. What is the past? It is the times ['zamaana']

The Holy Prophet (saw) has stated that, 'do not overlook the times; Allah is the times.' What man calls the present and the future, is actually a continuous and repeated process of living. In this process of living, two styles have been determined. Man has named one of these styles as peace, and he calls the other style conflict, destitution, worry, anxiety, fear and restlessness. But when we study these two styles and reflect upon them with a psychological perspective, only one thing emerges: that these two styles also, are directly related to the past. If the worries of today failed to become the past, man would lose his senses at the hands of these worries and would start to suffer attacks of insanity. If a single condition persist within the progeny of Adam and Eve, life would freeze. This is because the universe has been created upon the formula that life is continuous movement. In other words, movement is the name of life. If movement stops, so will the universe. It is the daily observations that reveal these styles to us. Coolness with heat, heat with coolness, illness with health, and health after illness, and the process of birth and death, [all] are also established on the same formula (equation).

When we say that a particular person has died, we actually mean to say that a particular person's character, his life, or his voice has become a documented record. What it means is that the person who has died has gone into the past. When we mention our ancestors (including everyone from Adam up to our forefathers), in reality, we are mentioning the past. Today we are calling our ancestors, the past; in the same way tomorrow our next generation will refer to us in terms of the past.

The past is our origin, and the past is the entire record of our life

If from the mind of one hundred year-old man, the past of his childhood, youth and adulthood deleted, what would remain elderly man? O those possessing intelligence, reflect upon this!

Just as the life of a hundred year-old man is a record and past, in the same way, when this earthen confinement or cage ['the Physical body'] is overcome by death, the entire life of the earthen body becomes the past. When we step aside from the philosophical points of view, and reflect upon what is real, that is, the spiritual knowledge, a door opens deep within us. From this door enters the light of the Holy Quran in the form of waves descending on our brain, and these waves give us the following message in words of the Holy Quran:

"And what do you perceive the great life to be; and what do you perceive the lowly life to be? It is a record."

The knowledge of truth guides us in such a way that, if we want to get acquainted with ourselves and with our Creator, it becomes incumbent upon us that we look into our past. Before entering the womb of the mother, the child was in Barzakh ['realm between physical and spiritual world']. The world of Barzakh is a reflection of Loh-e-mahfooz ['divine tablet of records']. Loh-e-mahfooz is a page of Kitaab-ul-mubeen ['the manifest book']. Kitaab-ul-mubeen is Aalam-e-arvaah ['world of the spirits']. And Aa/am-e-arvaah is the world that was manifested when Allah the Exalted said kun ['be']. Life after death, in reality, is the progression towards this world of the spirits. Those individuals from humankind who strive to see, understand and find this life are granted such vision and insight, according to the laws of Allah, which enables them to tier I his world and to understand it.

Steam

The importance of the study of the universe can be judged from the fact that in the Holy Quran there are 150 verses on topics such as ablution, salaah, fasting, zakaat ['tax Muslims must pay on their wealth for social and religious welfare works'], Hajj, and the issues of divorce and loans etc., whereas, there are 756 verses on the study of the universe and the formulas for its conquest. The Holy Quran teaches us to benefit from the minerals within the earth and the treasures within mountains. The Holy Quran claims that it contains everything, from the smallest to the largest, in detail. But when the Muslims reduced this book to merely a means of achieving their purpose and merely a means of deliverance from calamities and misfortunes, they deprived [themselves] of the secrets of the universe contained within it and of the formulas of the conquest of the universe. The Holy Quran claims that religion has been perfected. That is, the laws and principles of the social, intellectual, moral, and spiritual progress of humankind have been expounded upon and written down in the Wise Quran. The Holy Quran is the inheritance of humankind. The Holy Quran guides whichever nation from among humankind desires to benefit from this inheritance.

Allah the Exalted has stated,

**"We have sent down iron, and have placed
many benefits in it for mankind."**

[Holy Quran ch57:v25]

The nation that reflected upon the declaration of the Holy Quran and started to struggle [accordingly] became successful and continues to be successful even today. When the Europeans busied themselves in the search for iron, copper, and [other] treasures buried within the earth, according to laws of nature, the treasures of the earth themselves started to reveal their benefits to them. And they became successful in producing inventions made of iron, copper, and compounds made of the various metals, and thus stood out among the nations of the world. Flying in the air became for them a routine of life. To float on the surface of rivers and oceans, and to move about thousands upon thousands of tons of cargo from one place to the other became for them a very ordinary thing. Because of their intellectual inquiries, distances grew smaller and smaller. News of the world started to travel from one corner of the earth to the other. The invention of steam established the system of trains. As gas and petroleum came out of the earth, motor cars started to run on the ground. Under the system of wireless communication, people living in faraway places, relatives, and dear friends, came closer to each other. Gaining awareness of the weather and climate system, they made revelations which enabled Allah's creatures to remain protected from heavenly calamities.

All of this happened because their intellectuals and thinkers, after the study of heavenly scripture, used its laws and verse' to improve their own life and the life of humankind.

**The Holy Quran loudly declares,
"Quran is a book containing the formulas
of the conquest [of the universe]. To gain
distinction among the nations of the world,
reflect upon it, learn it and understand it. How
many blessings of your Lord shall you people
deny?"**

[Holy Quran]

To understand Allah Almighty's grandeur, His eminence and His creative powers, reflect upon his creation and His system of sustaining the universe ['Rabboobiyat'].

The light of inventions, progress, and education and skill, which is spread in the West today, once shone from the East, and when eastern nations, in general, and Muslims, in particular, severed their relation with this light of education and skill, education and skill also cut off their relationship with the Muslims.

Allah the Exalted states:

**"The nations that do not try to change their
fate; Allah does not bring about change in them either."**

[Holy Quran ch13:v11]

Reflecting upon this expansive system of Allah, one can see that this world of fragrance and beauty is composed of two worlds. And each individual from among the creatures that dwell within these worlds possesses four eyes, two brains, two noses, four ears, four hands and four feet. Each individual from among these creatures is bound in six directions. Each individual has two sides: One solid, the other ethereal. There is one space to live in, whereas there is no end to time. Space gives the person the awareness of being [or the awareness of his existence] while time gives him the awareness that he is made up of 60,000 senses. And when a nation attempts to gain awareness of these senses, Allah the Exalted opens up the doors of progress and constructiveness upon it. Scientific knowledge and bright prospects of progress and inventions are revealed to his mind. And then this nation, having dominated the earth and space, becomes the crown of nations, whereas, the nation deprived of inquisitiveness, inquiry, reflection and intellect lives its life as a slave, and is disgraced upon the earth.

Inventions

As far as goodness and evil are concerned, no action in this world is good or evil. In reality, it is the act of giving meaning to an action that constitutes goodness or evil. The act of giving meaning refers to the intention that is behind the action. It is the intention of the person, before carrying out the action, which is good or evil.

The job of fire is to burn. If a person uses fire to cook food for the welfare of people, this act constitutes goodness. If the same person uses that fire to burn down people's houses, that act constitutes evil.

If we carefully study the way of thinking of the nation's we find impressive, or the nations that dominate us, one thing that becomes clear as daylight is that all the scientific progress focuses on the goal that one nation should become all-powerful, and that the rest of humankind should become its slaves, or that so many material benefits should be earned through inventions that a particular nation or a particular country should become wealthy while humanity should suffer at the hands of poverty and deprivation—it is so, because this progress does not contain the underlying intent of human welfare according to Allah's thinking. It is because of this reason that all this progress has become a hardship and affliction for humanity, as well as for those nations themselves that have produced inventions upon inventions after so much struggle and effort. This hardship and affliction will one day become the misfortune and downfall lot humanity], turning this earth into hell.

As long as the conviction remains in a person that the life and death of things is from Allah, the mind is able to focus, and when this certainty weakens and breaks apart, the person gets caught up in such beliefs and superstitions that result in mental chaos, worries, grief and fear, even though it can clearly be seen that every act of man, every action and every movement is under the control of a being who cannot be seen—the dwelling of the infant within the mother's belly, the provision of nourishment for nine months of growth and development, the balanced growth of the baby through the nourishment of milk, the growth of a small child into a man seven feet tall, the demands of adulthood, the creation of resources in fulfilment of these demands, and the presence of resources before they are provided. If Allah stopped the earth from producing crops, it would become impossible to acquire sustenance on earth. [Also among the signs of the invisible force behind human actions is] the presence of the desire in [men and women] that, after marriage, there should be someone to remember them, and the occurrence of his desire with such an intensity that it results in them becoming parents. Parents' love for their children is not peculiar to ho human heart; this emotion is common among all of Allah's creatures. And supported by this love, parents raise their children, look after them, and provide them resources.

Generally, the impression that is present is that acquisition of resources is not possible without struggle and hard work whereas we see that the resources that we struggle and we to acquire are already present according to a preset law a principle. When a farmer toils and sows seeds in the ear the growth and development of that seed provides a variety of nourishment for human needs. All of this is possible when the resources are already present, for instance, the presence of seeds, the presence of land, the ability of the earth to grow and develop the seed, the presence of water for the growth and development of the seed, the presence of moonlight, the presence of air, and the presence of hot and cold environment according to season. If seeds are not present, or the earth lacks the ability to provide growth and development to the seed, or if water or air are not present, then every effort of man will be wasted.

It is an attribute of Allah that, when He creates a thing, billions upon billions of creatures come into being through that creation. In present times, we have before us the example of electricity. One of Allah's auxiliary creations is electricity. Through this electricity, thousands of inventions have come before our eyes, and will continue to arise. In light of this situation, the secret that is revealed to us is that Allah has created resources for the purpose that humankind should find the hidden powers within these resources and should benefit from them, and when a nation busies itself in finding those hidden abilities, Allah bestows upon [such a nation] so many revelations, and in the light of those revelations, when that [nation] reflects upon those revelations, new inventions come into existence. Qalander conscious guides us to see that everything in the universe is established in two different aspects. One aspect of creation is the apparent and visible aspect, while the other aspect is the inner and hidden aspect. Water is a liquid object. This is its apparent and visible aspect. But when the hidden abilities of water are searched, we witness before us an innumerable number of such abilities. Similarly, there is the example of iron. Apparently, iron is a metal. When a person is able to find the hidden properties within the particles of iron, new inventions continue to come into existence through his intentions, and under his command. When we look for the attributes of Allah within a thing, it is revealed to be that the entire universe is present. Everything that has been made in the universe and everything that is present on earth has been created for man.

Istaghnaa ['lack of concern for resources/ contentment'] does not merely mean that a person becomes unconcerned with wealth and money, as no person can become completely independent of wealth and desires—

to fulfil the requirements of life and to provide for one's relations is a necessary act and it deals with huqooq-ul-ibaad ['the rights of people on a person] — istaghnaa means that everything a person does should have Allah's approval along with that action; that the way of thinking or action should not harm Allah's creation in any way; and that each person should himself remain happy and not become a hardship or cause for grief for humanity. It is essential that it must be instilled within a person's mind that it is Allah who is the complete and ultimate owner of everything in the universe. It is Allah who has granted the earth the ability that a seed may change into a tree and that the earth raise it within its embrace, that water should run like blood through the veins of the tree, that the air should become light and make up for the shortcomings of the colours that work within the tree, that sunshine should become attached to the tree according to a continuous relationship and principle to ripen the premature fruits, that moonlight should produce sweetness within the fruits, and that the earth should be assigned the duty that it nourish those trees that fulfil the needs of man. It is the responsibility of the trees to grow such leaves and fruits that will fulfil the needs of the creatures according to the season.

(Excerpt taken from the book "Qalander Sha'oor" ['Qalander Conscious'])

Idol Worship

When we discuss religion, the first perception or awareness that is evoked is that of fear. Our religious leaders have tried their best to establish the distinction of this perception in relation to religion. When perception or awareness was categorized, many groups came into being.

One group says that, "Awareness is the dependency upon an unseen power and the reliance on that power for one's life."

Another group says that, "Awareness is brought about by fear."

A third group attaches the concept of awareness to a sensual life.

A fourth group says that [human] awareness is, in fact, inspired by the awareness of a limitless and unchanging being.

When an ordinary person looks at these contradictions it most certainly creates a doubt in his heart as to whether awareness even exists or not, and this doubt turns into such a confusing maze that man rejects religion all together.

The topic of religion is so complex and broad that it would be a meaningless and senseless thing to claim that one is able to encompass it, but if religion is defined within one's capacity and within the circle of limited awareness, two aspects come to surface. One aspect of religion is shara'ae ['under decree of divine law'] and the other aspect is individual or personal. One branch of religion claims to believe in a single being [as their God], while the other branch mentions human psychology using intellectual arguments and individual explanations and denies belief in the unseen being. The individual religion has proven to be the political religion, while the shara'ae [or 'divinely legislated'] religion wants an organization to be established on a pattern of living based on worship, sacrifice, and other religious rites, where all of humankind can be gathered on one platform.

The followers of shara'ae religion worship the transcendental being under the perception of fear, but they also say that one cannot see the transcendental being. There is one group that is known as the sufia ['plural of sufi: mystic saint']. This group claims that the transcendental being is not at all a fierce being. This transcendental being loves us 70 times more than our own mother. Nobody has ever observed a mother pushing her child into a blazing fire. This group also claims that any ordinary person can witness the transcendental being. And there are present in much larger numbers than worldly statistics can convey, such examples, such incidences, and such feelings spanning thousands of years, which support this claim.

The fact of the matter is that fear, whether it exists between two men, a man and beast, or a man and snake, creates a distance and remoteness. Contrary to that, love creates the feelings of nearness.

As distance is created, it most certainly brings about fear and doubt in one's mind. As feelings of closeness diminish, to reduce his fear, man creates many new images with his own hands, and idol worship is initiated around this point of origin) [nuqta-e-irtakaaz]. The presence of idols erases the virtue of truth from man. The deprivation from the virtue of truth is called magic. From this point onward, many innovations arise within the human psyche. These innovations lead to new ways of thinking, and it is eventually announced that religion and spirituality are an imaginary thing. The Sufis say that even if one accepts the argument that religion and spiritual perceptions are only a figment of the imagination, then it can also be said that the denunciation of religion, disbelief, and feelings infused with doubt are also imaginary. Sufi personalities present the argument that even if we accept that spirituality and religion is a product of human imagination, the fact cannot be denied that a religious spiritual person has within him peace and contentment, and he engages in works that provide comfort to his fellow beings. Within him arise unseen powers which contain hidden within them a striving for the welfare of the common people. Contrary to this, if the lives of non- religious people are studied, despite the fact that they have in their possession heaps of worldly resources, they do not possess within themselves the peace that is within a spiritual person. It is apparent to every aware adult that lowliness and imbalance enter the life of the person who commits base acts. When an object that has become impure and unclean is washed, it becomes clean and pure. Within a just person resides Allah's justice. As a result of justice, fairness, kindness, and mercy, the transcendental being enters within the person.

Hypocrisy enters within the person who deceives and defrauds others and who is selfish and unfamiliar with hardship, because such a person [in reality] deceives himself. As a result of this, the monster of doubt and uncertainty overwhelms him, which leads man, to whom angels bow in servitude, to lose awareness of his own self.

The wise and farsighted men of God say that the effects of character never remain hidden. It is an established truth that those who give to others never become poor. Even a small portion of untruthfulness in one's actions creates contradiction in one's words and deeds. Truthfulness in conduct is a quality that illuminates every particle of the earth, and each particle of the earth loudly declares that a person is a messenger of truth. Who is it that would dare to say that committing wrongful actions does not diminish one's existence?

Come, let us leave this philosophical discussion and instead reflect upon the consequences. Allah, Bhagvan, Nirvan, God, El, Ailia, the Transcendental Being— [called by any names He is the guardian and custodian of all; He is the beginning and the ultimate completion. Fear of

the Guardian Being throws man into deep recesses. Love, on the other hand, leads to feelings of closeness. However much one loves this transcendental being, Allah, in the same proportion, ten times over, the transcendental being becomes attentive to His servant. The distinctive quality of friendship is closeness, not distance. A friend neither fears nor suffers grief at the hands of his friend.

The sons and daughters of Adam and Eve should pledge that from today onward they would not fear the transcendental being, Allah. Instead, they will love Him, because the transcendental being Himself makes the announcement that,

**"Allah's friends neither fear nor grieve."
[Holy Quran 610:v62]**

Transcendental Strings

This issue has been the cause of much debate in the history of Sufism ['Islamic mysticism'] that when spiritual powers stir and operate within a person, how is one to discern whether these conditions are based on reality or whether they are the work of Satan. This issue has a great deal of importance in religion as well. If spiritual occurrences and perceptions are not based on reality, the fear that satanic revelation would throw man into abyssal depths, becomes a certainty. As far as the teachings between a spiritual mentor and his disciples are concerned, the point of objection has been as to how a spiritual mentor is able to train his disciples hundreds or thousands of miles away. Even if he is able to train spiritually, what is the element of certainty that would guarantee that the mentor's spirit is free from satanic revelation? A spiritual mentor is after all a human being like us.

The analysis of the intellectuals regarding human life is that life, in reality, is like a movie composed of thoughts, and this movie continues to be projected upon the screen of the mind with an uninterrupted continuity. When we reflect upon thoughts, we become aware that giving different meanings to the same thought constitutes fulfilment. When we become attentive towards hunger, we declare a particular act of filling our belly as good, while [at another time] we associate the same act of Wimp, the belly with evil. Marriage is an act upon which depends the existence of the human species. If this same act is fulfilled according to the rules and regulations set up by man, this act is good; while the same act, if conducted against the predetermined rules and regulations, is evil. This is despite the fact that both aspects of this act bear the same result.

The way to recognize the nature of an action is that performing one kind of action pleases the conscience and waves of peace-and contentment flow through the person, whereas, the identity of the other [kind of] action is that it displeases the conscience and the person feels shameful having conducted that act.

Man, in reality, is [like] a tree and the morals and actions of his life are the fruits of this tree. Another thing that is clear to us is that a tree is not recognized by its roots, but by its fruit. The same applies to human actions. Truth is not determined by the source, but rather by its consequences. No conclusive judgment can be made regarding the good or bad thoughts within a person. It is the actions of the person that can assure whether he is truthful or untruthful. To judge an action it is necessary to ascertain how that action impacts society. If the action possesses truth, depth, and accord with nature, then it is a correct and truthful action.

The manner of speech and the style of teaching of human beings, whose physical needs are connected to their spiritual states, points to the fact that human beings contain within them an awareness of the relationship between the body and the soul. When the system connecting the body and the spirit is activated, one feels immersed in feelings of joy and selflessness, and looks upon one's brothers and sisters, and indeed upon all of God's creation, with the eyes of a mother gazing lovingly upon her very own children. The thought is that is ingrained upon his nature that, 'my relationship is established with each individual of the universe, and just as the universe resides within me, in the same way, each individual of the universe is casting his image upon the mirror of my heart.' Whenever he desires, he can communicate with this image inside of him.

The one, who personifies evil and embodies the satanic way of thinking, perceives himself to be better than everyone else. His neck muscles suffer spasms due to his constant display of arrogance and contempt. Instead of beauty, charm and innocence, his face is taken over by rigidity, cynicism and unsightliness.

Sitting in the company of a person like one's self can be a source of joy and pleasure, whereas, sitting in the company of a person different from oneself can be emotionally draining and distressing. Each person, from birth until old age, is a document of experiences. If goodness has permeated this document, the document is valuable and beneficial; if it is evil that reigns over [its pages], the document is monstrous and unsightly. The best document is one that is a means of self-awareness. Self-awareness is an unending path such that walking upon it a person can become a tree whose fruit is sweet and ripe; a world benefits from him; his cool shade provides tranquility. An unsightly document produces insensitivity, selfishness and greed within man. This person is such a thorny bush, under whose shade no one desires to stay even for a few moments.

If there is peace within the person himself, he will be a means of peace and tranquility for others; his shade will be cool and fragrant, and his spiritual states will be real. On the other hand, if the person himself is removed from peace, overshadowed by clouds of sorrow, and suffering in the dry and barren valley of fear and grief, his state is that of a satanic revelation, and his entire life is a deception.

The person who bears the document of a good life has a close relationship with God, He enjoys the nearness of God. He experiences attachment to God without asking and without expectation. He experiences closeness to God with every breath of life. He experiences God

manifested within his own self. He listens to whatever God says; God accepts whatever he says. When conversing with God, the months and the years of life, the imaginary senses, and his habits and ways temporarily disappear. Then upon him are revealed such secrets of which the worlds possess no knowledge. Due to this awareness, man is able to recognize his true self, and he realizes the secret that lies behind his life and death and his transition from the life of one world to the next. Such a person experiences the presence of God within him, every moment and at every instant. Physically this person is like an average person, but the singular point within him is illumined and charged with divine light. This is the point at which the entire universe is tied together with transcendental strings, [maavaraa'ee doniyaann'].

The Central Point

Man desires a life that is not familiar with death. He wants health that is not affected by illness. He wants an adulthood that does not turn into old age. But this has never happened. Adulthood changes into old age; illness, time and again, subdues health and wellness. Man may wish all he wants to escape the ups and downs of life; he does not succeed at it. This is because nothing in this world is free of instability. The process of death and destruction continues unabated.

When man is dominated by instability, he becomes more sensitive to pain. In the state of pain and grief, such feelings and emotions arise that make the person sad and apprehensive. Life loses all its brilliance, and all grandeur and glory shrink into sadness.

Man, from birth till death, stays engaged in a continuous fight. He wants to win and succeed at all cost, but finally it is old age that wins, and a time comes when death overtakes old age. Life may have the most glorious beginning; it undoubtedly ends upon death. At each instant and at every moment, death maintains its fixed stare upon humankind.

According to one school of thought, man's happiness resides in his living a free life, but when proponents of this idea began to ponder the mortality of life, they came to the conclusion that in .in is never free. This philosophy also brings forth the point that after each occasion of joy, a calamity is sure to follow. After each period of peace and tranquility, disorder is soon to arise. Each moment of happiness, in reality, is predicative of the onset of grief, and each period of peacefulness ends in anxiety and restlessness.

**Each moment of happiness is only an intermission,
wherein brew ingredients of future's sorrow
Each moment of peace, a mere respite, from the
trials and tribulations of morrow**

The general observation is that, whether it is peace and happiness, worries and trials, youth, or adulthood —death dominates all. If one reflects upon the issue, it appears that, of all the creatures living on earth, man suffers the most at the hands of hardships and calamities. When he comes face to face with death, his entire life's struggle appears to have been in vain. Man lives and suffers so much pain and misery that when his joys and sorrows are added up, his entire life seems like an unending series of misfortunes. Man is born into this world naked, and he departs from it naked. And it remains unknown where he came from, why he came, and where he has gone. The prevalent perception is that man came out of

nothingness and returned to nothingness. That is, all of man's strivings, all of his efforts, and all his struggles to survive, have all come to naught. According to a plan, through resources and provisions of food and drink, life keeps man in motion. Man, feeds animals to fatten them. He then slaughters them and eats them. Just as man eats animals, so does death consume man.

There is only one way to fight life bravely and to succeed, and it is that man should become aware of the reality of struggle and effort. Awareness means that life should be spent as a routine. An example of a routine is that of the process of breathing or blinking our eyes: We breathe, but always without thinking that we are breathing; we blink our eye,, but always without thinking that our eyes are blinking.

The true way of thinking is that one should not have expectations of others because the person who does not have any expectations is not disappointed. Expectations should be measured and few. And they should be such that they can continue to be met easily.

According to heavenly books, the effective way to attain peace is for man not to get angry and not become aggravated by things. He should not show slackness in his actions and strivings, yet he should also not stake all of his hopes upon a particular result. He should study the principles observed by the other species inhabiting the earth.

When the units of this temporal life are brought together, they bear witness to the following:

There are no loopholes in the laws of nature. Everything is a toy or a puppet in the hands of time. However, time wishes, it winds the key, and the thing comes into motion. When time severs its relationship, the key cannot be wound anymore. All the mechanical parts remain the same, but the strength or energy is no more. Time is an expression of quwwat ['strength/ power'], this strength or power is a type of energy—a centre—and it is this centre which the heavenly books introduce as qudrat ['nature/the power of nature']. Qudrat or the 'power of nature' exists independently, of its own accord. It is this central point ['markazi nuqtal, to which all individuals of the universe are tied. Existence ['vujood'] and non-existence ['a'dam], both are immersed within it.

When man is able to find his relationship with this central point, all his expectations in this world of fiction come to an end. And when this happens, joy and happiness orbit around him and death looks upon him with eyes filled with maternal love. Death, before approaching such a person, first knocks at his door and requests permission to enter.

Thirsty Earth

If we analyze different beliefs, the observation that emerges is that religion is based on faith in the unseen. That is, [religion is based] upon the certainty that there are unseen realities that we are unable to see, but despite that, our welfare lies in our having faith in these unseen realities and in establishing the relationship of our mind and our actions with the unseen world.

Religions and their deities that people worship are merely an imaginary world. In terms of physical perception, these deities can neither be seen nor felt. Besides the present and perceivable religious observances, there are other concepts within religion that deeply affect the words and actions of human life.

In today's advanced world of glittering bright lights, a school of thought declares that none from among the topics such as the nature of the universe, the spirit, and the life after death, can become the subject of their educational and intellectual pursuit because their concepts and the knowledge base of their conscious perceptions demand that they contain only physical perceptions and material forms. And since religious topics and beliefs are not established perceptions, for that reason this domain is meaningless from an educational point of view. This is indeed a strange manifestation of human life: slim man, with all his strength, believes in the existence of such things regarding which he cannot even establish a clear concept.

It was a somewhat similar situation that existed 1400 years ago. People had carved many new idols upon the pattern of physical perception. Dark clouds of ignorance loomed everywhere. In Greece, Rome, and in areas surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, divine religions had lost their strength. Worshipping the state was the religion of the Roman Empire [nooma-tul kubra'], and idolizing the monarch was its faith and belief.

The civilization and culture of Greece, Rome, Egypt, Syria and India, despite standing at the peak of superficial heights had sunk into a deep moral abyss. Ignorance and idol worship reigned supreme. Sinfulness, debauchery superstition, immorality and shamelessness had taken over society. Whoever had power in the human society assumed the authority of God. The senselessness of accepting a person like themselves, who depended on food and water like themselves and who also, required relief from bodily waste as their god, was completely

lost on them. There were no legal limits that were established. No one followed any rules or regulations. And the height of their immorality was that they considered acceptable the killing of a being borne out of themselves. Killing of daughters, gambling, drinking, and ill mannerism and immorality were common. This was that dark period when the dry and thirsty earth and the creatures living on that earth, looked up toward the heavier and from beyond the heavens, the being seated on the throne, who is the Creator of all, and who has created with love, took mercy upon the earth. And so, he sent a portion of His divine light upon the earth so that darkness would change into light, so that the thirsty earth would be quenched, so that the blind would be able to see again, the mute would talk again, and the deaf would hear again. The trust in humanity that had been shattered would once again be re-established,

In this suffocating period of human history, one filled with brutality and selfishness, a great man was born a man who was all mercy, and who is still mercy. The Holy Prophets(saw) was born in a nation that from head to toe was immersed in cruelty and ignorance. When this minaret of light shone in that darkness, even the enemy admitted to his truthfulness and trustworthiness. The old, the young, the men and the women—all who lived in Makkah trusted him. So much so that when the Holy Prophets(saw) gathered the residents of Makkah and asked,

"If I say that there is a large enemy force on the other side of the mountain ready to attack you, will you believe me?"

They all replied in unison,

"Indeed, we will believe you, because you have never lied."

But when that truthful and blessed soul gave them the message of God and told them to stop indulging in superstitions and to stop worshipping their hand-made idols, they all became his enemy. They verbally attacked him with profane language and pelted him with stones, they lay thorns in his path and dragged him with a noose around his neck, they laid filth on him while he lie prostrate in salaah and they dumped refuse on as he walked the streets. Why did all of this happen? What was the reason for this hostility and animosity of the people of Makkah? It was because the True Guide had lit the lamp of divine light amid the world of darkness. He had shown the right path to the caravan of humanity to save it from destruction. As this beloved servant of Allah found the company of a few persons possessing holy spirits, the barbarians did not leave his disciples alone either. They were made to lie down on blistering sand, nails were pierced through their hands and, with hands and feet tied up, they were dragged upon the searing sand of the desert. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, watched all this and showed patience and endurance. Why? It was because the Lord of the worlds had sent him as Rahmatul-lil alameen [mercy to all the

worlds']. What crime had deserved this punishment? What had caused such cruelty and barbarity? It was because the Rahmatul-lil-alameen wanted to embrace people in his arms and save them from painful punishment. This beloved of the Creator of the universe wanted to introduce people to the eternal comforts. How unfortunate it was that those who loved were being rejected. The one who loved was treated with hatred and anger. The calibre of patience and perseverance was of such magnanimity that when he took the message of Allah to the people of Taaif they called him a madman, and when that did not dispel their anger they threw so many stones at him that he was covered in blood. At the sight of the Holy Prophet's blood, his friends [Companions] said,

"O Prophet of Allah, pray that punishment befalls them."

The Holy Prophet's' replied,

"I have not been sent to inconvenience people; I have been sent as a mercy upon them."

Allah is with those who patiently persevere. When Allah promise came to be fulfilled, people saw God in a perceptible way; they heard God's voice in a perceptible fashion; and they were able to achieve His nearness in a perceptible manner.

Vajdaan

It is said that in order for man to live he must be bound to some set of beliefs. The beliefs or doctrines that are imparted to the child's mind and that develop within it through the agency of the environment that surrounds him or through the upbringing of his parents, are what his religion becomes. The foundation of all points of view is based on this principle. Without it, impressions, incidences, and states and perceptions find no place in the system of doctrines. All our philosophies and the entire physical sciences are established on this conclusion, but when we ponder upon the mental and inner life of man we find a distinctive difference in the personal incidences, as opposed to the apparent or outward ones, and we are forced to admit that a very small portion of life comes within the circle of rationality. Everything that one believes in is there as a result of thoughts and perceptions inherited from parents and heard and seen in childhood. When we try to resolve the same issue in a logical way, we are disappointed to see that, although intelligence is highly respected and revered, in reality it is powerless, because when it is proofs and arguments that come under discussion, mere word play does not resolve the issue. When we think about beliefs and doctrines on the basis of intellect or logical reasoning, we obtain nothing but disappointment and failure. There was a time when much was written in an attempt to prove the existence of God. Many arguments were compiled in prose and poetry and an entire group of people was dedicated to spread to others those arguments and that style of thought, but as human consciousness took a turn and rejected the centuries-old rationale, all those writings, speeches and hefty books were put away on the shelves of oblivion. This happened because the next generation could not find the proof it sought regarding the truth] of religion. As a result, they lost faith in religion and the young generation started to say that, 'The God that is mentioned in religion, if He indeed exists, is not the God that our ancestors thought of.' When a thinker dives into the sea of reflection, he concludes that no person can explain the reason for his religious beliefs, because describing the reason would require intellectual arguments.

Despite all this, in this hustling and bustling life, we are certain that no individual can establish life on the right pattern without a set of beliefs. Belief is usually understood to mean that a person declares [faith] in a transcendental being in whose hands resides the entire system of universe and who can make anything happen as He wishes. Lack of belief or wrong belief makes one think that everything that is present is a result of unplanned coincidences in nature. Whether it is belief or lack of belief, in either case,

man is forced to think beyond his personal self-regarding the inner world. We say that declaring one's lack of belief is also a declaration of a belief. If a person rejects the being of God and the existence of God, We consider him to be of atheistic beliefs. As long as we possess a philosophical style and a logical reasoning regarding religion and God, we cannot arrive at any conclusion, because in order to understand the transcendental being, we must possess transcendental consciousness. Thus, what is proven is that the real foundation of religion, truth and the transcendental being is our subconscious belief and our vajdaan ['spiritual intuition']. When we advance in vajdaan, nature becomes our guide and intellect follows. It has been observed that those, upon whom the world of vajdaan had been illumined, did not waver even the slightest in their belief or their way of thinking regardless of how strong an argument was presented before (hen) to disprove the existence of God. This reality guides toward the fact that vajdaan is a realm in which truths are reflected every moment and in each instant. The one who travels in the realm of vajdaan is able to see that which the one cloaked in intelligence cannot. When basic human instincts ['jibillat'] are compared to nature ['fitrat'] it appears that the basic human instincts keep one restless while nature bestows man with peace and joy. This is because nature is linked directly to the Creator of the universe, and that Creator is all peace and mercy.

When our children do not find peace in the religion they follow as their ancestral inheritance, they rise in rebellion. Peace is a reality—a reality through which the entire universe is tied together. Reality is not fiction. Now, the crucial question is this: Which power is it within man that is protected from wear and tear, from the changes of increase and decrease, and from destruction? That power, that being, is each person's own spirit. As a generation, if we introduce our children to the spirit present inside them, they will become friends of God. It is the declaration of God that, 'God's friends neither fear nor grieve.' All of life's joys—mental, physical and spiritual—remain with them.

Flood

When we mention religion, we tend to think of two styles of thought. Those belonging to one of these schools of thought are a rare group, while those belonging to the second school of thought are in the majority. Both of these groups claim that they have received a divine blessing. Those belonging to one of these styles of thought are hard on their own souls but kind and affectionate to others. Those belonging to the other group are so far removed from the common people that it seems as if they have drifted away from the natural and instinctive needs and are treading a most incorrect path. One of these groups is emotionally volatile and easily influenced by outside factors, while individuals of the other group love a life of morality and action. Both say that their trust is in Allah and whatever they do, they do it for the sake of Allah. But the individuals of one of the two groups always remain in the clutches of fear and grief. Whatever the members of that group do, they say that it is for the alleviation of fear and grief, but as practical life in the form of religion surrounds them, they become more and more entangled in the trap of fear, terror, and doubt. All their emotions turn cold, and when an emotion gains intensity, each individual harboring that emotion wants to see every other individual suffer at the hands of fear and grief, just as he suffers. [For that group] the foundation of every act worship and spiritual exercise is that the act will free one from fear. As to when this freedom will be attained—that is a question regarding which no evidence based on certainty is available to them. And without solid evidence man lose personality.

Once, a place became flooded. The entire area sank under water except for a small hill that remained above water level. People, and many animals from the jungle, as well as blip and insects, came to seek refuge on that hill. A lion came, swimming toward the hill; panting like a dog he sat down among the people. He was so fearful that he had lost awareness of his surroundings. A man, very calmly, got up with his rifle and shot the lion in the head. Under the emotion of fear, the lion had forgotten his beastly qualities, and the emotion of fear had made him more cowardly than a goat.

When we mention the emotions that come into play in life, we see that along with circumstances and incidents, emotions also are subject to change. If an atmosphere of fear and terror is created, people live a life of fear. Contrary to this, if the atmosphere is that of courage and bravery, people do not become cowards. Similarly, if the environment contain elements of laziness, idleness, and indifference, most people living in such an environment become lazy and slothful. And if laziness and indolence are removed from the environment, to the same degree people become active and, employing their will power, they accomplish great feats.

An example: There is a comfort-loving woman who does not want to suffer any inconvenience. She habitually sleeps in. She turns away from any place she fears she might face difficulty or worry. But within the same woman, a revolution occurs, as she becomes a mother. As maternal instincts envelop her, she stays awake at nights. Without excuses or complaints, she brings up her child and educates and trains him, overlooking any thought of hardship and discomfort. Quite on the contrary, the discomfort she suffers due to the child further deepens her sense of action. Personally, she may be miserly, thoughtless and selfish but, for the child, she always makes sacrifices.

Those who are not free from a life of fear always remain under the attack of selfish and carnal emotions. These carnal emotions turn them into their subjects. Narcissism and carnal feelings eventually make them listless and inert, and when they enter that period of life where these emotions cool down naturally, they are left suspended in an unending state of boredom and annoyance. To fight this condition, they employ such means as only cause pain and suffering to others. For instance, when they want to invite another person towards goodness, they say out loud without hesitation: 'You do not perform acts of goodness.' That is, they intend to say: 'We are righteous.' Some matters demand understanding, thought and reflection. If they are unable to make such matters clear to the other person, they start to express anger and hatred. And this style of thought makes such a deep imprint upon them that their faces become distorted and devoid of spirituality. And, on their faces, one can see an agonizing film being played out.

The other group is one that does not have fear in its style of thought. Whatever it does or whatever actions are committed by it are not based on the fear of hell. The goal of life of such people is the friendly communication with their Lord, and happily submitting to their Creator, and giving themselves up to Him. They are relieved of all types of fear and doubt and a state of peacefulness infused with obedience takes charge of their personality. They deny themselves the desire for popularity, honour or power. They refrain from engaging in untruthfulness and acts of hypocrisy. They do not deceive anyone by their words and actions. They treat each other with complete honesty. They tell the truth without fear, as they see it. They do not accept the doubts, weaknesses and uncertainties, arising in people's hearts. They remain serious, and speak of matters soberly. And they advise their human brothers and sisters to live their lives in a serious way as well. Also, they do not display false humility or exhibit their Educational prowess. Pride and pretentiousness keep away from them.

By correcting one's center of emotions, cleanliness and purity is developed within a person to such a great degree that he is freed from spiritual illnesses and disharmony of life. His heart becomes purified of carnal temptation and indecent thoughts. He is freed from the impurities of the world. Such a person adopts an attitude of love and kindness towards all his brothers and sisters and all of Allah's creatures. He loves his enemy and interacts with kindness and benevolence towards even those whose outward appearance may be repulsive. If the center of emotions is not corrected, man becomes an active member of [the life of] harshness, discord, hypocrisy, short sightedness, pride and contemptuousness, greed, and an inferiority or a superiority complex—he becomes someone whom Satan recruits among the progeny of Iblis [the being who disobeyed Allah and seeks to send humanity toward heir] and employs him for his own missions.

Spiritual Mentor and his Disciple

Life has many aspects; each aspect possessing attraction. Living in the conscious world, when man peeks at the other side into the subconscious, the mystery that unfolds before him is that this world is divided into groups. Each group has its own point of view and each group is the voluntary prisoner in the web of its own particular desires. A gambler, although he knows that gambling is a waste of wealth, continues to gamble even in poverty. An alcoholic, although aware of the fact that alcohol is eating away at his lungs, does not give up drinking. Alcohol is taken to alleviate worries and hardships, but what kind of alleviation is it that ends up eating man from the inside, rendering him hollow.

The group consisting of the followers of a religion travels through the maze of beliefs and doctrines. Within this stormy world of beliefs, there are many sects and denominations. Each sect considers its own self delivered of sin, while it considers the others to be condemned to hell, but when inquiry is made of any individual of any of the sects, the lava of uncertainty and doubt can be seen boiling within him. When the life of comfort (heaven) and misery (hell) is mentioned to a person who had been busy in worship and spiritual exercise, from the age of 17 till that of 80, he is found to experience a level of uncertainty that can be called by no name other than hell. Religion persuades man towards a world of certainty. And certainty is not complete until it becomes an observation.

Religion negates excessiveness, arrogance and contempt, and feelings of superiority or inferiority, while these emotions dominate a religious person. Religion invites humankind to gather on one platform, whereas the religious intellectual spends his entire energy in the direction opposite to this.

The world of sufis, saints, spiritual leaders ['pir'], and successors to those leaders [sajjadah-nasheen'], is a strange and magical world. They all have their own view on life— their own direction. This group says that it is incumbent upon the disciple ['mureed'] to follow his spiritual mentor ['murshid']. That it is not right to discriminate and prioritize among the various commands of the mentor because a religious mentor a representative of God. That the spirit weakens, if the spiritual mentor is not obeyed. The disciple is like a wax figurine in the hands of the spiritual mentor—he may bend it any direction he may wish. Speaking, writing, reading, staying quiet, doing or not doing something, all should be left to the wishes of the religious mentor.

That the disciple, in the hands of the spiritual mentor, should be such as is a walking stick in the hands of an elderly and frail man—like a lifeless material object which the mentor may pick up and place anywhere he wishes. It is said that a religious mentor ordered his disciple to jump into a well. The disciple, in obedience to the command jumped into the well, but the thought occurred to him that the mentor would finally save him. In the estimate of that pir sahib ['religious guide'] the [occurrence of that thought] disqualified the disciple's action [of jumping into the well] as obedience to his command. The thing that is really strange is that all these secrets and symbolism are mentioned by these, whose own life is composed of doubt and uncertainty.

When we look at the puritanical [zahidaana'] life [of the self righteous], we see that [such a] puritanical life is, in fact, a war against nature, and it possesses a character that is diametrically opposed to nature. This group insists—in fact it is their belief—that against the superior emotions, the inferior, emotions should be incinerated; that, desires should be destroyed. Clothes that one wears should be thick, coarse and ugly; food that one eats should be stale and dry; pessimism should prevail through the days of one's life; and that man should live as one poor and destitute. Obviously, a destitute man will spend his life in poverty and starvation. And the misery and hardship of hunger, thirst, heat and cold will become his life's achievement. This group calls this self-made life of hardship by the name of acceptance and obedience to divine will.

Qalander Baba Auliya (RA) states that, 'Religion means that man must have faith within him. Faith is belief and certainty, and this certainty is not finalized without observation. Entering into the world of certainty, man realizes that the supreme ruler of the entire human brotherhood is Allah. Allah desires that men unite and hold tight to His rope, and that they not create disunity amongst themselves. Those who recognize the supreme ruler, Allah, are His friends. And a friend possesses the certainty that his friend will not cause him pain. For this reason, it is instilled within his soul that he will enter heaven.

Qalander Baba Auliya (RA) states that the relationship between disciple and his spiritual mentor is like that between a student and a teacher and between a child and his father. The spiritual mentor is the beloved of the disciple. The spiritual mentor trains the disciple according to the disciple's particular nature. He covers his mistakes, large and small. He takes him through the ups and downs [of life], and the hardships of the journey, and brings him to that place where a peaceful life embraces him.

Qalander Baba Auliya (RA) states that a life of righteousness does not require that man should annihilate his desires and, in the process, destroy himself. If man shuns nice clothes and declares that wearing tattered and patched up clothes is the superior state of life, all the large and small industries and factories around the world will be shut down and hundreds of thousands of people would starve to death. Allah has not brought forth resources from the belly of the earth for them to be left unappreciated and unutilized. If eating stale and dry food is the acme of life there would remain no need for rain—the earth might then turn barren. It is to beautify the earth that Allah has made the multi-colored flowers and leaves, fruits and trees, and the mountains and waterfalls.

Qalander Baba Auliya (RA) states:

The righteous person [‘zaahid] should happily utilize every blessing that has been bestowed by Allah, but he should not consider himself the owner of these blessings. If it is dry and stale bread that he receives from Allah, he should eat it happily, and if it is a grand feast provided by Allah, he should eat it happily as well. When everything is present, he should make full use of it. He should consider Allah his provider at all times and should remain His grateful servant in all circumstance.

Pile of Ashes

The Creator of the universe said: "I am about to appoint my vicegerent in the earth."

The angels humbly offered their opinion before Allah the Exalted saying, "This earthly servant will become a symbol of violence and bloodshed upon earth."

Listening to the angels, God did not negate their objection proclaiming, 'Man will not cause disorder in the Earth.' Instead He replied, "I know what you know not!" He then taught Adam the knowledge of His attributes and, presenting this masterpiece of His to the Angels, He said, "Now show how much knowledge you possess compared to him."

Trembling in the awe of God's grandeur and majesty, the angels exclaimed, "We only know what Thou hast taught us. Indeed Thou art All Knowing, the Wise!"

[The Holy Quran, ch2: v30-32]

According to the angels, human beings cause chaos and disorder. But possessing the knowledge of God's attributes, they become God's vicegerent [or viceroy]. In other words, if man is not the viceroy of God, he is evil incarnate — creator of disorder. The natural consequence of causing evil and disorder is the distance that one creates between oneself and Allah, and this distance from Allah throws one in the clutches of fear and despair. A fearful person always tries to prove himself as more aware, more intelligent, and more powerful than the others. Over the lengthy span of 2000 years, this perception of fear has grown into such a mountain that its expanse has taken over the vastness of the entire Earth. To rid themselves of fear, nations have invented weapons capable of destroying their own kind and make the Earth shudder, and giving this horridness the name of "progress," they have placed the entire human population on edge. To prove his superiority, man has invented weapons that can destroy the world in the blink of an eye. These intellectuals of mankind, who indeed are not Allah's viceroys, have brought disgrace upon themselves by inventing and reinventing deadly weapons. According to reports of the conscientious individuals of developed nation, we learn that 40,000 atom bombs exist in the world today, It is impossible to even estimate the number of traditional weapons. Why is such progress taking place? Against whom are these weapons being made? Who will be destroyed by the use of these weapons? Is this not tantamount to burning down one's own house?

The earth belongs to Allah; the earth is the center of the welfare and prosperity of the people; the earth is our place of birth; the earth's womb bears natural resources for us; and it is the earth whose fields and gardens have been made a bountiful spread for us by Allah's blessing. How unfortunate that, in the name of progress, we are bent upon destroying the very womb in which we have grown to maturity. What kind of progress, is this that will turn the colourful beauty that surrounds us into ashes—the flowers and the trees, the mountains and the valleys, the gardens and the deserts? This is not progress. This is decline, misfortune, and fear—the fear that, 'we will be destroyed by our own brethren,' and thus resorting to amassing such power so that no other group from our kind can destroy us. But there exists an unavoidable law that, 'as a thing comes into being, its use becomes inevitable.' These 40,000 atom bombs and who knows how many other kinds of bombs that have been created will inevitably explode one day and, when the world is released from this glittering illusion of progress, no tree or pebble would remain; nor would any evidence of progress of a fearful humanity remain.

Come out of this life of fear! Then there will be no need to amass these means of destruction and the earth will not be brought to ruin—the earth whose every particle gives us life.

The Flying Carpet

Life, with all of its emotions and perceptions, incidents and states, concepts and thoughts, only continues as long as the process of breathing continues. Life depends upon breathing. When one ponders the different ways of breathing, one finds out that the process of breathing is established in every living thing, but within each species there is a set interval between each breath. For instance, if breathing causes man's heart to beat 72 times within a certain time, the heartbeat count for a goat for that period of time will be different. Within an ant, it will vary even more greatly.

If an instrument is invented that could measure the breathing of a tree, its heartbeat, based on its breathing, will be different than the heartbeat of the creatures that can talk. And if we invent an instrument that can measure the heartbeat of a mountain; it will be different from that of a tree. Everyone knows that one breath comes in and the other goes out. That is, we inhale one breath and exhale the other. It is also common knowledge that under peaceful circumstances there is a particular balance in the process of breathing, on the contrary, in times of worry, grief or anxiety the state of breathing changes. For instance if a person becomes afraid, his heartbeat becomes faster, and faster still. If we observe carefully we can see that along with the heartbeat, the process of breathing also becomes fast. There are two aspects to breathing. One aspect is that we take in breath, that is, we inhale and absorb oxygen through breathing. The other aspect is that we expel breath, that is, exhale carbon dioxide.

The point to carefully ponder here is that when we inhale, something goes inside of us and burns. That is, the oxygen that is in the atmosphere goes inside of us through breathing and it burns as petroleum burns inside a car. We also see that the burnt waste is expelled outward. This process continues from birth until death. Now we will describe this in terms of spirituality.

According to the statement of Allah the Exalted, everything comes from Allah, and everything returns toward Allah [Holy Quran ch5:v18]. When we breathe in, our direction is inwards, towards our soul. When we exhale the breath, all our interest lies in the world and remains attached to the objects of the world and to our perceptions of flesh and blood. There are two aspects to perception. One aspect is that which confines us within time and space. The other aspect is that which frees us from the confines of time and space, and it remains dominant within us during the state of sleep. That is, when we fall asleep, our conscious perception is negated and time and space lose their grip upon us; and when we wake up, our perceptions free of time and space are temporarily distanced from us. According to the saying of Allah the Exalted, sleep and wakefulness are the two aspects of life. That is, human life is composed of two aspects, or two types of perceptions or awareness. One is called day or wakefulness; the other, night or sleep. Under the form of the awareness of night, every living creature is free from time and space; under [the form of] the awareness of day, every living creature is confined within a perception bound to time and space. Life is established upon breathing, and breathing has two aspects: we breathe in, and we breathe out. The breath that goes in brings us closer to our spirit, and the breath that goes out brings us closer to the perception that keeps us away from knowledge of our spirit. With closed eyes, or with our eyes open, when we concentrate upon something with complete focus, the duration of breathing in becomes longer, that is, our conscious awareness turns towards our spirit.

In all the books that have so far been written on tasawuf ['mysticism'], spiritual fields of knowledge are mentioned but that knowledge has not been made readily accessible to the general public. Many secrets and hints are mentioned but only those that have attained a certain level of spirituality [i.e. they are manzil raseedah] or those who have treaded the path of mystic initiation ['raah-e-sulook'] are able to understand these secrets.

Our ancestors have also stated that since spiritual knowledge is transferable, it should be protected and safeguarded. This is the reason that these fields of knowledge are called ilm-eseenah ['knowledge of the heart']. The ancestors have gone so far as to say that, after attaining this knowledge, their results (supernatural phenomenon) should be kept secret. Why was it so? The only thing that comes to mind is that, in those times, people did not possess the ability to think, understand and attain knowledge to the extent that they do today. Before this age of scientific progress, it was considered a miracle to be able to send sounds too far-away places. But today scientists have discovered the wavelength of sound. The transfer of thought from one place to another was also considered miraculous (supernatural). In today's

world, complete images can be transferred over distances of thousands of miles. Not long ago, just some 50 years ago, when it was said to people that man is made up of lights, they ridiculed the idea. Today science has proven that man is composed of wavelengths [of light]. Not only have they said that man is composed of waves, but they are also able to capture the image of man at a place where Ire had previously been present, but has since left.

In the olden days, grandmothers used to tell children stories about magic carpets, on which the prince and princes would sit and fly away. The same magic carpets of the grandmothers are today present before our eyes, Not only are they present, but we are able to travel on them according to our will and desire.

The examples show that, before scientific progress, humankind did not possess the ability to understand these symbols and secrets. This is the reason why our elders and ancestors first selected a few individuals and then transferred to them those fields of knowledge. But in this age, man's mental ability and stamina, and his understanding and power of reflection are so strong that the things which used to be categorized as miracles are present today in people's everyday lives. Due to the exposure of knowledge, as man gained in [mental] stamina, his conscious grew stronger, his intelligence developed further, and his ability to learn and understand the deeper [aspects of life] increased. This is a great advantage that has come about due to the advancement of science, but along with it, as the strength of the conscious grew stronger, to the same degree the strength of certainty grew weaker and weaker.

The weakening of the strength of certainty means that man drifted away from Allah, and the main reason for that is that the goal of scientific progress was the attainment of worldly comfort and luxury. Since this world itself is a symbol of uncertainty, is fictional, and has no more significance than its assumed perceptions, this progress also became a torment. If this progress, along with material means, was based upon the search for transcendental abilities, belief and certainty, instead of weakening, would have strengthened. But despite this, the advancement of scientific knowledge has this benefit at least that we have developed the taste to learn about such fields of knowledge that bring us closer to spirituality.

Fifty years ago, or a hundred years ago, what used to be achieved by performing spiritual exercises over fifty or a hundred years, can now be achieved in a few months or a few years due to an individual's unshakeable certainty, and strength of will.