

PHILOSOPHY OF
TAUHID

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FOREWORD

In The Name Of Allah The Merciful, The Beneficent

TAUHID is not only a metaphysical concept but very much a living one. Indeed it is a concept that can guide us through the quagmire of conflicts if properly understood in the context of a living reality.

This idea has been amply portrayed by Marhoom Jaffer Ali Aseer, in this book, originally written in Gujarati. The references to the Indian society of the time were quite pertinent at the time and in many cases are relevant even today. However, it is the central theme of living Tauhid that makes this book a welcome addition to Islamic literature in the English language.

It may well be that the book may kindle a fire in our younger generation and bridge the time gap between them and the young Jaffer Ali Aseer who died at the age of 23 years.

Haji Murtaza Lakha has done this community a great service in translating this book from the Gujarati original at the behest of the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania. Haji Muhsin Alidina and Mulla Asghar Ali M. M. Jaffer have both read the manuscript and have made valuable comments.

May Allah give us tawfik in our endeavours.

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PART I

ITS EFFECTS ON THE SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL REFORM

Our community needs to be reanimated with the doctrine and spirit of Tauhid (Unity of Allah) and its true realisation and appreciation, for only then can it be re-enlivened. Although it is the only community on earth today which subscribes to the doctrine in its true meaning and spirit, we are still unconscious of its importance.

The tenet of Tauhid is the root and foundation of religion and social structure. On it are based the principles of ethics and etiquettes. On its true realisation are virtue and courtesy attained. On its abandonment every vice and defect takes roots. Through it, discoveries of new sciences have become possible and knowledge and freedom established. By holding fast to this spirit, man has been able to attain humanity. Ignorance of it has led him into bondage and debasement to the level of a beast; or even worse. This doctrine assures the protection of the human rights . It upholds independence and rejects dependence. It helps man maintain his status designated by Allah as the best of His creation. Tauhid has opened up the avenues for knowledge and has given man power, government, wealth, prestige, splendour and grandeur. In short, realisation of this doctrine is the key to every achievement and its ignorance results in total loss.

THE GOD OF A POLYTHEIST - HIS OWN CREATION

The belief in the Unity of Allah is of such predominant importance for human progress and perfection and for attainment of nearness to Allah that all the Prophets of Allah right from Hazrat Adam (a.s.) to Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) taught mankind this concept and emphasised its eminence. Yet, the descendants of Adam have been so obstinate that they have never taken pains even to understand this principle. They did not remain contented until they had, with their own hands, carved out a god to worship the way they manufactured their other essential goods. Just as an artist or a poet conceiving a beautiful thought gives it a form on paper and comes to love it so much that he becomes a worshipper of his own creation and is willing to sacrifice his life for it, so has man from time to time conceived his own god giving him some shape and size depending on his needs in that particular age.

THE MODERN GOD IN THE IMAGE OF MAN

At first sight it is astonishing to note that a learned man would be prepared to regard a thing he possess or has made with his own hands as his God, his creator and his master! However, when one reflects on human nature, one is able to understand this behaviour. Has not man been a slave of his desires and a worshipper of his needs? When there exist men who profess Tauhid (the Unity of Allah) and yet succumb to their desires and needs as their god, then there is no wonder if they accept a man or an individual who fulfils their desires and needs as their god also.

Man is so advanced in his knowledge about Allah that even those who prostrate before an idol or worship another feeble entity, a human being, lay pretence to be the genuine believers in Tauhid. This polytheism is then garbled philosophically to make it acceptable as a true and important necessity of mankind. But, modern man has created many more gods of various kinds beside the ancient deities and idols. Any human individual or being with whom our needs are attached becomes our god. The fact that we do not bow or prostrate before such person, nor do we utter the words we chant in ritualistic prayers, does not detract from the reality that we treat him as a god. The outward forms of prayers are in themselves nothing but a natural manifestation of submission to God. For example, a Hindu stands before an idol with his hands clasped, a Christian or a Jew kneels in a church. Similarly, every religious person praises and worships God assuming a posture of humility. Such actions in the course of prayer are not the prayer itself, but merely a way of effecting and manifesting obedience. In these different ways, we declare our absolute submission in all our affairs to the entity we

worship. As a result, the will and command of such entity have to be totally obeyed. In short, therefore, if a Muslim were confronted with a desire contrary to the wishes of Allah Whom he worships, he would act absolutely in accordance with the wishes and commands of Allah regardless of the difficulties and adversities he may have to surmount.

WORSHIPPING GOD IN THE IMAGE OF MAN

As stated above, an idol-worshipper who prostrates before an idol or bows before it in all humility with hands clasped, in total submission to it, will never act contrary to the commands of the idol. Thus, various modes of prayers are only a method of manifesting total submission to an entity worshipped by man.

So if at the time of need, a person deserts Allah and bows before an imaginary god or, an individual capable of meeting those needs, and, to please such an individual he acts contrary to the commands of Allah, then he actually becomes as much an idol-worshipper as the people in ancient days of ignorance. This is called human worshipping or associating a partner to Allah. Disobeying Allah to please this other entity is tantamount to worshipping the latter even if one identifies oneself as a monotheist or an ardent opponent of idol-worshipping. Indeed, he would have proved himself an idol-worshipper, a polytheist or a human-worshipper. In fact, this form of idol-worshipping or human-worshipping is much worse than the ancient deity- worshipping and more dangerous for mankind.

OUR DESIRES ARE OUR GODS

Failure to know Allah truly has led man to make his own wishes and desires his god. Our desires born of animal instincts have often lowered us beneath our dignity, leading us to bow down at many places. When we fail to fulfil our desires, we helplessly turn towards other people who, then, gradually become our gods, as is conclusively demonstrated by the ancient Indian and Greek beliefs. In both those regions, gods were created after man's various needs: they would invoke a specific god for wealth, children, seasons, water, wind, light etc. Similarly, separate gods were created to alleviate unhappiness, distress and many other problems. Still worse, we find different powers taking the form of gods to fulfil various human vices and virtues which, when examined closely are simply human desires and sensuality. The Holy Qur'an makes reference to this state: "Do you see the one who takes for his god his own passion?" (25:43).

The word "HAWA" in Arabic is not confined to greed alone but extends to sensual and animal instincts. Hunger, thirst, anger, greed, avarice are all covered in its connotation and in practice it is these instincts which create our various needs and put us through various tests. When we find ourselves inadequate to fulfil them we bow to the wishes of others even though to do so is contrary to the command of Allah. For example, when one is hungry one looks for food but when fails to find it, one bows before others who are thought capable of supplying food. On such occasions many consider those able to fulfil their wishes as their gods, although they can never be worthy of such regard.

The root cause for such conduct is our fear that if we

antagonise the one fulfilling our needs, our wishes may not be realised. Thus the provider becomes our God. We forget Allah and cease to recognise Him as our true provider, as though we never believed in Him. Had it not been so, we would never disobey His commands only to please another human being. We consider the idol-worshipping of the ancient past unbecoming of man and discard such practice, yet since our human needs are still with us, we have led ourselves into a new form of idol-worshipping. In the place of stones and idols, numerous gods have sprung up in human form. The ancient Greeks and Indians used to worship the deity of wealth in order to attain it. Today, we worship the wealthy whose pleasure is of such paramount importance to us that we have lost the fear of disobeying the commands of Allah and seek the indulgence of those whom we regard as capable of making us wealthy.

THE MODERN IDOL WORSHIPPING IS MORE HARMFUL AND DANGEROUS

We know how ancient people worshipped to please their deities. The modes were innocuous and the result of ignorance. The worshippers needed only to donate little money, some flowers and make a few sacrifices. These were coupled with simple rituals and a demand for a few virtues. The deities required that prior to their prayers, the worshippers should already have acquired certain virtues. For example, before a Christian attends church, his thoughts and concepts have to be in keeping with the teachings of Jesus Christ. Thus, the dangers of these forms of worship were to a large extent limited to the individual worshippers themselves. While their worship of such idols, the sun, the moon, the planet, the earth, the oceans, fire or wind, could not enhance their status at the same time it did not harm any other person. Moreover, the demands of the deities were already prescribed in books with no danger of additional claims from them or of subsequent innovations to the detriment of the public. Although it is now manifest to all of us that these deities and idols are useless and of no benefit, yet their roots have remained firm till today because they represent the fulfilment of human desires and wishes. We have not detached ourselves from the needs that arise from wishes and lowly desires. Thus we have replaced the deities and idols with human beings who we regard as capable of fulfilling our desires and wishes and, therefore, worthy of worship. These articulate human deities are very injurious and dangerous to the general public.

The deities of today speak; they are keen to obtain fulfilment of their endless wishes and commands; they are not contented

merely with flowers and sacrifices, but make definite demands on us for the fulfilment of their ill desires. Is there a man on earth whose profits do not lie in the loss of another? Thus, if a person becomes a worshipper of a human being he will surely harm another in order to please the former. This cruel and destructive form of idol-worshipping has spread throughout the world today , from the East to the West. A large majority of those who profess Tauhid and submit themselves entirely to Allah's Will, have already fallen prey to this form of polytheism by bowing before these articulate deities. Having embraced Islam, they have been constrained from idol-worshipping and have declared themselves obedient to only one Allah, but being ignorant of the implications of the concept of Tauhid, they have become subservient to these vocal deities whose commands and desires are largely detrimental to the common man .

The ancient idol-worshipping was less harmful. If a person bowed before the god of wealth or an idol made of stone to obtain wealth or sustenance, the society as a whole was not generally affected . The worshipper had only to sacrifice a little money, food or flowers; others were not harmed; rather, they derived some benefit. The poor received those items of sacrifices. On the other hand, the present form of human-worship not only harms the worshipper but is also a cause of suffering for others. Although today we look down upon such form of idol-worshipping, yet in order to obtain our necessities, we regard it more important to comply with the commands and desires of those fulfilling our wishes than to obey the commands of Allah. Is it possible that the person worshipped may be ruthless? Is it not possible that he would be feathering his own nest at the cost of others? By such conduct, we, the believers in one Allah, become instruments of cruelty and oppression. The subject of polytheism starts from this very point when a person, obsessed with his wishes and

desires, seeks their fulfilment from other than Allah, regardless of whether an idol is made of stone or is in the form of another human being. By this act, man invalidates his belief in the Unity of Allah. The true meaning of Tauhid is not merely that the form of prayer and imploration prescribed for the worship of Allah should not be employed for any other entity; the essence of worship is total submission to Allah alone. Therefore, even if we do not prostrate before another human being and do not utter the phrases reserved for the worship of Allah, yet, if we submit to another human being and for his pleasure disobey the commands of Allah, then undoubtedly we will have prostrated before this human being. Prostration is the soul of prayer. The command is: “Guard your habit of prayers and the Middle prayer, and stand before God in a devout frame of mind” (2:238). In the same vein, the Holy Book equates prostration by the inanimate with total submission to Him.

QIYAM, RUKUU AND SAJDAH TEACH TAUHID

Today , we ostensibly say our prayers (namaz) but do not have regard to its true meaning. When a worshipper performs ablution (wudhu) he washes his hands of all the impurities of the world, he cleanses his limbs of untidiness and beastliness, and by saying “Allaho Akber” places himself away among those who “overflow in their love for Allah” (2:165). He thus declares that only Allah is his Master and that he seeks only His love. Indeed absolute submission is the only proof of one's true love.

A man forgets himself when in love and regards himself insignificant. Love engenders self-effacement. In our prayers we leave our hands open displaying engrossment, but our minds and hearts wander elsewhere; by raising our hands we demonstrate our helplessness and humility, but we do not give any thought to what we do. Qiyam is a posture similar to waiting upon someone. Like a lover awaiting the wishes of his beloved or a servant awaiting the commands of his master. But absolute submission lies not in waiting till an order is issued, but in the immediate declaration of readiness to obey Allah. To manifest this condition, we bow in rukuu. Then, we need to declare our willingness to forsake everything in His obedience and like inanimate things be ready to submit to the commands of Allah. This condition is fulfilled in prostration (sajdah). The true meaning of the concept of Tauhid is attained when one reaches such a peak of understanding in which one realises one's total worthlessness before Allah and is willing to sacrifice everything in absolute obedience to His commands. In short, each of the movements in prayers (namaz) is directed towards establishing in our minds the true meaning of Tauhid and teach us to refrain from disobeying His commands. Mere

parrot like repetition of words, in total disregard to the purposes of these movements would be nothing more than a futile exercise.

NAMAZ TEACHES THE LAW, THE PATH, GNOSTICISM AND REALISATION

Our only Ruler, Master and Lord is Allah. If religion has come to this world to teach us that we are small and insignificant in relation to Allah, then the standing in prayer illustrates compliance with the rules of religion and leads to the Path. If by bowing into Rukuu we declare that before our Ruler our personal desires are of no consequence, then during prostration keeping our forehead on earth, we demonstrate the understanding and appreciation that before Him all the treasures of the world are not worth even an iota and that He has the power and authority over all the powers of the world.

At this juncture Muslims need to question themselves if they do not associate Him with any other entity. Admittedly they no longer bow before any deity or idol, we should sincerely examine our desires and intentions. Through prayers (namaz) five times a day we obtain perfect education on Tauhid. When we perform at least thirty four prostrations (sajdah) every day we make our declarations before Allah that we and our intentions and powers are meaningless before Him, that we are willing to obey Him like any inanimate being and appreciate that before Him all powers and authorities are ineffective. Do we make these declarations sincerely when at every step in this world we are willing to prostrate before another human being only to attain worldly desires, even at the expense of the people and the country? If we are willing to kill our brothers and violate the dictates of the Holy Book and the Traditions for the pleasure of other human beings, then we have undoubtedly prostrated before a vocal idol. Our prayers and fasts, our standing, bowing and prostrating in namaz are all for the one other than Allah.

Those professing to be true believers in the Oneness of Allah only pay lip service to Allah because they are in reality steeped in polytheism. Majority of Muslims today are in the bondage of profound polytheism. Muslims! awake!

If blasphemy (Kufr) rises from the Holy Kaaba itself then where is Islam? If Muslims remain in the bondage of grave polytheism and if blasphemy emanates from their own hearts, then the concept of Tauhid is non-existent! Muslims need to awaken from their slumber! They need to examine themselves, their neighbours and friends. If they find any of them disobeying the commands of the Holy Book or disregarding the Traditions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) so as to attain the pleasure of another human being or acting in a manner detrimental to general welfare of the people by acquiescence to the personal desires of some, then they should admonish and advise them that they are distant from Tauhid, chained in polytheism. Man does not so much displease Allah by worshipping deities and idols than by the worship of another human being. Thus does man earn for himself a permanent place in Hell.

A DISBELIEVER IN HUMAN EQUALITY IS A POLYTHEIST

Muslims are today unwittingly engulfed in a devastating aspect of polytheism which Islam had sought to eradicate. They are seen prostrating before the same huge idols which Islam struggled to destroy. What is this grave aspect of polytheism? It is the failure to accept one human being as an equal to another.

One who does not acknowledge or believe in human equality is undoubtedly a polytheist. It is not only the arrogant man, looking down upon another as weak and lowly who suffers from this disease, but so does the weak and helpless human being who, on noticing a great man, inwardly feels that he cannot be like him. In fact, this weak person's form of polytheism is even worse.

Islam has not emphasised Tauhid for the fear that acceptance of another human being as a god will weaken Allah's position or that if stone, tree, ocean, sun, moon, planet, stars or a human being claimed to be god, Allah will become jealous. Although, through ignorance, some religions do portray Him with such weaknesses. For example, in the twentieth chapter of the Torah, it is stated: "Allah restrains man from worshipping idols because by such worship the jealousy of Allah is provoked and He avenges this sin on four generations of the sinner."

The Holy Qur'an and Islam are pure of any such misconceptions. Allah is not dependant upon or jealous of another person. If the entire universe became immersed in polytheism or idol-worshipping, the kingdom of Allah would not be affected in the least. Similarly if the entire humanity became true believers in Tauhid and submitted themselves in

total obedience to Him, His status would not in the slightest be enhanced. Neither does He benefit from people becoming His true believers nor does He lose if they become polytheists. Indeed, what kind of Allah would He be if He feared a human being who claimed to be a god! What standing can any man-made gods have, be they Ram or Krsihna, Ezra or Jesus, the son of Mary, before the real Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe? How can a weak and helpless creature affect Allah by its claim to godhead? On the contrary, by abandoning Allah and worshipping His creature man only harms himself.

By steadfastly adhering to Tauhid, man only benefits himself. Thus the Holy Qur'an says, "And if anyone is grateful, truly his gratitude is a gain for his own soul; but if any is ungrateful, truly Allah is free of all wants, Allah is worthy of all praises" (31:12). So, Allah does not need worship or praise from human beings. If we regard someone other than Allah as our god, we do not in any way harm Allah. We degrade ourselves by feeling unequal to the other human being whom we worship, and consequently deny ourselves the opportunity to acquire the virtues and abilities that we find in him. Except for the ability to receive revelations and inspirations (as in the case of the Holy Prophets and the Imams), Allah has not granted any particular ability to any one human being while depriving another of it. Yet, if one regards another human as one's god then the equality between them is lost.

To encourage man to develop his full potential it is very important for him to appreciate that he should not regard the greatness of any scholar or highly successful person unattainable, because every ostensibly weak man has the same latent abilities as the successful one. The only difference between them is that the successful person has fully utilised and developed his abilities while the other has disregarded

them. The same abilities are potentially in us all; their realisation depends entirely on whether or not one has folly exploited them.

To ensure that there would never be deviation from this concept the Holy Prophet (for whom Allah has said that but for him, the entire universe would not have been created) announced of himself, "I am but a man like yourselves, it is revealed to me that your God is One God" (18:110). He further says: "The only difference between you and me is that Allah has appointed me His Messenger to convey the message that there is only one God. I have come to explain to you the true meaning of "La ilaha illa Allah." Allah is the most Powerful. All other powers in this world are equal to or lesser than yours. After Allah, man has the highest status and everything else is lower than him. Any person created as human being is your equal, so much so that as far as being human is concerned I too am just like you."

The significance of these words for reformation of society will be illustrated later. One point which must be made now is that even the Holy Prophet asserts that he is a "human being like yourselves," could there be a worse polytheist than a Muslim who does not regard himself equal to others in his ability or who on noticing a scholar, a craftsman or a wealthy person becomes so confused that he regards himself inadequate and incapable of being an equal to that person or obtaining the opportunities that other has? No doubt, such a Muslim is least aware of Tauhid.

If the Holy Book has repeatedly warned man against regarding others as god , it is not because such polytheism affects Allah in any way. A parent takes delight when his small child imitates him. Would the Creator of the entire universe feel helplessly nervous by a mortal's pretence to be a god?

In a manner of speech, we are also the children of Allah. His true prophet has taught us that we should strive to adopt His qualities. Hadithe Qudsi states that if we become true followers of and obedient to Allah then our limbs would become Allah's limbs, and in accordance with this promise the Holy Qur'an states in honour of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) "You did not throw when you threw the dust, but it was Allah who threw" (8:17). Thus Allah describes the hands of the Holy Prophet as His hands. From the various descriptions of the qualities of Allah in the Holy Qur'an, it is clear that man possesses the capacity and ability to cultivate in himself divine character and virtue. Thus when we regard another human being as our god, our belief in Tauhid is weakened. In fact, by regarding another human being as our god, we are denying ourselves attainment of the virtues and abilities which exalt him in our estimate. If we abandon this form of shirk (polytheism) and consider ourselves also capable of cultivating the virtues that he has attained, we would be inspired to attain and achieve them.

Jesus had guided his disciples to become like himself. When His disciples asked him, "How are you able to work these miracles which make people regard you as God?" He answered, "You also can work such miracles. You can become exactly like myself. You need faith and virtuous deeds only."

Prayers, fasting and adherence to the commands of the religion can help develop such powers in man. A faithful can elevate himself to the level of the ancient prophets. One Tradition from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) states, "The scholars among my followers are like the prophets sent to the children of Israel." By elevating Jesus and Ezra to the level of god, man has deprived himself of the capacity to attain their levels. We have been prohibited from regarding them as gods because such faith contradicts the concept of equality

of men. Except for Prophethood or Imamat which is attained by revelation or inspiration there is no other quality, ability or status which man cannot attain.

Why then, does Allah become displeased when a person claims to be god? What is a humble man before Allah? For example, if a mad person claims to be equal to a lofty king and manages to find a few mad followers, what would the real king do other than just laugh him off? However, if by such a claim the laws of his country are violated or his subjects harmed, he would certainly be disturbed. Thus the actual cause of his displeasure is the harm that may befall the people.

When one relates these kings of the world with the King of all kings, their position and power become worthless. Allah is displeased with such claims because we thereby hinder our latent abilities to bear fruits and restrain the potential which He has reposed in us. He has sent Prophets to the world and manifested through them unusual abilities as an example of His quality and capacity so that we may at least acquire that which is attainable. The Prophets did not perform miracles to make us regard them as our gods, rather through them Allah wished to illustrate the extent to which He has bestowed man with human capabilities. They came as examples from Allah to bring to us the good tidings that, "I am a mortal like yourselves" and explain to us that as human beings we too are destined to attain the heights which are within human reach. This was the true implication of the Qur'anic behest: "be with those who are true in word and deed," so that in their company, man may take on divine colour.

IT IS POLYTHEISM TO ACCEPT ANY PERSON WITHOUT DIVINE QUALITIES AS AN IMAM, KHALIFA OR LEADER

So many Imams have sprung up today who have no nexus with Islam. Innumerable examples are found in history of depraved, impious and unholy persons claiming to be Imams and some ignorant Muslims accepting them as such. As a result, Muslims fell victim to polytheistic influence. They appear yet to be in slumber and will ever remain so without the knowledge and understanding of “Tauhid.” If they have not understood the true meaning and purpose of religion then surely their prayers, fasting, Hajj, charity, etc., are no more than mere physical exercise and meaningless routine. For a true realisation of religion, there is an eternal need for a sinless, perfect ideal who is actively engrossed in earning Allah’s pleasure. In this respect, the Holy Qur’an has guided: “One Day, We shall call together all human beings with their Imams” (17:71). If we are followers of an Imam who is holy and pious we will be in his group. Tauhid has been taught to us so that we steadfastly follow and seek to take on the divine colour. If we become followers of a person who is not himself sinless and pure, then divine proximity cannot be realised. Thus the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) has made it obligatory for us all to recognise our Imam. He said, “He who dies without having known and recognised the Imam of his time will have died the death of an infidel.”

One method of identifying a true Imam has been clearly elucidated in the Holy Book. It sets out the qualities of the true Imam we should follow if our aim is to be inspired by Allah. When this objective is not accomplished by following a particular Imam, then to continue accepting him as an Imam

is polytheism. The objective of seeking nearness and oneness with Allah is symbolically expressed by the Holy Book as the "Divine Colour." He says: "Conduct yourselves in His ways" which means, "Adopt the traits found in Allah." In this practical world, man needs an ideal to follow in addition to mere theoretical instructions. Thus the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) was sent so that "He purifies them and gives them the teachings of the Book and Wisdom" (3:164). Therefore, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) instructed as well as purified people through his own pure examples. Indeed, only those who are themselves holy and pious can become Prophets or their true successors. Their every word or act complies with the commands of Allah and their lives are a successive chain of a living example of the Holy verse, "Say: truly my prayers, my sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds" (6:162). They say to the world that their religious activities, their living, their death are all dedicated to the service of the Sustainer of the universe. It is only the persons who have attained such lofty levels who can effectively guide the people. The command is "Follow me and God will love you" (3:31). Those who obey Allah in this way become so close to Him that even their limbs become symbolised as the limbs of Allah. By following and obeying such personages one hopes to take on the divine colour. This is the lofty level of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) and the Imams (a.s.). The only difference is that the dress of the Prophet has been directly cleansed by the "Hand" of Allah and is coloured with His colours. While the dress of the Imam is cleansed by the "Hand" of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) and also coloured in the divine colours. Although both the Prophets and the Imams are sent by Allah for the guidance of the people towards Allah, the only difference between them is that the Holy Prophet receives divine light directly from Allah whilst the Imams receive its reflection through the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.). The level of the Imam is that he has direct

communication with Allah by way of inspiration known as “Ilham” and is, at the same time, “a human being like yourselves.” If we follow and obey such an Imam, then we are actually following Allah. Thus, it is not possible for just any one to become an Imam.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) received knowledge directly from Allah while the Imam receives his instructions from none else but the Holy Prophet. Today a number of Muslims, unaware of the true meaning and concept of Imamat and obedience to an Imam, accept false and incompetent persons as their Imams. This is polytheism. Thus, to guard oneself against such polytheism it is incumbent on us to know and recognise who a true Imam is. As stated before, he must be a holy and pious person adorned with the attributes of Allah. However, we know numerous examples of impostors who, to accomplish their selfish desires, would publicly say prayers and fast excessively to appear holy and pious. It is, therefore, important to bear in mind that a holy and pious person has no objective other than the pleasure of Allah. He is like the spirit of the age and his only anxiety is the goodwill and betterment of the entire world. Thus, we must not distance ourselves from Islam by following persons who are not dedicated truly to Allah. It is necessary that we save ourselves from such polytheism and that is why Tauhid has been taught. Only such persons qualify to be followed who can rightly address us in the words of the Holy verse, “If you do love Allah, then follow me and Allah will love you” (3:31).

It has become necessary to allude to Imamat because people neither understand the true meaning of polytheism nor the true objective behind the concept of Tauhid. Allah has enjoined Tauhid so that the spring of human love should be exclusively His. Love means that man should become at one with the beloved.

The word “Muhabbat” is from “Hubb” which denotes being overwhelmed. Allah has also employed the word “khullat” which denotes “to empty.” Thus, so long as a human being does not engrave both these aspects in himself he cannot claim to love Allah; he needs first to clear his heart of all worldly yearnings and then fill it with love for Allah. Then only can he become “khalil” and “muhib” and claim, “I bear testimony that I hold love for Allah.” It is only at this level when Allah is the true beloved and the true beloved is Allah. To love those who have not taken on divine colour is polytheism. When there is no room in our hearts for other persons, then our total submission is to Allah alone; all our limbs are under His control and in His service. As Muslims we do not regard any other entity as god, but by loving those who are devoid of divine light, colour and fragrance, we make them our god. Thus Islam forbids us to love another human being as we love Allah. Any person who out of his love for another human being or so-called Imam ignores the commands of Allah becomes a polytheist; or even worse.

An Imam never violates the commands of Allah or His Prophet so that to love him is truly to love Allah. His commands can never be contrary to those of Allah and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.). If a command reaches us in the name of an Imam but is inconsistent with the commands of the Holy Qur’an, then it is obligatory on us as Muslims to disregard such a command, because it can only have been falsely attributed to Imam. A Masoom has said in a tradition, “If a Tradition or a command attributed to us contradicts the commands of the Holy Qur’an, then do not accept it as our command. The test of a true Tradition is to compare it with the dictates of the Holy Qur’an. If it is consistent with the commands in the Holy Qur’an, then you can accept it as emanating from us, but if it is not, then reject it.” This is the true aim of obedience of

an Imam appointed by Allah. How then can a command or Tradition from him violate any command of Allah or His Prophet? This is the test of true Imam. Regrettably, however, so many Muslims today regard as their Imams people who publicly and unabashedly indulge in gambling, adultery, drinking and pursuit of illicit pastimes. They openly oppose the commands of Allah on prayers, fasting, hijab, etc. Yet the so-called Muslims remain in obedience to them and engross themselves in activities contrary to the wishes of Allah. They remain unaware of the polytheism in which they are engaged. To give total education on the concept of Tauhid Islam precludes love for any entity not approved by Allah. Because in such love man applies all his energies and power in blind obedience to the wishes of his beloved. It thus becomes necessary to throw some light on the true meaning of worship so that the meaning of the concept of Tauhid becomes clear.

PERFECTION OF THE SOUL IS TRUE WORSHIP

Allah has created intrinsic beauty in all things. The Creator of the universe develops them to their perfection, which they attain after undergoing various stages of purification. The greatness of Allah is manifested in an entity when its inner energies are developed to perfection and radiate their brilliance. For example, to a learned person, emission of gas from charcoal illuminating a house in a dark night, is an excellent illustration of the glory of Allah and makes his heart bow down before the glory and grandeur of Allah. The mere chanting of certain sentences does not awaken us to the reality of worship. We shall become true worshippers and pious, only if acting in compliance with His commands, we develop fully the intrinsic beauty of our character to the extent that they glitter brilliantly. The purpose of Namaz is to display the true meaning of the command, “Stand before Allah in a devout frame of mind” (2:238). Indeed obedience to the commands of Allah is nothing but to manifest the intrinsic beauty of one’s character. The perfection of one’s soul is true worship. Thus does the glory of Allah reveal itself on earth and the praise and worship of Allah attains its true meaning. The adoration of Allah is to attribute to Him all our good deeds through which we seek to manifest our intrinsic beauty and to adopt, within our limits, His qualities. By praising and glorifying Him, we manifest His purity and thus teach ourselves to refrain from evil. This is the true meaning of praise and adoration of Allah. “He who is grateful to Allah does so to the profit of his own soul” (31:12). This means that the true purpose of worship is manifested by bringing the hidden intrinsic beauty into the open. The best manifestation of the glory of Allah is in the exhumation of hidden beauty so

as to provide proof of His power. We often marvel at effects and qualities emerging from ordinary worthless things. In comparison to any other thing, man is a small world by himself. In him is hidden the spiritual splendour, and should they attain perfection and manifest themselves fully, how much astounded shall we be! Even today the new inventions made by man which demonstrates his genius astonish the world. The day of the perfect manifestation of the glory of Allah will dawn when all the powers and capabilities of man shall attain full development. This manifestation is described in Arabic as “Falaah” - that is profit and prosperity. The purpose of religion and revelation is to achieve this end, Qur’an says: “And these are the ones who shall prosper” (2:5). Only such persons are true Muslims and true believers in Tauhid. In short, the true meaning of worship is the attainment of perfection of the soul which can be achieved only by compliance with the commands of Allah. To remind us of these commands of Allah, Islam has laid down a number of rituals, one of which is daily prayers (namaz). Assuming that you pray only to Allah, still if you love any other person or are greedy of any other material thing which hinders you from obedience to Allah or renders you unable to fulfil your original aim, then you become the worst polytheist. If you claim to believe in an Imam in order to learn the rules of religion and act accordingly, then you should also fulfil the main purpose of religion which is to manifest clearly the hidden traits of your character. First, one must examine the worthiness of the person one regards as Imam. By worthiness is not meant capability to impress others by will power or the performance of some special acts. It means the extent to which he is able to live in obedience to the dictates of Allah, the extent to which he is immersed in the knowledge and understanding of Allah. To impress by one’s will power or cure certain diseases are human capabilities found in non-Muslims also. The rules

of religion and the secrets of the Holy Book are unravelled to an Imam. The purity of his soul is engendered by his true understanding of the Holy Book. Thus do they become the ones to provide redress to the ills of Muslims.

THE APPOINTMENT OF AN IMAM MUST BE BY ALLAH

Chanting, glorification and repeating the names of Allah are all virtues in themselves, but it is not the lack of any of those virtues that has placed us in the predicament in which we find ourselves today. An Imam or leader must be a person who is deeply affected by any calamity befalling Muslims, is well acquainted with the conditions of the Muslims and the standing of Islam and is able to find solutions to problems of the Muslims from the Holy Qur'an. It is easy to be misled by the mere words, "the Law, the Path, the Truth and Gnosticism"; these words are weapons for those who have deserted religion. Only those who have attained mastery over the shariah can guide us to its understanding and to its right path. If this argument is not clear, then recourse to the first eleven verses of Chapter 23 of the Holy Qur'an entitled The Believers (Moominun) will indicate the path towards an attainment of perfect human development, which begins and ends with the daily prayers (namaz). Obviously, it follows that obedience to an Imam whose order is contrary to religion, is polytheism and it cannot be taken for granted that anything he utters is the rule of religion. A true Imam cannot ever issue a command contrary to the rules of religion. He has the divine colour and therefore his commands should be subservient to the commands of Allah. Today a number of Muslims are trapped in polytheism simply by accepting persons who are not worthy of this office as their Imam.

Therefore, to disentangle oneself from such a trap, it is essential to know the qualifications of an Imam. He should be one who has taken on divine colour. However, we notice that show and pretence has gripped the world. Millions of people

present a public image different from their actual true selves. How then can one judge whether a particular person is truly pious and sinless? We are not capable by ourselves to attain this knowledge for it is related to the inner secrets of man. Thus the appointment of an Imam can only be by Allah and not by popular vote or support. That is why the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) in his lifetime, in compliance with the orders of Allah, revealed the number and the names of the Twelve Imams who would succeed him. As explained earlier the best way of manifesting Allah's greatness is to bring to light our hidden and latent qualities. The concept of Tauhid (the Unity of Allah) has been taught so that we do not become entrapped in this type of polytheism and abandon the true objective of religion. The difference between human beings and animals lies in the power of reasoning. It is only when this power is trained that it can be developed. Whenever we are required to take any action, we must examine it on the principles of truthfulness and established facts by use of our knowledge so that we are able to discern truth from falsehood and eventually reach the correct conclusion. We are blessed with the Holy Book, which contains all the principles and teachings on which we place total reliance and it alone can be our guide on every matter. If we accept the authority of a person whose instructions are contrary to the dictates of the Qur'an, and regard him as an Imam then we undoubtedly commit a grave sin of polytheism.

Such a follower has not paid due regard to the guidance from Allah and has abused the gift of reason. He incurs the displeasure of Allah not because he has given priority to the commands of a human being over the commands of Allah but that in his love for another human being, he has abused the blessing of intellect and reason bestowed upon him and by such an abuse he has gradually rendered it useless and ineffective. As a result, the qualities which were to become

evident in him in future, manifesting the glory of Allah, have been stifled. Love for a person who is not sinless becomes an obstruction in the path of Allah. This is the kind of polytheism which Allah has particularly forbidden, because thereby we elevate ordinary men and teachers to godhead.

TAQLID: FOR WHOM?

During the days of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) Jews were not idol-worshippers, nor did they regard any other human being as their god. Holy Qur'an has depicted them as human worshippers. When they defended themselves by asserting that, unlike the Christians, they did not regard a human being as their god, Holy Qur'an replied, "They take their priests and their monks for lords in derogation of Allah" (9:31). The Jews regarded their scholars and elders as deities and their teachings as absolutely reliable. They did not respect the Torah, and gave preference to the utterances of their scholars whose instructions were considered as sacrosanct as Allah's command. Although they had the Torah in their hands, yet they obeyed the commands of their elders even if they were in violation of the commands in the Torah by saying, "These are the people who interpret better the secrets of religion." They regarded obedience to such scholars as the source of the pleasure of Allah. Remember, such is the conduct which the Holy Qur'an has depicted as human worshipping. Does this verse of the Holy Book not apply equally to the Muslims of today?

It is important to remember that to a certain extent it is because of such blind obedience to scholars that there are seventy three different sects in Islam today. It is for this reason that Islam has ordained that one should apply one's reasoning and be personally satisfied before accepting the fundamentals. No doubt, if we do not possess sufficient knowledge ourselves to extract the rules of religion from the Holy Qur'an and the Traditions, then it is necessary for us to rely on scholars for their guidance and act according to their directions. However, this does not mean that we should not

ourselves strive to acquire that level of knowledge. Indeed, it is obligatory upon us to undertake such a study. In matters of jurisprudence, following the scholars has not been made mandatory to relieve us of the duty to acquire the knowledge ourselves. It was meant only for the lay men who, for one reason or the other, have not been able to acquire that knowledge. For example, a person is converted to Islam at the age of forty or fifty and is unable to acquire such level of knowledge at that age, then such guidance is meant for him. Similarly, a beginner who, in spite of having attained puberty has not reached the required grade of learning may need such guidance. Actually, it is a duty of each Muslim to acquire sufficient knowledge to be able to extract the rules of religion from Traditions and the Holy Qur'an. Alas! Today we conduct ourselves as though the existence of such guidance from scholars totally relieves us of all duty to acquire such knowledge ourselves. Not to endeavour to reach that degree of knowledge is disobedience to Allah. A man is excused if he is genuinely unable to acquire such knowledge but if he is merely careless about it then he has disregarded his duty because of his personal desires. Thus he makes such desires his god and violates the commands of Allah; he can no longer call himself a monotheist.

WORSHIP OF SCHOLARS IS ALSO POLYTHEISM

We cannot owe religious allegiance to any human being other than the Masums. If we are incapable of acquiring the knowledge of the FUROO' (the rules of religion), then we must follow the directions of honest and worthy scholars. For attainment of any form of education , there is a need for teachers. Similarly there is need for scholars to impart religious instruction. If, however, a teacher's or a scholar's instructions are contrary to the accepted principles, then one should immediately discard such a scholar, because to continue to regard him as an authority is itself a grave error. Allah has endowed us with the Holy Qur'an and the living example of the progeny of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.). When a person issues a directive contrary to the teachings of the Holy Book and of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) and his progeny, then obedience to such a person is polytheism. Muslims need to reconsider their condition and understand the true meaning and import of Tauhid. Acceptance of guidance from scholars, if required, is not only necessary but obligatory, but this does not mean blind acceptance of all their directions even if they are clearly in violation of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. Nor should one consider oneself relieved of the obligation to acquire more knowledge merely because it is convenient to comply with the instructions of a scholar; indeed, by doing so, one is only failing to develop one's own talent. When a scholar, an Alim, issues a verdict in contradiction to Holy Qur'an, he commits SHIRK, and, moreover, to consider such a person as an Alim is SHIRK also.

LIFE IN ACCORDANCE WITH TAUHID

Islam is based entirely on the doctrine of Tauhid. The meaning of Islam is absolute submission to Allah, which is also precisely the meaning of Tauhid. To obtain an insight into life based on acceptance of this doctrine, one must examine the lives of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) and his progeny which were indeed the translation of this doctrine into deeds. The Holy Qur'an describes such lives in the following verse: "Say, surely my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah , the Lord of the Worlds. He has no partner. I am commanded to this and I am the first of those who submit" (6:162,163). This verse stipulates that the purpose of every action in life should be the worship of and submission to the Sustainer of the world. In other words, Allah must be the sole objective of ones life. To achieve this goal, it becomes necessary to comply with all the commands of Allah and not to associate with Him any other entity. Even the goal in one's life is not determined by man. It is in obedience to His command. One should be in the forefront in obedience to Him so that ones entire life is spent in His service.

The translation with commentary given above is of a verse from the Holy Qur'an uttered by that great man thirteen hundred years ago by way of revelation from Allah and these words portray the practical implementation of Tauhid. Believing that Allah is One, recognising Him as One without any associate or partner in the course of worship or in time of need, to bow down before Him only and not to seek assistance from another human being, these are but preliminaries of the doctrine at ordinary level. Although, before the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) a number of prophets had come to earth with the same message, none tried to understand this doctrine in its

complete and perfect form. We must thank Allah that in His Mercy He sent to us such teachers who gave perfect and practical illustrations to convey this message throughout their lives and demonstrated to us its application. Its effect has been so far reaching that even the polytheist themselves today look down upon polytheism. However, the true level of Tauhid is much higher. It must be remembered that Allah does not seek people to accept Tauhid for His selfish ends nor for any benefit to Him. By indulging in polytheism man only harms himself. If one has divested oneself of polytheism, one has only reached at the doorstep of the doctrine of Tauhid. The true meaning of this doctrine is only attained when the object of ones life, ones pleasure and displeasures, ones hopes and fears all centre around Allah alone, Tauhid alone helps to acquire the sublime and impeccable character.

THEISM AS A RESULT OF FEAR

How often have we noticed ourselves doing acts which we abhor, entirely out of fear of another person or institution or power? Fear and greed excite us into such action, but if we were true followers of this doctrine enshrined in the verse of the Holy Qur'an, "Do not fear them but fear Me" (2:150) no power on earth could make us do anything contrary to our conscience. Would you, because of fear, act in a manner that would be detrimental to the interest of one's country, community or religion?

THE FIRST CAUSE OF FEAR - WEALTH

Fear is aroused by considerations of wealth, fame and adversities. The lesson of Tauhid is, "The treasures of the heavens and earth belong to Allah" (63:7). He who contemplates any action contrary to his conscience, country or community or violates the rules of religion in the hope that he would thereby acquire wealth from another human being, ought to remember that all the treasures of the entire world are in the hands of Allah alone. Why should one care for the wealthy? The greed for wealth leads one to act contrary to the interest of one's country, community or religion. Thereby with one's own hands, one digs one's grave and tarnishes one's character. Do not think that any particular wealthy man can make you rich or deprive you of money if disobeyed. The proper belief is that all the treasures are in the hands of Allah alone. He alone can deprive anyone of wealth and He alone can make one wealthy. So one must submit oneself to Him for the benefit of one's country, religion and one's own self.

THE SECOND CAUSE OF FEAR - IMAGINARY FAME

Another fear which makes us act contrary to our conscience is the greed for illusory fame or fear of losing prestige and praises. For example, the titles and honours that are conferred these days make people undertake very lowly acts; bowing before the idol of prestige, they are prepared to cause harm even to their community and country. It is important to remember that true worship lies in service to the community and country in accordance with the commands of Allah. To save mankind from such polytheism and injury to character, Allah has said, "Honour belongs to Allah and His Prophet" (63:8). The honour which man pursues so hard and the loss of which he fears so much, that he is even prepared to be the tool of lowly people and harm others, is transitory and worthless. True honour and respect are only for Allah and His Messenger and the pious believers who do not violate the orders of Allah. Do not act to harm your fellow men. Honour the commands of Allah and His prophet for thereby Allah bestows everlasting honour. Regarding Allah alone as the Lord of all the honour will save you from blemish.

Do not bow down before the idol of fame, or before another human being in the hope that he can bestow my honour, nor should you obey him, contrary to the commands of Allah, for fear of insult from him believing that he can cause your fame to fade. We have been taught in the Holy Book, "You (Allah) bestow honour on whom You please and You bring low whom You please. In Your hand is all good. You have power over everything" (3:26). The message of this verse is to obey Allah only and fear none.

THE THIRD CAUSE OF FEAR - ADVERSITIES

The third cause is fear of difficulties or trouble. It makes us bow our heads before lowly people or untruthful ones in the apprehension that if we do not obey such persons they could create difficulties for us. Such fears have even led men to murder their own brothers, to insult their elders or harm their country. The Holy Qur'an teaches us, "And We will certainly try you with some measure of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits; but give good news to those who patiently persevere and when a misfortune befalls them, say: 'Surely, we belong to Allah, and to Him we shall surely return'; those are the ones on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course" (2:155-157).

God does not torment mankind by trials and tribulations. His intention is to enable man to cultivate and develop his intrinsic beauty through severe and trying tests. So if these qualities are not found in a man, his existence is meaningless. Think of the smallest of victories to see if it would have been attainable without patience, perseverance and courage, which though found in all men, cannot be developed and trained without experiencing difficulties and trouble. Is it then not the Grace of Allah that He should cause these qualities in men to shine out? He causes them to suffer and shine, just as gold shines brighter when heated on fire.

When we learn to disregard the fear that compliance with the commands of Allah will bring us difficulties from other human beings and accept the difficulties as a mercy from Allah, helping us to bring forth our inner qualities fully and to elevate our character, then undoubtedly, we would be

free from that form of polytheism and will become true monotheists. We shall then acquire the qualities of patience, enthusiasm, fortitude and determination, which lead to victory and achievements. People with such qualities are given glad tidings for possessing these attributes for which they have deserved the mercy of Allah. If these values are priced high today, then it should be remembered that it can only be acquired through suffering and privation. And they can be faced by only those who, by words and deeds, live upto the verse “We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return” (2:156). With all the courage and determination at their command they act on that verse. Had we come to this world only to enjoy happiness and escape all difficulties , then we would indeed find the adversities intolerable. But since we are for Allah and live only for Him, then why should we be disturbed by difficulties or troubles? It is this attitude which makes a person a true monotheist.

As has already been stated, high character is a treasured wealth. Through high character, order and organisation can be created in a community and one can attain greatness in life. It is difficult to cultivate such character without ascribing to Tauhid. By acting on this principle, it brings our hidden talents to full play. Although each verse of the Holy Qur’an is directed to this end, the one just cited is directly pertinent to this point. When life itself becomes a continuous prayer or service to Allah, then we become true monotheists.

The practical application of “LA ILAHA ILLA ALLAH” makes a man fearless of any worldly power, allows him to regain his status so that he does not regard honour or happiness to be in the hands of other men, nor does he allow fear of others prevent obedience to Allah. The following three verses are his constant reminders:

1. To Allah belong the treasures of heavens and earth
2. To Allah belongs the honour
3. Surely, we shall test you

One ought to cultivate this enthusiasm engendered by Tauhid and free oneself of the fears of this world. Wealth and honour should only be sought from Allah, difficulties and troubles should be considered Allah's Mercy, necessary for development of character. Then there will be no worldly power that can harm you or prevent fulfilment of the commands of Allah. The difficulties that befall us in the world today are a result of our having made other men our gods, considering them capable of fulfilling our wishes, custodians of our honour and happiness and capable of harming us at will. Once such thoughts are discarded, honour and position are regained. Life can then be led in full obedience to the commands of Allah, in a manner that fear of wealth, greed or loss of fame would not detract us from the path of Allah. The qualities of patience, fortitude and determination, which are best developed in times of difficulties, become parts of our life.

The question which arises is, how does one develop the qualities of patience and determination? How can one regain true fame and honour? The Holy Book answers these questions in the verse, "By no means shall you attain righteousness until you spend (benevolently) out of what you love; and whatever thing you spend, Allah surely knows it" (3:92). (The true meaning of this verse is not to renounce social love. Such renunciation or suicide are forbidden in Islam. It means to detach oneself from the world while leading one's life therein. This topic has been discussed fully in another book by the late author entitled "Islamic Philosophy.")

Glory to Allah! Various philosophies have been propounded

to protect society from evil, depravation, vice and sin. Different religions have taught various ways to attain this aim but all have proved meaningless because they did not deal with the main issue. On the other hand, Islam has not only taught us the philosophy of avoiding evil and sins but has also laid down a course for us to follow so as to attain the true meaning of life and, consequently, protect ourselves from every kind of evil. How does evil arise? What is its root cause? By nature human beings have certain needs whose fulfilment depends on the acquisition and possession of certain things, which, in turn, become very dear to them. We like a certain thing and gradually become fond of it, because we feel that fulfilment of certain desires depends on it. However, obtaining such a thing by improper means is called evil and obtaining it by proper means is called virtue. Therefore, to save ourselves from evil we must cultivate in ourselves the habit of parting with the things dear to us, which we should also have obtained in the lawful and proper way. If a person can give away his own property generously to another person, how can he think of obtaining the property of another to which he has no right or entitlement at all? That is why Islam has given the command in the verse quoted above. Inability to part with things dear to oneself, hinders one from attaining true virtue and righteousness. By parting with ordinary wealth, one acquires the infinite and everlasting wealth which is high character and conduct through which the qualities of patience and fortitude are developed to their perfection. This way, one will regain in a million times the wealth given in charity. Thus we must spend in charity, wealth lawfully acquired, form in habit of being able to part easily with fame, pleasures, tools of comfort, time, food, wealth, honour, clothes, friends, brothers, relatives, home, country and all things that give us physical comfort. If, when necessary, we give away all these things willingly to earn the pleasure of Allah only then we will have understood Tauhid;

otherwise it would be paying mere lip service to the doctrine. The true meaning of “La Ilaha Illa Allah” is to cultivate a capacity to part gladly with what is dear to us. This is the true spirit of “Hijrah” - suffering exile from ones beloved thing and place - which elevates us to the “attainment of the highest achievement” (33:71).

Glory to Allah! Not only has the Islamic philosophy taught us all this but, as stated above, has also laid for us a course for daily conduct so that we attain a high spiritual level and the true realisation of Tauhid. This code of conduct is contained in the rules of religion known as the ten branches of religion, namely, the daily prayers (namaz), fasting (saum), the obligatory pilgrimage (Hajj), the alms and poor-rate (Zakat and Khums), the Holy War (Jihad), enjoining others to virtue (Amr-bil-Maaruf), forbidding others from evil (Nahy-Anil-Munkar), association with the virtuous (Tawalla) and disassociation from the vicious (Tabarra).

We perform our daily prayers in order to get away from our personal thoughts and worldly occupations and dedicate the time to remembrance of Allah. It must be noted that of the manifold forms of polytheism, the worst and the most dangerous is egotism, which breeds rigidity. We would rather die than compromise. It is this form of rigidity which is the root cause of numerous difficulties and dissension in this world, giving birth to various kinds of religions and their different sects. Fanaticism is the cause of the murder of millions of innocent persons. We say daily prayers in order to annihilate this monstrous and dangerous idol. Five times every day we remove our fears and divert our attention from our routine occupation, we leave aside all our work and present ourselves in the court of Allah standing before Him in humility. In this way, not only do we destroy the idol of

egotism but train ourselves. to cast aside all our worldly pre occupations in the remembrance of Allah and spend our valuable time in His service.

In the Holy month of Ramadhan, we develop in us ability to refrain from legitimate pleasures of life; eating, drinking and lawful sex are avoided during the day, although they are natural human needs. If for one full month a person has observed fasts but has remained unaware of this teaching or has not been able to develop in him such quality, one can only classify such fasting as merely remaining hungry and thirsty. If, even after fasting for one month, one has not been able to develop readiness for sacrifice, nor can he ignore, when necessary, for the sake of others or oneself, the natural urge to eat or drink, then undoubtedly, one has not observed fast in its proper meaning; one has merely starved oneself or has kept the fast for ostentation or in blind imitation.

By giving alms in charity we train ourselves to part with hard earned money and donate by way of Khums, one-fifth of our lawfully earned income to attain this quality.

We proceed to obligatory pilgrimage of Hajj and leave our homes, motherland, children and family entirely for the pleasure of Allah and in compliance with His commands. These are dear and near to us but unless we cultivate in ourselves the habit of being able to easily part from them, there remains the possibility that in future, our love for them might induce us to act contrary to the commands of Allah and regard their wishes as our god forgetting Allah. Thus Hajj has been made obligatory. We do not proceed on this pilgrimage for the sake of business, fame or holiday but for training ourselves in the habit of parting from dear and near ones for the pleasure of Allah.

Before we enter Makkah we even cast away our dress which, ordinarily is an indicator of status and wealth and which makes even a low-bred person appear respectable in a foreign country. We remove our adornments and are clad in a dress of two simple pieces of cloth.

Some foolish, emotional youths who have not yet experienced the reality of life and are educated and bred in Western culture and thoughts, take pride in vainly criticising religion without any knowledge or experience in religious matters. They call prayers merely an exercise in standing and sitting, fasting as starvation, pilgrimage as ignorance, charity as a means for the priests to fill their pockets and the other rules of religion as merely the means to evoke enmity amongst the people. They fail to realise that these are not rules made by the ignorant or customs created by the uncivilised. On the contrary, it is a course of daily programme to enable one attain high character and submit to the One Allah.

The dawn prayers have to be said before sunrise by forsaking sweet slumber and striving to get onto the path of Allah. Moreover, there is no definite pre-determined time for the sun eclipse, moon eclipse, earthquake or storm but when these phenomena occur special prayers have been ordained, be it midnight or noon. One has to be prepared at that hour to obey the command of Allah. Furthermore, there are recommended optional prayers, the pre-dawn prayers (TAHAJJUD) carry vast blessings. The sole purpose of such prayers is that one should be able to train oneself to sacrifice sweet slumber and worldly occupation so that at no time could they obstruct one from the path of Allah.

Undoubtedly, there are inconveniences to be surmounted in performing these prayers, but they are all for one's own

benefit; these difficulties will make one a true worshipper of Allah. Without them one is not able to attain the spirit of "HIJRAH" - renouncing the dear things of this world for the sake of Allah. If this high spiritual level is not attained then it is not easy to remain steadfast on the verse, "To Allah do we belong and to Him shall we return." The lust for fame, the greed for wealth, the fear of adversities and the love for dear possessions do not take long to pull one away from the path of Allah causing one to be possessed by them. Beware, that if that happens, ones conduct, behaviour and character will be adversely affected. It is only when one is able to maintain high character that one deserves to be called a human being. In other words, a person who does not possess good character and who can deviate from the path of Allah and disobey His commands for the sake of wealth, fame or comfortable life is not living for Allah. His object in life is merely to attain wealth, fame and praises from other men. He is not a true believer in Allah, nor can he call himself a true monotheist; he is a polytheist worshipping Allah together with other idols, namely wealth, fame and human beings. Muslims who cannot demolish these idols, should be ashamed to call themselves Muslims. They are a disgrace to themselves and to their holy religion. The aim in life must be total submission to Allah, obedience to His commands and to act only for His pleasure. The whole life and all actions must be entirely for Him, devoted to creating the inner power so that, when necessary, to give up gladly the things one loves and the dear and near ones for the pleasure of Allah. If you observe that daily prayers, fasts, pilgrimage and charity, have not developed that spirit of dedication, than it means that all your worship was for someone other than Allah; it was ostentatious and not sincere.

There are valuable lessons for Muslims to be learnt from the pages of history and the holy lives of the progeny of the

Holy Prophet. Ponder over their aim in life and strive to create within ourselves the means to attain it and develop the necessary qualities which they possessed. The example of Imam Hussein (a.s.), a historical fact, demonstrates that only for the pleasure of Allah he departed from his home, his children and family, his homeland, his gardens, his wealth, his food and drink, his clothes and, eventually, even from the life-saving water in a scorching desert. So pathetic is our plight that despite such examples of lofty spirits in our history, we derive no lessons from them. O Allah, imbue in the hearts of Muslims the true meaning of Tauhid and awaken them from their slumber (Amen).

In Hajj all the ten branches of religion become applicable at the same time. It is well known that the pilgrims visit the plain of Arafat which is situated some twenty miles outside Mecca. There they prostrate on earth and by announcing “Labbaik” (I am present) declare, “We neither are the masters of our time nor of our wealth, food has no taste for us nor has the love of our family any effect on us. For Your sake, we have forsaken our family and our home. We have removed the decorative dresses and have come to Your House entirely in submission to You and in compliance with Your commands. In this way, we free ourselves from all other distractions and submit ourselves to You, in all readiness to earn Your pleasure and in fulfilment of Your commands. You have neither an associate nor a partner, we have no regard for any other than You. You are our aim and objective.”

It is sad to note that the world cannot understand the true meaning of the pilgrimage: If every Muslim performed it not as a matter of routine but in its true spirit then the Muslims today would have been able to control all the powers of this earth and would have set brilliant example of character and

sublime spirit. If every Muslim develops such spirit in him he would be able to act as he wills and the whole world would be on the right path today. This is not mere figments of imagination but a reality.

While a number of things in this world are dear to us because they provide solutions to our problems, it must be remembered that the root of all our necessities is the animal instinct. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) identified pilgrimage as the final stage of salvation, because in it we obtain the perfect training to control this instinct. On the morning of the 10th Zilhaj, we sacrifice an animal. The animal instinct in man evokes in him innumerable wishes and desires. On the day of Hajj we do not simply slaughter an animal but in doing so are in effect killing our own animal desires. Unfortunate is the Muslim who regards this sacrifice merely as a means of getting to eat its meat, or who having slaughtered the animal does not learn to control his animal instinct. If we indeed act in the true spirit of the pilgrimage and divest ourselves of animal instinct then the meaning behind the enunciation of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) that “He who performs Hajj has all his sins forgiven” becomes clear. The true realisation of Tauhid cannot be attained by empty verbiage.

One does not become a Muslim by memorising the words “La Ilaha Illa Allah,” rather it is by our deeds that we establish that we really exist for Allah in fulfilment of the meaning of the verse quoted above.

A Muslim who does not resort to irreligious and improper means to fulfil his needs and who for the pleasure of Allah is able to divest himself even of the things he has lawfully acquired, acquires that enhanced level. Animal instinct cannot then lead him astray.

The key to all success is to develop the spirit of “Hijrah.” If we lack this spirit we are distant from Islam. However much one may claim to be a Muslim, one is no where nearer to it if one does not possess this quality. “Hijrah” does not only mean emigrating from ones homeland out of anger or frustration. Its true meaning is best known to the person who has experienced it correctly. It has various meanings, including, the capacity to separate oneself from the ordinary necessities of life, like food, sexual desires, dress, wife, property, family and, when necessary, even ones life. This capacity is called the spirit of “Hijrah”; one becomes “Mohajir” even in ones own homeland. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) has said that a Mohajir is a person who can restrain himself from sin; and that becomes possible if he can restrain himself from animal instinct. We must try and cultivate this quality in us. We must strive to ensure that nothing obstructs us in the service of our country, community or religion. Only then can we attain the stage of spiritual attainment. Indeed our objective must follow the guidance by the Holy Book. Our actions must not be actuated by selfishness or politics. The Holy Book is a perfect and complete code. Thus our political activities must always be in conformity with the commands of the Holy Book.

PART II

ACCEPTANCE OF BEING POWERLESS IS POLYTHEISM

A person who aspires the spiritual level of piety and virtue, should all the more inculcate this spirit in himself in respect of his worldly affairs as well. A monotheist who sees a successful industrialist or a craftsman and feels he cannot become successful like him is undoubtedly a polytheist. A necessary result of Tauhid is human equality. We have all come to this world with the same abilities. The Omniscient Allah has created the same conditions for us in which to strive and toil. How then can one person fulfil a certain job and another fail to do so? It is to bring us out of such darkness that Tauhid has been enjoined. It was first propounded in its true sense by Islam.

DISLOYALTY IS ALSO POLYTHEISM

The necessary corollary to the acceptance of Tauhid is the creation and establishment of human equality. A system of rule in which human equality is not respected is an obstacle in the path of Islam; and on the other hand, a true Muslim cannot be unfaithful to his country or government nor create an atmosphere of mutiny or unrest. Islam has provided for two courses: one is to boldly demand one's rights from the rulers, without first resorting to an insurrection. Traditions describe this course as the greater Holy War.

There is a Tradition reported from the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) which enjoins Muslims to obey its rightful ruler even if he were a Black man. Simultaneously, they were allowed to draw government's attention to its errors and invite it to make amends. These Traditions have taught the world how to fight a government, a course which in today's political science is known as Constitutional Agitation.

The very meaning of the word Islam is compliance with the divine rule. Therefore, it forbids any form of treachery or disloyalty. Just as one cannot rebel against God, so is one prohibited from treason. Thus does the Holy Book draw our attention to this aspect: "And He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion" (16:90); Muslims are forbidden to form underground movements and unlawful insurrections. Bearing these directions in mind, the duty of a true Muslim who sees the government depriving a citizen of his rights or acting unjustly against him, is to boldly point out the error to the government and refuse to succumb before injustice. Undoubtedly, an individual Muslim or a community truly believing in Tauhid should be able to obtain his rights from the government.

Thus, while treachery, disloyalty, underground manoeuvres and injustice are all prohibited, in the same way a Muslim must refrain from supporting injustice or disobeying commands of Allah or indulging in polytheism. He must be courageous enough to demand his rights with justice. This is not merely a directive, it is his duty.

“WAHDAT” HAS TWO MEANINGS

Tauhid has only two interpretations: to regard all human beings as equal and to regard all the remaining creatures as their subservients. Both these aspects of Tauhid have been indicated in various verses of the Holy Qur'an. Indeed, progress of a community and prosperity of mankind depend on these two realities. The first protects the rights of one another and eliminates partisanship and the second demonstrates that the inner gems, high qualities and virtues are present in every person. Thus, everyone is inspired to endeavour towards attainment of these high qualities which are possible for everyone to achieve. The second aspect also enables various kinds of qualities to be discovered, which will be discussed in greater detail later in the book.

THE DOCTRINE OF HUMAN EQUALITY MUST NOT BE VIOLATED

Here we must consider the aspect of human equality. It is the duty of a true Muslim to invite the attention of government to pursue a policy which would maintain equality between the ruling class and the ruled. It is not humiliating for a Muslim to choose to live under a non—Muslim government. To grant power or to take it away is in the hands of Allah. He grants it to whom He pleases and takes it away as He deems fit. It is not at all necessary for Muslims to get excited against wisdom of Allah. Many have been banished from their land. There could be a divine plan in such events. Is it not possible that this set an unprecedented example to the world? Or that it was an admonition to the Muslims so that they may struggle to rescue themselves from polytheism? Or that it was a test with innumerable lessons from Muslims? When Allah pleases, this power will be withdrawn from intruders. These are the teachings of our religion. It is the duty of the government to respect our religious demands and not to interfere with religion.

The qualities which bestow power on a group of people, irrespective of their religious persuasion, are justice and equality. In a conflict between individuals, to maintain justice is an elementary principle in the affairs of a government. True justice can be recognised in a government only when its Officers regard the different communities under their rule as equal without any discrimination of caste or creed or political belief. If Muslims protest against a government which violates equality of rights, only then they are on the right path, saved from polytheism and are true monotheists. Equality of mankind is their true religion. They

will make respectful and just demands from the government and seek amendments in the laws which permit disparity between the ruling class and the ruled, so that the government fulfils its duty of maintaining equality amongst all citizens in all matters, like commerce, industry and education. The government must render to an Indian the same facilities for emigration to another country as it offers its own community. For example, when the Indians were admitted into Oxford and Cambridge Universities to obtain education from the Westerners, and excel in various sciences, why are such universities not built in India? Are Indians not to be educated in the same way?

Thus it is the religious duty of every Muslim to seek lawful and legitimate redress from his government. Islam does not only teach prayers or beliefs so that a particular God becomes pleased with us and issues a certificate of entry to Heaven. The true aim and objective of a religion is to elevate mankind to perfection. All men are gifted with equal talents. Those who oppose this fact, or create conditions in which human equality is violated, are certainly the enemies of Tauhid. To correct this fault is our religious duty, and to explain this doctrine of human equality is to propagate Islam. Indeed in so doing we should always bear in mind the command in the Holy Verse, "There is no compulsion in religion" (2:256). There is no room or permission for any compulsion in the propagation of religious beliefs. It is possible that a government may not heed the complaints of the citizens; yet a Muslim must not commit treason, nor in such circumstances can he indulge in underground movements. He must constantly persevere to bring the truth to the attention of the government, and must not retreat in his constitutional and legal efforts to point out to the government its errors. This method of persuasion, obviously, is a slow one and the government might take long

to discern the truth. The government might even take steps to silence or kill him; even in such circumstances a Muslim will not rebel against a government. He will decide to migrate. And again, migration is a subject of time and circumstance, and we are presently unable to foretell when such circumstances may arise in India.

THE OPPONENT OF HUMAN EQUALITY IS A POLYTHEIST

It is highly important to admonish Muslims who do not regard their brothers as equals. They must remember that discrimination of caste or tribe is a violation of the doctrine of Tauhid. Nearness to Allah is not attained by the caste or by being a Seyyid, a Pathan, a Moghul, a Kutchi or a Kathyawadi. It is solely decided by piety. Even a person of a low caste can be more respectable in the eyes of Allah by virtue of his piety than a sinful Seyyid. When Allah has forbidden any discrimination, a person who still practises it is a polytheist. Thus a Muslim who does not regard his fellow human being as his equal but looks down upon him with contempt is the worst rebel against Allah. Discrimination and superiority based on caste or tribe is a form of polytheism. That human being is most generous to his fellow beings who acquaints them with their true abilities and allows them to develop themselves. In the past, the Hindus, by maintaining caste discrimination destroyed the capabilities and latent talents of millions of people. The lowly caste of Kshudhra could not unchain themselves from their disrepute. Even today to them a tanner remains a tanner for a thousand generations. However, if he converts to Islam then that tanner of yesterday becomes a cobbler today, and maybe, a shoe merchant tomorrow and thereafter a leader of merchants. All these are the benefits of Tauhid which has forever destroyed any discrimination between castes and has infused a sense of independence and unity. If despite such teachings Muslims practise discrimination like Hindus, then they undoubtedly are polytheists. This form of polytheism, however, still exist amongst us; we must take immediate steps to eradicate it.

ESCAPING POLYTHEISM

To save us from such polytheism there is the very strong recommendation to attend congregational prayers in which there is no scope for any form of discrimination. In such prayers a King and a pauper can stand shoulder to shoulder. If such conduct is possible within the four walls of a mosque then why do we not practise it outside the mosque as well? The answer may be that such conduct is necessary in the House of Allah. If so, then indicate a place where Allah is not present! In acting like this, we indulge in two forms of polytheism; first, that we do not regard another human being as our equal and, secondly, we have regarded places outside the mosque as devoid of the presence of Allah. Five times a day we are taught equality so that when we emerge from the mosque we regard others as our equals. We are expected to nurture this spirit in them, remind them that the qualities and abilities found in us can be cultivated and attained by them and if we are virtuous we should create conditions for the helpless, weak and powerless so that they too can be assisted to rise to our levels. Remember that a true Mumin, Muslim and believer in Tauhid is one who infuses into others the spirit of independence and equality.

WILL OUR PREACHERS HEED?

At this stage we wish to draw particular attention of our preachers that they should broaden the scope of their preachings and not let their vision remain narrow. Preachers learned in tradition should broaden their vision and not dwell on certain venial sins only. They should examine the various facets of the Muslim community. Wherever they find discrimination for reasons other than piety, purity or honesty, they should make every effort to uproot it. Whenever and wherever one human being dissuades another from such form of polytheism he is benefiting the whole community. The preachers should awaken the leaders of the community from their slumber. Those leaders who support causes which violate equality of human beings, they are guilty of the worst form of rebellion against Allah and harm the entire community, because their actions affect the community as a whole, while the blunders of an individual only affects himself.

Equality is a blessing by itself and is a true result of adhering to Tauhid. Ignorance of the true meaning of Tauhid has led to misinterpretation of freedom spreading in the world. "Licence" is mistaken for freedom and as a result, even basic virtues like respect for the elders is compromised. Respectable people are denied respect due to them and communal development as well as spiritual enhancement are hindered. Unfortunately Western education has played its negative role too. A number of Western habits may be proper and acceptable in Western countries and culture but to us they are disrespectful, insulting or even obscene. Some enthusiastic youths have fallen prey to this lawless freedom. The line of distinction between some virtues and vices is so fine that sometimes a vice appears to us to be a virtue. Essentially the

cause of such error lies in different reaction to the same passion; different circumstances and timings accord them high or low guise. For example, obstinacy and determination are two aspects of the same passion yet a person is considered as determined and consistent while the other is called obstinate. Obstinacy is represented in the person of SATAN, while determination produces such high personages as Prophet Mohammed (s.a.w.w). A number of ill-informed people, having nurtured obstinacy during childhood and sustained it in their youth regard it as determination and their flatterers encourage them to carry this misconception to extremes. The children of successful leaders tend to cultivate such habits easily, and their followers regard them as learned and elderly like their fathers, giving the same regard and reverence.

Another example is in the confusion between cowardice and humility. Quite often what we regard as humility is sheer cowardice. This delicate philosophy of virtues is elucidated in the Holy Qur'an. Similarly, lewdness and true freedom are in reality the results of the same passion. However, if one did not have ability to discern the right occasion for their application because one has indulged since childhood in animal instinct, then one would abuse it and lose all sense of decency, decorum and self respect. It is necessary to remember that to be able to maintain ones position and respect is both valuable and important, otherwise it would not be possible to fulfil communal responsibilities and obligations peacefully. A number of Muslim youths, attracted by Western culture, are simply unable to differentiate between being licentious and true freedom. Between cowardice and patience, an intelligent person can easily differentiate from the circumstances in which he finds himself. To remain silent when one sees a person going astray, is sometimes the result of patience, sometimes of cowardice and sometimes of sheer pride. Pride surfaces

when seeing an error made by an ordinary person we regard it beneath our dignity to correct him. However, there are times when we fail to correct a person out of cowardice but pretend to show it as our patience, though, inwardly we know the true reason for our failure to correct him This is where real freedom is abused.

MISUNDERSTANDING TRUE FREEDOM

To remain quiet and condone an error when occasion demands it, is abuse of freedom. Naturally, when the error is not grave and silence or patience could result in reformation then to speak out on such an occasion would also amount to abuse of freedom. However, the modern youth fails to differentiate between animal instinct and true freedom displayed in his own behaviour and conduct; similarly he regards it his liberty to criticise and express his opinion on matters which do not warrant his views at all. They must understand that a University degree or a social standing does not make them learned and experienced in all fields nor does it give them the right to speak whatever come to their lips. The Holy Qur'an provides remedy for this misconception of freedom in various ways, but we shall confine ourselves to only one aspect which the Muslims at present need to heed most.

TRUE INDEPENDENCE LIES IN OBEDIENCE TO THE LAWS OF ISLAM

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) in teaching the rights of human beings and equality among them has emphasised upon the fact that all men have equal capabilities. To encourage human kind to achieve excellence, he said “I am a human being like yourselves.” At the same time, to rescue man from his animal instinct or over enthusiasm for equality which may lead him to disregard and disrespect for the great, the respectable and the highly knowledgeable persons or to unbecoming behaviour towards them, he has also commended: “If you do love Allah, then follow me and God will love you” (3:31).

If we examine the combined effects of these two verses, it will become clear that the concept of equality was not taught to us so that we can behave as we like and degrade anybody we do not like. It is only to teach us that we have inherent in us the natural capacities to compete for the achievements of the greatest among us. To develop ourselves to realise this understanding is not an easy task. Just as an unpolished stone cannot compare with a polished diamond, so an ignorant, unlearned and backward person cannot equal a learned, experienced scholar. Therefore, we become awe-stricken when we encounter an eminent person and regard ourselves incapable of attaining his level or fail to appreciate the impetus in the verse, “I am a human being like yourselves,” and become guilty of grave polytheism which does not deserve forgiveness in this world or in the Hereafter. However, if we do not revere a great person simply because he is a human being like ourselves, then not only do we fall in to a grave error but are also guilty of a grievous sin. This is one occasion when the zealous youth is unable to differentiate between true freedom and ruthlessness.

Some scholars regard this sin sufficient to render the sinner deserving of a permanent place in Hell. In conclusion, therefore, equality is the birth right of man and a necessary consequence of Tauhid. Equality protects human rights, opens the door of scholarship, engenders the desire for progress and kindles the flame of mutual love and brotherhood. Social progress and reform are dependent upon it too.

FEAR ALLAH ONLY

While freedom recommends to overlook and condone human errors on certain occasions, it is also important to appreciate that at certain times to maintain silence violates the doctrine of Tauhid. Such silence hinders the qualities of virtue and good character associated with Tauhid, from attaining their perfection and being fruitful. Our natural daily needs keep us, all the time, balanced between fear and hope through which various virtues and blessings are attained. On the one hand, our natural needs demand our energies and on the other hand the anxieties about the results of our efforts create in us all kinds of sentiments — hope, fear, precaution and doubt. Both these factors, the natural need to fulfil our requirements and the fear and hope about the outcome of our efforts, produce virtues as well as vices. A person who in order to fulfil his natural needs depends Upon another person and lacks faith in his own efforts or reposes faith for his success in sources other than Allah, inflicts harm on himself and is guilty of grave polytheism. Even the modern Muslims subscribing to Tauhid seem entrapped in such polytheism. To save us Allah says at various places in the Holy Qur'an: "Allah does not suffer to perish the reward of any who do a righteous deed" (18:30). "He is a protector of those who have faith" (2:257). "He befriends the pious" (7:196). "He is sufficient to those who have reposed faith in Him" (65:3). In various verses of the Holy Book Allah announces that He is sufficient for you and in another verse He commands "Do not fear them but only fear Me" (2:150). He is fully aware of our weaknesses. To protect us from the polytheism arising out of hope and fear, He has assured us that we need to repose total faith and trust in Him alone and if we make full use of our own resources, we would invariably reap fruits of our labours. Thus we must not hesitate to state the truth because of the fear

that we may be harmed. If the commands of Allah direct us towards one path, and a person whom we fear desires us to take the opposite course then Tauhid requires us to ignore him altogether. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an, "It is only the devil who suggests in your hearts fear for the friends, but do not fear them and fear only Me if you are true believers" (3:175)

To bow one's head before an idol is not, in the final analysis, a very serious form of polytheism but the form described above is the most serious and dangerous. If the purpose of Tauhid is to bring forth innate virtues and good character, then, we are doubtless guilty of the most serious form of polytheism if we do not act on the command "Do not fear them, but fear Me" (2:150) because of our temporal needs.

OUR WAVERING ATTITUDE

A reflection upon the first few verses of the chapter “The Cow” in the Holy Qur’an reveal that there are two main causes of sin; the first one is to overestimate our capacities and secondly to underestimate them; in other words to be arrogant or ignorant of them. Arrogance breeds conceit, baseness, immodesty, cynicism, beastfulness and vanity. Ignorance leads to hypocrisy which breeds cowardice, lies, defamation, flattery etc. The Holy Qur’an has in a few verses admirably elucidated the intricate questions of virtue. These days we are not victims of overestimating our capacities. For them the Holy Book states, “The same is to them whether you admonish them or admonish them not: They will not believe” (36:10). Most of us are portrayed in the Holy verse, “And of the people there are some who say: We believe in Allah and the Last Day; while they do not really believe” (2:8). And by the verse “And when they meet those who believe, they say: We believe; and when they are alone with their Shaitans, they say: Surely we are with you, we were only jesting” (2:14). We need to discuss these Holy verses; we know our wavering selves too well and how quickly we abandon Allah and side with Shaitan out of greed for fame and fortune or out of fear of adversities. The Holy Qur’an has dealt with both types of persons; first there is praise for the pious people who will benefit from the Holy Qur’an and secondly there is description of the arrogant who are heedless and underestimate their worth and fall victim to hypocrisy. There is no doubt that the arrogant are steeped in polytheism, but even Muslims awed by others, not only underrate themselves but also fail to comply with the command of Allah: “Do not fear them but fear Me” and are not true adherents of Tauhid. One who reveres this command from Allah will never worship another person; such a person

can protect himself from hypocrisy and attain high level of character. In other words, firm belief in Tauhid alone elevates man to nobility.

FEAR ARISING OUT OF LOVE OR RESPECT IS PRAISEWORTHY

Fear which is engendered by arrogance of another is a vice and a form of polytheism. We Muslims have been commanded to be obedient citizens, not because we regard those rulers as high deities but only because obedience and loyalty are a command of Islam. If we avoid violating any law of the land not inconsistent with the spirit of Tauhid, it is because we love the rule of the law, a love which is inherent in all followers of the Holy Qur'an. On the other hand, it is the duty of every follower of Tauhid to free himself of the fear caused by the arrogant. If secular powers win over their citizens with love and respect, then respect for them will be embedded in the hearts of their people. No governments can intimidate their subjects.

SPEAK ONLY FOR ALLAH

A person who has accepted “La Ilaha Illa Allah” (there is no God but Allah) should have only one objective in life: that whatever he does should only be for the pleasure of Allah. If what pleases or displeases Allah have already been made plain and if the Holy Qur’an is a sufficient and complete guide for a Muslim, then his belief in Tauhid must necessarily reflect that his every word and act is only for the pleasure of Allah. His love and anger must be for Allah only. He should provide for his family, relatives and friends only because the Holy Qur’an has so commanded him. He should obey his government, whatever its composition only because the Holy Qur’an has enjoined it. Allah has laid out in clear terms our obligations towards fellow man in each sphere of life; national, political, social, cultural etc. and it is our duty to fulfil them. To oppose such commands is to court polytheism. By thus holding steadfast to the doctrine of Tauhid we shall stave off many calamities and shall save ourselves from being misguided. Moreover, whenever we embark upon any action in compliance with the commands of the Holy Qur’an, our spiritual energies augment tenfold our physical energies and determination. This is what the Holy Qur’an itself says. The angels of Allah come to our aid. Amity and brotherhood are inspired in us and unity restored amongst us.

For example, the recent boycott against British in which the Muslims joined their compatriots, was not in response to the call of reputedly selfless leaders like Mr. Gandhi, or Shaukatali or Mohammedali, because that would be polytheism, contrary to the dictum of the Holy Prophet; “I have no goal nor intention nor ideal save Allah.” When our faith is that the Holy Book and the teachings of the Maasumeen contain answers for all our

needs then to look for solutions from other sources is polytheism. Indeed, we should search for remedies for all our maladies in the Holy Qur'an. Muslim leaders, particularly, must seek answers to modern day questions in the Qur'anic teachings. The Holy Book has given clear guidance on the question of association with Allah's true believers and disassociation from the enemies of Allah, including the question of boycotts. The true concern of the leaders to create unity in the nation, requires them to prove that their appeal for boycott is in compliance with the commands of the Qur'an. Every action of a Muslim, must be within the bounds prescribed by Allah. When Muslims unite with Hindus in the interest of the nation, they do not do so because they are primarily Indians. They do so because of their obedience to the Qur'anic cannons which prescribe definitely on unity and duties towards fellow countrymen. Islam teaches Muslims to participate in all constructive deeds towards the welfare of their country, religion or community. Similarly, a Muslim is commanded to refrain from any deed likely to cause disunity or breach of the peace and to disassociate from all such persons, whether a Hindu, a Muslim or even his close associate, who indulge in such acts. Islam prohibits Muslims from any act contrary to the dictated of Allah even if they were adopted by ones ancestors.

A BELIEVER IN TAUHID POSSESSES ALL VIRTUES

It has already been stated above that by accepting Tauhid one attains all the virtues and good character. When our anger, prejudice, sacrifice, opposition, likes and dislikes are all for the pleasure of Allah only and if all our relations are based on this principle alone, then how can vice or bad character get close to us? Yes, Allah is God described in the Holy Qur'an with all the divine attributes mentioned in it. Similarly, Muslims acting according to His commands will be seen with the highest of virtues and conduct reflecting the sublime attributes of Allah. After such knowledge no problem or difficulty arises which cannot be easily surmounted. If Muslims had been true believers in Tauhid, they would have never felt the need to use arms for according to the wish of the Holy Prophet this ought to be the time of peace. Nor do the Muslims need to flatter their compatriots or riot or revolt. It is important for them to act only in accordance with the dictates of the Holy Qur'an. If, in accordance with the Holy Qur'an and the Traditions, they regard it as their duty to attain a certain objective then they strive for it for pleasure of Allah, and on attaining it regard love for any worldly gain, particularly if it is forbidden by the Holy Qur'an, as polytheism. If necessary we have to sacrifice wealth, buildings, clothes, country, relations, family in order to comply with the commands of Allah. When we regard something as gift from Allah, we must receive and acquire it only for His pleasure. Then only would we be true believers of Tauhid. It is not necessary to revolt or take up arms because such acts are forbidden by the Holy Qur'an and because this is no occasion for defence in India. The Holy Book enjoins, "Do not create mischief on the Earth" (2:11). We need only create in ourselves the true spirit of Tauhid, the spirit of "Hijrah,"

to develop great qualities of sacrifice, determination and greatness. Against these qualities, the most arrogant and conceited will be obliged to bow down.

Such is the impact of Tauhid that drawn swords are sheathed, enslaving the assailants. This may be difficult to attain but is certainly not impossible. The important condition for its attainment is that we should not, like other religionist, engross ourselves in mere outward rituals and ceremonies, without experiencing its true “Hijrah,” that is renouncing the evil. The true aim of prayer is to attain this quality. Namaz, fasting, Hajj, Khums and Zakat, help us to attain steadfastness. The concept that there is no god except Allah is a fire that burns out various desires and wishes, particularly when they are rooted in selfishness and sensuality, and kindles in us a light which cannot be extinguished by even the fiercest of storms. Do we really have the capacity to resist even the feeblest of sensual desires? If not, then we must realise that we are not believers in Tauhid. We can abstain from the demands of sensuality only when we become true believers of this concept. Sensuality drains us of courage, determination and firmness rendering us helpless. Only a true believer walks on the elevated ground of Tauhid without being moved by worldly respect and prestige; no earthly power can dislodge his firm feet from his path. Today our position and level is most pathetic. We have lost greatness and are sunk in the abyss of dishonour, although to disentangle ourselves from it we do appear to be engaged in a vain struggle. Scholars and leaders are prescribing various remedies. However, the true remedy for progress lies in having firm faith in Tauhid and basing all actions upon it.

As stated above, Tauhid has not been preached on earth simply to elevate the character of man and take spiritualism to its pinnacle but also to instruct us in social progress and to

enable us to benefit from natural resources. It is such educational attainment that has led to the latest discoveries and inventions. This topic has been discussed exhaustively in “The Guide of the World, The Qur’an.” Here the attention of the reader is drawn only to a few important relevant issues.

THE POWER OF MAN ON EARTH

As long as man was fettered in various forms of polytheism, he could not fully utilise the service of the various creations on earth. When we deify any object, we cannot subject it to our advantage. If there are benefits for us in its creating, we can only use them at its pleasure. On the other hand, if it is totally at our disposal, then undoubtedly we would be able to make maximum use of all the powers in it. As long as we regarded the sea, ocean, tree, stone, wind, water, fire, earth, etc. as gods their benefits reached us only as condescending favours, and we kept bowing before them to attain such pleasure and made sacrifices to them regularly to sustain it.

We were not able to obtain maximum benefits from them. But, the moment the voice of Allah, the Great Guide of this world and His infallible vicegerents enlightened us with the doctrine of Tauhid, explaining us that all these are not our gods but have been created by Allah for our benefit, we directed our energies to discover how these creations could be utilised for our benefit. This knowledge and quest opened for us the gates of the recent discoveries and inventions. We experimented with them in the same manner as we test a new servant to determine the extent of his capabilities and, having defined his limits, set duties for him to obtain maximum service out of him. Similarly, the day man abandoned worship of Nature and its powers, and realised that they were created for his benefit, we began to study their qualities and effects. Thus we laid the foundation for modern knowledge and the world was able to progress towards modern social development. Glorious was the day for mankind when the teacher of Tauhid revealed the good tiding, “He has made subservient to you all that is in the Heavens and on earth” (45:13). By use of the word

“subservient” mankind’s attention was drawn to the fact that he can attain superiority over them and obtain service from them as he pleases.

WHAT WAS TAUGHT TO ADAM

The detailed description of the creation of Adam and the command given to the angles to prostrate before him was intended not only to manifest the superiority of man over angels who bow before him, but also to reveal his qualities so as to make the creations on earth his servants. Allah taught Adam all the virtuous names and also their meanings. Traditions reveal that these were the names of Prophet Mohammed (s.a.w.w.) and his holy progeny. The question that arises at this stage is how by mere knowledge of these names did Adam become elevated to such a level that the angels had to bow before him? The reality is that in the name of a person is the indication of his qualities, capabilities and true worth. Thus Allah revealed to Adam the capabilities and true level of those personalities and, by the same tokens showed him how they managed to attain such levels.

Traditions also reveal that Adam was informed of the sacrifice of Imam Hussein (a.s.). These were the names of personalities whom the angels had served from their childhood, as had the various creations on earth like storm, tree, ocean, wind, water, fire, etc. By such knowledge Adam, reached such a high level that even the angels had to prostrate before him.

THE STORY OF ADAM IN THE BIBLE

When asked what we have comparison with the Bible and the Torah, our answer is that in comparison to parrot-like stories in the Bible we have found in the Holy Qur'an profound knowledge and scholarship. By reading the episode of Adam in the Torah, even a person who is not a non-believer would become one. Its version is that Allah prohibited Adam from getting close to the tree of knowledge. However, when he attempted to eat the fruit of knowledge, God finds all excuses to evict him from Heaven. What regard can we have for a god who would create all sorts of fruits and flowers and bless us with abundant supply and even create woman to grant us sensual pleasure (even the Torah states that the creation of woman was for the final and complete comfort of man), make exhaustive efforts to fulfil all the physical needs of man, and then deny Adam knowledge which is the major factor distinguishing man from animal? After all, what would be the aim of Allah to deprive man of knowledge? However, the corrupted versions of the Bible narrate that when Adam desired to eat the fruit of knowledge, God gathered His angels and warned them that if Adam ate the fruit, he would acquire the mysteries of endless knowledge and would be able to lead an eternal life like them. So, in evicting Adam from Heaven, God was only protecting His own security! At least, it is thereby established, that eternal life can be attained through knowledge. However, what can be said of a god who became so frightened that his jealousy removed man from eternal life and reduced him to eternal destruction? We are confused whether to consider such a narration as divine knowledge or a mere fairy tale? This story about destruction of man is read as avidly, as are stories of how man is saved from destruction and made capable of eternal life. It is strange that the West which

bestows degrees for knowledge and scholarship, has, despite all their intelligence, failed to appreciate this simple point. If, by eating the fruit of knowledge, Adam put mankind in an eternal damnation and the only reason offered in the Bible for the prohibition was that God did not wish to bestow on man eternal life, then what was need for repentance or atonement of sin? Indeed, the son of Man (Jesus Christ) gave us the same lesson of eternal life on the cross, which God did not wish us to have by prohibiting Adam from the fruit of knowledge lest we attain eternal life!

Why does not man understand a simple fact that an act by itself is not a sin. The results of the act determine the virtue or vice in it. Thus, not the mere eating of the fruit but the consequences of it could have determined the sinfulness of the act - the consequence being that Adam would have acquired eternity. Now why should the very thought of our acquiring eternity which had provoked the wrath of God subsequently be infused in us? The answer is that the sacrifice of Jesus bestowed upon us this quality of eternity. Do not these two statements contradict each other? Torah insists on the cause and effect relation between eating the fruit of knowledge and acquisition of eternal life, and that God did not wish man to attain that; the church states that the consequence of eating the fruit was a life of eternal damnation. These propositions are astonishing! The result of this story is that God is jealous. In any event, if by the sacrifice of Jesus, God meant to endow man with eternal life, then why was eating of the fruit, which would have fulfilled the same objective, forbidden? Does the church take pride in portraying the qualities of God in such a light? On the other hand, the Holy Qur'an depicts this episode in the spirit of knowledge and scholarship, providing us education on our natural abilities and the inherent relationship between us and the rest of the creation. Adam was told that he was

being made the vicegerent of Allah on earth and that the entire creation in the Heavens and earth would be at his command and service. But to obtain such service from them all it was necessary for him to attain knowledge of the names and “He taught Adam all the names” (2:31). The moment Adam gained this knowledge, all the angels prostrated before him.

Adam’s knowledge of these names obliged the angels to prostrate before him. Similarly natural human energies, in their seminal form, develop into fruit bearing trees through knowledge. If these energies are misused as a result of ignorance, then the tree that grows out of such conduct will also turn out to be evil and will eventually become a hell itself. Man has been forbidden from such unlawful use of the process which is depicted in the form of a tree and, therefore, the command, “and both of you do not approach this tree” (2:35).

What is the episode of Adam? It describes, at once, both the element of human nature and the force of the world. Man was thereby taught that by acquisition of knowledge, he could gain control over the entire world and become a ruler of the world. He was also warned of the consequences of wavering from His path. The Qur’an, therefore, brought to mankind the good tidings that the elements which he considered as his god are, in reality, his servants. He was awakened to the realisation that the entities over which he had been granted control were not his gods and, that a human being can attain power and control over natural elements. Strangely, instead of learning this lesson from the man sent down by Allah, people started treating that human model as a god. Indeed, the Holy Qur’an not only mentions of the angels as servants of man but also specifically refers to the various natural elements as created to serve man; “He has made the ships subservient to you that

they may sail in the waters by His command, and the rivers has he made subject to you” (14:32). And in the ensuing verse, “And He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon diligently pursuing their course and the night and the day” (14:32). And in another chapter, He says: “He has subjected to you all that is in the Heavens and on earth.” Can man, who has considered these elements his god, have the courage to obtain services out of them? Far from getting them to serve him, he would regard the very thought of making such a demand a sin.

Then what belief or faith has the force to invoke in him the courage and determination to subjugate these elements to himself? It is pertinent at this stage to observe that the mere thought of attaining power over these elements would lead us into a discovery of their composition and forces, for when we are told that gases can be useful to us, we would immediately attempt to ascertain their composition and qualities. In this way numerous modern discoveries have been made. It is as a result of such teachings that we ask if there is any other book or religion to which the world is more indebted than the Holy Qur’an. If modern progress and the means of comfort are the product of modern education, then man was able to achieve them only after he abandoned worshipping the natural elements and after making them serve him.

If you worship “Neptune” (god of water), then to derive benefit from water you will have to seek ways to attain his pleasure; so you will sing his praise and make sacrifices, yet remain unsure whether he will let you derive any benefit. Indeed, such was the result of worshipping him. As long as man regarded him as a god and bowed before him, he only quenched thirst and watered the fields, granting no access to its secret, latent force. But the day that great teacher of the world, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) and his infallible successors taught and emphasised

that water is our slave and revealed the mysteries of attaining control over it, then behold the progress man has made by exploiting the latent forces of water! Today, we get electricity out of it, steam power runs our trains and various engines, we sail on it in our ships and derive thousands of advantages from it.

These are not fairy tales; history records numerous instances to prove this point. Before the advent of Islam, man knew of things as they appeared to him. His perception of the natural elements was very limited, if any. The reference to the knowledge of nature and its secrets as “modern science” is in itself a proof of the fact that this knowledge has been acquired recently, the foundation of which was laid by Muslims. They blazed the new path, and threw light on the various natural sciences, allowing the Western world subsequently to use the path for progress. In other words, all this progress is the result of the true understanding of Tauhid.

Appreciation of the extent of dependence of social and commercial progress on Tauhid requires deeper thought. Yet even a superficial examination reveals the number of difficulties and problems the doctrine has solved for man-kind. In India various diseases are regarded as signs of displeasure of certain gods and goddesses. The only remedy for such diseases was the appeasement of such deities. Only a few years back the cure for smallpox was considered to be only the worship of the god of smallpox. It was believed that he entered the house on a donkey. So gram would be fed to a donkey in the belief that it would reach the donkey of the god of smallpox. The Brahmins were supposed to know what things the gods and goddesses loved and having learnt from them, man made offerings, a portion of which was taken by the Brahmins themselves and a small portion was given to the patient. Many a time, this

treatment worked because the potion used had some beneficial effect on the disease. Thus was smallpox treated. They believed that the god of smallpox came with a definite purpose of taking children away and, so, from the early days a sacrifice would be made of a few children to this god. However, the great Prophet of the world demolished all these deities by declaring only the Almighty Allah worthy of worship. He thus saved thousands of Indian children from senseless immolation.

Why does man not understand that Allah has no need? What selfish motive could Allah have in having Himself declared as the only One? What benefit does He thereby derive or what danger does He avert? What a God would He make if He were to be flattered by praises! In fact, by subscribing to this doctrine man is able to obtain superiority over the entire universe and it is to achieve this objective that he has been created. By teaching the doctrine of Tauhid the great prophet of the world explained that all things in the world have not been created to be worshipped but for the service of mankind. Man has been created to be served by the Universe, not to become its servant. He is servant of only One Allah, Who does not depend in any way whatsoever on man and Whose only purpose in obtaining service from man is to help man himself secure supremacy over the Universe.

When we subscribe to the doctrine of Tauhid, we only benefit ourselves in that we will not permit our servants to rule us. In aesthetic as well as mundane spheres, this doctrine is the guiding force to success ('Falah'). The Holy Qur'an describes success and salvation as main purpose of religion. As we have seen before, the purpose of religion is to ensure that we develop our latent capabilities to the full. All the powers of the entire world should become subservient to man to bring about progress in his social, commercial and domestic activities. It is

for the maximum progress of humanity and society that Islam has used the word “success” (Falah) but, unfortunately, its true meaning has not yet been grasped by the Western mind.

Thus it is clear that for full human progress and development education in the doctrine of Tauhid is of the highest importance for it is through such knowledge that we can make great strides. Thus the Holy Qur’an declares that religion has come to the world to teach the doctrine of Tauhid and revelation and holy scriptures stress that the aim is to secure success for mankind. Both these propositions portray cause and effect relationship from two different angles. Since success has been shown as the aim of religion, it means that mankind would attain success by living within the limits of religion. If the meaning of religious instruction is to attain the truth of the doctrine of Tauhid then this doctrine is also a means to the attainment of success. The doctrine is the root and success is its fruit. If the aim of religion is not the success of mankind then man does not need religion at all. Thus is the aim of religion explained and the doctrine of Tauhid elucidated. Except for what is contained in the Holy Qur’an, there is no other explanation as to why we should regard Allah as only One and what are the benefits of such a faith. Everybody claims that there is only one God but nobody explains the reasons for belief in Unity and its consequences. We are confident that the students of this doctrine will become conversant with its philosophy and reasons, and will bow before the Holy Qur’an, which presented this doctrine to mankind, and threw light on its every perspective so that man may be able to have capacity to achieve success, and to regulate his affairs to achieve the ultimate and eternal success also.

In so far as this discussion concerns morals and human character, we like to draw the attention of Muslims that they

should not rejoice in the thought that these pages provide literature against other religions. When a writer eulogises the qualities of Islam, Muslim readers are pleased without even pausing to reflect whether these qualities are found in them. Muslims, unfortunately, take pride in their past glories. Those who were better and capable Muslims justifiably died satisfied with their conditions. It should be appreciated that only that community remains alive in this world whose faith is linked with the future; those who live in the dead glory of the past or the pleasures and comfort of the present are in loss. Only the person who has faith in the future and strives to improve it can avert loss. The Holy Qur'an lays stress on "Those who have certitude in the hereafter" (2:4). The Holy Book has elucidated all the facets of our faith.

We have been taught to have faith in Allah and the "Other Day." In Arabic the word "YAUM AKHAR" has a vast meaning. Any fraction of time can be regarded as "YAUM" in Arabic and a moment thereafter, or an hour, a day, a month, a year, a decade or a century are all referred to as the "other day." It is important to heed this fact, think of the future and not merely reminisce the glories of your ancestors. When a Muslim reads about the beauty of Islam or proof of its superiority over other religions, he must not be complacent. The lamentable fact is that despite following a true religion, we lack honour and commitment of our predecessors, who were true Muslims and who made history and attained high status before Allah. If we truly seek to regain our past prestige, we must strive to base our faith in the future.

THE DOCTRINE OF TAUHID AND ALLAH'S BEAUTIFUL NAMES

It is necessary to understand the beautiful names of Allah and their true meanings so that our faith in Tauhid may enhance our morals and spirituality. The high attributes of Allah have been gravely misunderstood. We have been misled into misbeliefs and consequently our spiritual understanding has been built on feeble foundations resulting in numberless variations in the development and reform of different communities. Today, the existence of different religions is the result of different conceptualisation of the attributes of Allah. To illustrate this point let us take as examples, “Rahman” and “Rahim” (the Merciful and the Beneficent). As a matter of fact all the beautiful names of Allah have been subject of misunderstandings, but to illustrate the point we shall take only these two attributes to show how misunderstandings relating to them have resulted in the spread of wrong beliefs. “Rahman” signifies one who sends benediction, even if there is no deed to cause it and “Rahim” means the one who sends benediction for any act done to deserve it.

“Rahmaniyat” is the mercy from which the entire humanity benefits. Indeed Allah created the sources of this Mercy even before He created mankind. All men, be they believers or atheists, pious or impious, benefit equally from it. Examples of this mercy are the creations of the sun, moon, wind, clouds, rain, earth and milk in the breasts of mothers even before the birth of a child.

“Rahimiyat” is the mercy which is showered on man as a result of his good deeds, like in the case of a farmer who sows one seed and reaps a thousand fruits. To summarise, the grace of Rahmaniyat precedes the existence of human needs and deeds, while the grace of Rahimiyat is subsequent.

THE WRONG BELIEF SPREAD AS A RESULT OF MISUNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF “RAHMAN”

Rebirth: If Allah is “Rahman” then where is the question of rebirth? If all the heavenly bodies were created before the creation of mankind for his benefit - man is dependent on air to breathe, on water for life, on the sun, clouds, earth and air for cultivation and all these were created before his creation (as is manifestly proved by modern science) then the creation of all of them were not dependant on the deeds of mankind. This fact, therefore, contradicts the doctrine of rebirth because it preaches that the source of happiness is dependent on the actions of man. Similarly, animals, like cattle, cows and goats, are necessary for human life and Science has established that they too existed before the creation of man. This fact contradicts the second principle of rebirth in which these animals have been called human in that they were human beings in their previous lives, and, as a result of their misdeeds were reborn as animals. It is a pity that these people fail to appreciate the true meaning of “Rahman.” They have put humanity to shame by subscribing to this doctrine of rebirth which denigrates the dignity of mankind.

ATHEISM

It is common knowledge that the universe follows the doctrine of cause and effect. Even atheists accept the principle of the First Cause. The entire universe follows this order. Everything has its use and is in its proper place and each thing finds its use in another thing. However, the atheist does not accept that all this arrangement is deliberate. He considers all this as the progressive cycle of the inanimate nature. He argues that the causal relationship between objects is accidental and has come about as a result of their constant interaction. The word “Rahman” contradicts this argument. When we feel thirsty, our thirst can be quenched by water (which is a natural element). Water had been created before man and it is not our thirst that has created in water the quality to quench it. Thus, it is established that even before thirst came to be known water had already been created with the quality of quenching it. However, it is not possible for a remedy to exist automatically before the need for it arises. Thus, it becomes imperative to accept the existence of an Omniscient Being Who was aware of such need before it arose and provided for its remedy in advance. In the entire creation of Allah there is a remedy for one thing in another proving that their existence was not by chance but by deliberate act of an Omniscient Being Who is a “Rahman.” The belief in Christ as god, and the atonement through him are also proved false. According to the Christian beliefs, man is born sinful and Allah cannot just forgive him because His justice demands good deeds, and since all men are born sinful their salvation is impossible. So justice of God required the sacrifice from Jesus to atone for human sins, for God does not forgive without a cause. However, had they realised that Allah is “Rahman” and His grace needs no deeds, as has been clearly demonstrated above

and is our constant experience, they would have regarded the concept of atonement through the blood of Jesus Christ needless. Moreover, their faith in the godhead of Jesus Christ is also based on the belief that since all men are born sinful, and since one man cannot intercede for salvation of another sinful man, therefore Jesus Christ cannot be a human being. Thus, they become obliged to treat him as a son of God for only God is pure and so would His son be, and his blood could atone for the sins of mankind. In both these beliefs, it is implied that Allah is incapable of granting mercy without corresponding deeds; while science has already proved (as shown above) that His benediction existed before even the creation of mankind. The Holy Qur'an has refuted the Christians in express terms: "And it does not become the Rahman (Beneficent) that He should take a son" (19:92) (in other words He can shower mercy without any deeds or acts to deserve it). It is not intended to dwell on this topic at great length as it has been discussed exhaustively in our book "A guide of the world: Holy Qur'an" and in the second part of this book reserved for the Beautiful Names of Allah. After contemplating on the meaning of the word "Rahman," Brahma Samjis become obliged to abandon the slogan "There is no need for a word of God." Misconception of the word "Rahim" has led to wrong notions that there will be no reckoning after death. Similarly, by such misconceptions each of Allah's qualities has been misunderstood. Here we shall attempt to discuss the effect of such misunderstandings on spirituality.

THE NAME DEPICTS QUALITY

The Holy Qur'an has given the Holy Names of Allah in a beautiful and attractive arrangement. By the names of Allah is meant His attributes, for the purpose of a name is to depict its quality. Although the names we give are often derived, yet our main purpose is to portray its qualities. When a name of a person is mentioned, we do try to visualise his complexion, height, character which would conform.

THE NINETY-NINE NAMES OF ALLAH

The Holy Qur'an has mentioned 99 Holy Names of Allah and has divided them into two parts, the praiseworthy names portraying His pure attributes, and other names suggest the negative traits from which He is totally free.

TAKE ON THE POSITIVE QUALITIES OF ALLAH

It is only through these names that human soul attains perfection. When a person develops in him the qualities inherent in these names, he acquires excellence of character and transcends into the spiritual world. The Holy Qur'an, keeping man in view, has described the attributes of Allah as an example of the qualities to be adopted by man. Therefore, it is the duty of man to attain the praiseworthy virtues of Allah and free himself from the negative traits of which Allah is pure. The Holy Qur'an has described such deeds as virtues (Khairat), which fulfil the aim of the Holy names. Thus the direction opposite these names is that of sins, vices, misdeeds, misconduct, etc. The Holy Qur'an has described this important doctrine in the words: "The most beautiful names belong to Allah; so call on Him by them. Forsake those who profane these names for they will meet their punishment for such act" (7:180). In such few words the Holy Qur'an has shown the way to every virtue which can be developed to perfection. Acting only on this one verse, society, culture, morals and spirituality surpass all the stages to reach the pinnacle. One may say that the secret of the perfection of the soul is contained in this one verse.

WHEN CAN YOU CALL UPON ALLAH

You can invite a person only to a place when his presence is appropriate and where there is nothing averse to his nature, Mercury cannot be brought close to fire. But if it changes its nature then the two can co-exist. A vendor of perfumes is not comfortable in a dirty stinking place. Therefore, a person of unjust nature cannot call the Merciful Allah nor can a person of impure soul invoke the purest Being, Allah. If without changing his nature and character, he keeps invoking Allah then he is on the wrong path. For such persons the Holy Qur'an states, "The prayer of the non-believer is nothing but futile wandering in error" (40:50).

The first condition for invoking Allah by any of His names is that the person invoking Him must change his ways. If the person calling Allah has transformed himself to become consistent with the Holy Names, then the gates for acceptance of his prayers are wide open. This is indeed the true meaning of invoking Allah by His Holy Names.

SALVATION THROUGH TAUHID ONLY

Holy Qur'an has presented Allah as the ultimate aim and ambition of man. Expounding on "La Ilaha Illa Allah" (there is no God except Allah) the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) has said, "I have no purpose in life except Allah and no Master but Allah." To enable man attain this level of Tauhid, the Holy Qur'an as shown above, has related the development of man to the acquisition of the qualities inherent in the names of Allah. Then His 99 qualities have been defined as virtue and their opposite as vice. This has accordingly determined for us commands and prohibitions. Thus, the commands of the Holy Qur'an are for deeds which create in us the positive qualities of Allah and the prohibitions are against those actions which would bring about negative attributes. The commands and prohibitions in the Holy Qur'an, therefore, are derived from the Holy Names and our prayers and belief are based on them. The Holy Qur'an cites examples of persons who, as ideals, have acted in compliance with the commands and have refrained from the prohibitions. They are "those on whom Allah has bestowed favours" (1:6). Those who have opposed such commands and restraints have been referred to as "those upon whom a wrath of Allah is brought" (1:7) and who "have gone astray." The significance of all this is that Allah is the ultimate reality. This is why Hazrat Ali (a.s.) has said that the entire Holy Qur'an is contained in the first chapter "The Opening," because it contains the word Allah — a composite name which contains the elucidation of all His "names." There is then no wonder that the person who states "La Ilaha Illa Allah" is saved; indeed the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) has said, "He who says 'La Ilaha Illa Allah' will enter Heaven." Of course, the beauty of the expression does not lie merely in its utterance.

All these names of Allah point to virtues which every human should attain, they are qualities that can shine in us. It is clear that we can only know that which we can experience. Whatever the true being of Allah, our appreciation of Him cannot transcend our comprehension. We would not be able to appreciate the meaning of mercy, forgiveness, connivance, gratitude, potence until we have these qualities within us. This does not mean that man made up such names for Allah out of traits found in his own nature. If that was so, then the inherent secret of divine attributes would have been known by all. Every scholar could have then imagined and known them. Allah's mysteries would not have had to be unfolded by way of revelation on a human being even in backward country like Arabia.

The basic fact is that Allah has manifested Himself by way of qualities He has gifted to a human being. He has educated man in accordance with his capacity to understand Him. Even our own nature gives testimony to this fact. Everything in the entire world is a collection of numerous marvels and mysteries, but we are able to know of them only within the limits of our perceptive abilities and capacities. What we perceive does not necessarily represent the total and true nature of things. Likewise with the Holy Names of Allah; we cannot attain a total and perfect knowledge about Allah and His attributes. Allah has endowed human nature with some of His attributes and has then described Himself to man within those limits. In other words, having given us the ability to attain these qualities He has presented Himself in that light and image, and has thus directed our attention towards His perfect being for the perfection of our soul... Against this background, it will be easy to understand the extent to which it is necessary to accept the doctrine of Tauhid for man to progress and enhance his status. We have been endowed with

the qualities of Allah and it is only natural for us to develop them so as to reflect the attributed of Allah. The real meaning of Tauhid then is that we should create in ourselves qualities similar to His, pure and unsullied by the qualities of another creature. This may be difficult but is certainly not impossible to achieve.

Allah is “Rahim,” therefore we must also develop in ourselves this quality. Allah rewards a virtue, so must we. Allah is the Sustainer of the entire universe, so we too must play our part in its sustenance and progress. To cultivate in us these qualities of Allah is the right way to practise Tauhid. The important thing to bear in mind is that in doing so we should not pollute the divine colour with any other colour, for that would be polytheism. The Masoomen are a perfect example of those who reflect pure and full divine colour. Thus they become our ideals.

PART III

DIVINE RULE ON EARTH

The prayer once heard in the wilderness is still present in the Bible “Your kingdom come and your Will be done, on earth as in the Heavens.”

A reflection on the Holy Names of Allah as mentioned in the Holy Qur’an leads one to the conclusion that if every individual in society performed his duties and developed in himself the qualities depicted by these Holy names, the earth would be abode of peace and security and reach the peak of its development.

The Will of Allah which prevails in the Heavens, would prevail on earth as well. This was the precise aim of Jesus Christ in his prayer and it can be attained only in this way.

This is not wishful thinking or an imaginary story for amusement. One thousand three hundred years ago the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) presented to the world the rules and principles for the establishment of this heavenly rule on earth and when man will act in accordance with those principles only Islam (peace and security) will prevail on earth.

DIVINE POLITICS

As an example, we shall apply the belief in Tauhid to politics. If governments and politicians take on divine colour engendered by Tauhid, all the political problems would be immediately solved. Muslims look with respect upon the ruling individuals or nations. If a monarch or a ruling nation adopts divine attribute and conducts their affairs in accordance with such attributes, then this rule would be perpetual. The attributes of Allah are summarised in four ways, described in the first chapter of the Holy Book: namely, The Sustainer of the Universe (“Rabbul Alameen”), “Rahman” (Merciful), “Rahim” (Beneficent) and Master of the Day of Judgement (“Maliki Yaumi deen”). These qualities are regarded as the bases of all the remaining qualities.

SUSTAINER OF THE UNIVERSE

The quality or the Sustainer of Universe signifies that Allah, as a Creator, sustains, develops and leads the entire universe to perfection.

In the Kingdom of the Lord of the worlds, as is clear from the expression itself, there can be no discrimination of any kind (communal, national, linguistic or racial). The grace of His sustenance reaches all alike and equally. If all His creatures worship and adore Him equally, it is because His grace and benediction reach them all equally. His just and impartial rule has kept Him at the highest level in the eyes of all His creatures. His rule on earth is for our own benefit. There is, therefore, no reason why the human rules should not create in their affairs and rule the qualities of Allah. All the governments claim that their rule is for the benefit of the nation but there is no truth left in this slogan. If it was so, there would not have been the cry for home rule or Independence. So, the first rule is that the governing class should not practise any discrimination. Thereafter, to make their governments the centres of peace, security and prosperity they should adopt the quality of "Rahman." This would mean that in order to develop to the full the capacities and potentialities of its citizens and to enable them reach fruition and to exploit the open and hidden treasures of the country the government should at its own initiative and without the request of the people, establish at various places, utilities, schools, hospitals and other public institutions without imposing any special or additional taxes on the public.

No doubt a government must spend all its revenue within the country but a government can develop the quality of

beneficence by granting favour without it being deserved. If a government spends surplus revenue received from one source for other projects such as free schools then undoubtedly it will have created in it the quality of “Rahmaniyat.” The problem, however, is that modern day governments of whatever religious persuasion rule entirely for their personal benefits. The governments of today unlike the army of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) do not conquer in order to liberate the vanquished from their tyrannical rulers and provide them with a government for the interest of the people. Today authority is sought over another country entirely for economic gains. It is first determined whether the revenue of that country exceeds its expenditure and, if so, efforts are made to conquer it, or else, it is ignored.

RAHIM

The principle of Allah's benediction is that He rewards man ten or hundred times the worth of his effort. If a government were to operate on this doctrine, it would soon find that even if it is a foreign government, it would earn high respect from the citizens. Today, governments are not prepared to show any grace without definite returns and even then, their favours are not commensurate with the demands they make. Even the salaries paid to civil servants are far below what they fairly deserve.

Unfortunately, the Western world differs from the East in this respect. In Asia, people look to their governments to provide them with clothes, maintenance and security and in these respects the grace from their governments has to be showered upon the citizens incessantly. Whenever the Maasumin had the reins of the government of Islam, they practised this principle. On the other hand, the criterion of Western governments is economical gain. Let alone a government, even if an individual does not cultivate this quality in himself, he is not considered successful. This is why the Western world is not able to make peoples of different nationalities respect their governments of the day.

THE MASTER OF THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT

It is necessary to develop this sacred quality. In the divine context it means that every person will on that Day be requited according to his deeds. Rewards, of course, continue to be granted but punishments are imposed on a different basis. If the sin or the wrong of the person affects another individual or the society as a whole or deprives another person of his rights or otherwise is detrimental to him, then punishment is certainly imposed; but if the sin is merely disobedience to a command of Allah, and no other individual is thereby affected or prejudiced, then in the main divine mercy and forgiveness prevail.

In worldly governments, this mastery can only be developed if a government pardons offenders against the state. Of course, even mercy and pardon have their limits and if the offenders threaten the very foundation of a government, then the doors of mercy should be closed to them. From what we can perceive, the first three principles do not exist in the governments of today. There is only a flicker of light in respect of the fourth principle. However, the concept of the Mastery does not end here. If the governments of today reflected on one special aspect of this concept, they would see a clear way of maintaining their governments and securing the respect of their citizens.

If the rights of Allah on mankind are proprietary then the punishment for His disobedience must not be meant to destroy man but to reform him. No master wishes to see his property destroyed by punishment; he seeks, as far as possible, to safeguard his property and make it more productive. Thus, in the punishment of the Master of the Day of Judgement,

there is not retribution or revenge as in the case of one enemy punishing another. The punishment by a master is for the safety and defence of his property so that it is improved, becomes more beneficial and useful. If the governments of today dealt with offenders against the state in this way, without seeking revenge, and imposed punishment with the sole aim of reformation of the offender and to correct him into a peace-loving citizen, then this quality of Master over the Day of Judgement will have been developed in that government.

HUMAN AND DIVINE GOVERNMENT

In order to avoid any misunderstanding, it is of importance to appreciate that between divine rule and human rule there is a world of difference. The analogy drawn between the two rules is only to stress that within our limits we should strive to attain divine qualities. The rights of Allah on us are proprietary, unlike the worldly governments. According to Islamic principles, a worldly government is a constitution for service to the people and should be entirely for the benefit of the citizens. If the governments of today really become the servants of their nations why should the people rise against them? Why does not anybody rise against the divine government? But if a government machinery is run purely for personal, selfish aggrandisement, no wonder citizens rebel against it.

SUMMARY

This short discussion has relevance to our theme in so far as it demonstrates that if every individual and society acted on the principles of Tauhid and every individual attempted to cultivate in himself, within his capacities, the qualities of Allah, then this world would be free from all problems and difficulties. Governments would become only constitutional bodies to organise society. Thus, those involved in the administration of a government need to act on the principles of Allah. If there ever was the need for governments to follow these principles, it is greater today than ever before, for today in every country there is discrimination between the governing and the governed. Every move by the government is scrutinised closely and critically. There is deep unrest spread in India. In a country with wide ethnic and linguistic diversity it should be very easy to eradicate discrimination if the people in authority conducted their affairs as guided by the Sustainer of the Universe, the Merciful, the Beneficent and the Master of the Day of Judgement.

THOSE WHOM ALLAH DOES NOT LOVE

We have considered how the Holy Names of Allah can help governments benefit nations. Let us now examine the programme these names give to the people.

The 99 Names of Allah present a unique guide to the people. While the Holy Books of other religions are silent on this point, the Holy Qur'an presents to Muslims a complete constitution of life. It forbids Muslims from disobeying any law beneficial to the public, and from treason or treachery, committing breach of the peace, depriving others of their rights or property or transgressing proper limits. All such acts are held in contempt by Allah. The Holy Book states "Surely, Allah commands justice and benevolence to others and the giving to the kindered and He forbids lewdness and evil and rebellion" (16:90).

This Holy verse contains three commands and three prohibitions. It is not proposed to deal with the three commands at this stage, as full discussion on them is intended for our book entitled "RUHANIYAT" but we shall discuss the three prohibitions.

Our enlightened friends, Muslims and non-Muslims, must have heard a number of readers and reformers propounding on how to enhance love and spread peace throughout the country. But there can be no doubt that the manner in which the Holy Qur'an has dealt with this subject has no parallel and evokes unrestrained admiration. If the entire world followed the commands of the Holy Qur'an, evil would be eradicated from the earth and peace would prevail; dishonesty and wickedness would be unknown and none would commit political crimes.

A study of the criminal and penal codes of any country would reveal that all the crimes scheduled therein can be grouped under three main headings. The first group of laws deals with morals, forbidding to commit those offences which affect the individual perpetrator himself. The second are laws protecting the rights and properties of individuals, their lives, limbs or properties. Prevention or control of these two types of crimes cannot by themselves ensure peace in a country unless the law provides adequately for the third kind also, namely, crimes against the government and authorities. The Holy Qur'an in the second half of the above verse has discussed all these three matters by prohibiting indecency, evil and rebellion. The first prohibition is against evil deeds which affect the individual himself, the second prohibits evil involving the rights of other persons and society and, finally, the third prohibition against rebellion is for the security and protection of the country and the word "baghya" not only embraces riot and rebellion but all acts of perfidy and treason against the security of the state lawfully in authority.

Could any other book on social reforms or religion be cited which so emphatically prohibits its followers not only from indecency but also from evil and disloyalty against a lawfully established government? Every Friday the Muslims are reminded of this verse in the Friday sermons. A community, which since its inception is continuously reminded of its responsibility of state does not then need long speeches or conferences to educate them on loyalty. Indeed their religion is Islam (Peace).

If circumstances compel a Muslim to live under a non-Muslim or polytheist government then it is also incumbent on him to obey the rules of that country, especially those relating to the security of the state. This is because such laws are for the welfare of the country and for peace in that country.

However, if it transpires that the objects and intents behind such law are different, then a Muslim will never bow to such laws. It is the religion of Muslims to resist any laws framed to lead them astray from the path of Islam.

The importance of obeying the laws has been discussed above. Worldly power is not the objective of Muslims. What they crave for is divine government; thus whether they are under a Muslim government or a non-Muslim one, they will not disobey commands of Allah. On the other hand, they regard it as obligatory on them to obey all the laws of the country they have adopted, which do not prohibit them from practising Islamic laws; only laws consistent with Islamic teachings can be for the security of the state. A study of the lives of Prophet Mohammed (s.a.w.w.) and his infallible successors will reveal that they never obeyed state laws contrary to Islamic teachings, however harsh the atrocities they had to endure. The history of the sacrifice on the scorching desert of Kerbala provides a glorious testimony.

The security of the state itself is achieved only so long as it acts by the principles of “The Master of the Day of Judgement.” In other words, the whole foundation of the state should be on justice and equity. The moment it deviates into sensuality and injustices, the verse, “You take away Kingdom from whosoever You will” (3:26) becomes applicable to them.

When the scriptures and the principles of a religion preach for peace and security, and, when its very name denotes Peace, and it manifests such high regard for Peace that it even enjoins its followers to greet each other with the words, “Salamun Alaikum” (May Peace be upon you), how can it be accused of being militant or tyrannical? Such allegation can only come from a quarter totally ignorant of the religion or out only to malign it.

ISLAMIC GOVERNMENT

According to Islamic teachings, justice must be the religion of every government. It is possible to experience true peace only in a country founded on justice. The question which poses itself immediately is, has the world ever experienced such a government of peace? Can the world entertain a hope for such a government from the present parliaments? The answers are in the negative. The world has had the experience of autocrats and monarchs, and has found them unsatisfactory. It then turned to governments by the people but found them unsatisfactory also. This is because the laws they made were only to suit the needs of the times. They were made by humans whose experience, knowledge and perspective were limited and thus were not able to provide for all the social needs. As a result, justice is not provided to everybody. The way countries behave towards each other, in order to attain selfish advantage for their country or the leaders themselves, and abandon rules of justice is well known. Each country seeks to secure her own benefit even at the expense of the other; each attempts to become the sole independent ruler of the whole world. Almost all the governments today are of the people, yet there is no semblance anywhere of real peace or security.

The only other alternative is religious rule. Only such a government can provide true peace for its laws are enjoined by Allah. The rule of religion means divine rule and submission to Allah, as Jesus prayed, resulting in total peace and security. Heavenly kingdom does not mean that God should descend from Heaven and rule from a throne or act as the Speaker of a Parliament, but that His laws should govern the nation and His representatives enforce them. Only Allah can appoint such representatives who are infallible and whose conduct is in total

compliance with the commands of Allah. Such personalities are known in Islam as Caliph or Imam.

The world today awaits such a representative of Allah. Some call him Krishna, other call him Ezra while tin Muslims await the guidance of Hazrat Imam Mehdi (a.s.). He went into concealment in 265 A.H. When the entire world will have been utterly frustrated by its experiments of worldly governments and will crave for a divine government, he will reappear. May Allah hasten his reappearance, Amen.

Meanwhile, what is the duty of the Muslims during the Imam's occultation? They must prepare themselves to welcome him by obedience to Allah and the commands of Islam. Only after that will the world have prepared itself for divine government. It is important to remember the teaching of the Holy Qur'an that one has to strive for an objective one wishes to attain. As long as we are not ready for his reappearance, we will not see his government.

Let us now consider the lesson derived from the Holy Names of Allah in relation to the duties of the nation.

THE PLIGHT OF MUSLIMS

Muslims have lost themselves in their desire to imitate the Western world. Islamic zeal and progress are no longer found in them. Their children are growing up ignorant of Islam. We apologise for such caustic criticisms. But not to mention this reality is also to encourage such misconduct. Instead of serving humanity and leading mankind on to the straight path, the Muslim society has strayed even from simple virtues. Who does not know how to earn a living for himself and his family? Muslims appear to be ignorant even of this simple matter. We even seem to be losing the capacity to live in this world as one community. The children of the Moroy managed to survive in the streets of Malta by all means, but as a community they have become extinct. If Muslims do not awaken even at this stage, such will be their fate throughout the world.

UNFORTUNATE INDIA

In India the political paucity of the Muslims will render us paupers and dependant. While Islam commands Muslims to coexist peacefully with other citizens in the interest of the country, at the same time it regards to remain dependent on others as polytheism. A Muslim believing in Tauhid should always be independent. The number of Muslims in India is not small. But they lack Islamic spirit, for the force of Tauhid is such that even a small number of Muslims can achieve a good deal.

Was there an army of multitudes with Imam Hussein (a.s.) on the plain of Kerbala? Only seventy two men, including a six months old child and an old man aged 80 won everlasting admiration of the whole world for their strong character, obedience to the commands of Allah and total submission to Him. This is the miracle of the doctrine of Tauhid. Alas! Muslims seem to have forgotten all this.

HE HAS NO PARTNER

Are all the Indians today truly united in every political movement? Are all the Hindus really united in any given mission? Apart from these questions, how many Hindus and Muslims are united in any one task? The total number of Muslims in India is a thousand times more than the number engaged in this movement. If the objectives and the pursuits of the Muslims were in accordance with the behests of the Holy Qur'an and the commands of Islam, then it is incumbent upon them all to join this movement. Why do they not practise the Islamic constitution? Islam itself enjoins Muslims to join with non-Muslims on a matter of truth or in the protection or welfare of the country. The important point is that in this movement Muslims should be able to have faith in themselves. If at any time others are not with them, they should be able to act independently. They should not so place themselves that without assistance from others they would become despondent and ineffective.

Muslims must make it clear to non-Muslims that they join them in this mission not because they oppose a third community. That would be contrary to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. To oppose a third community because they do not belong to this country or because of communal difference against them is not becoming of a Muslim. Moreover, if the two communities today have united only to mount opposition against a third one then there is a definite danger of disunity in future even between them. Our love or enmity should only be for the pleasure of Allah. When we demand from the governing community any rights which are consistent with the teachings of the Qur'an, then the unity of the Muslims with non-Muslims is based only on the principle that they

are agreed on the legitimacy of such a demand. At the same time, they must become capable of assuring the non-Muslims that they could attain these rights without any assistance from others, because Muslims worship Allah Who has no partner and is Sufficient; rather others have to bow before Him and present their wishes to Him. Thus a spirit of Tauhid must be found in Muslims to render them independent of others.

Muslims must clarify to the Hindus that they join them in demanding these rights in compliance with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, that they have no enmity against any other person and that they support truth and justice. If in the future Hindus will seek support from the Muslims on a matter which goes against all norms of truth and justice, they should expect no corporation because their love or enmity is only for the pleasure of Allah.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) has taught us to adopt names of Allah but with the word "Abd" (slave) added so that it acts as a constant reminder to us to develop in ourselves the quality of Allah depicted in the name. "Abdussamad" means the one who submits to the Sufficient, which, as has already been discussed, helps to create in us Allah's quality of sufficiency. This is the reason why the recitation of the chapter of "Ikhlas" (Ch. 112) has been recommended in the daily obligatory prayers. Muslims have taken to the recitation of this chapter because it happens to be the smallest one in the Holy Qur'an and have forgotten its true purpose and objective.

We have already discussed in detail that Allah does not need our prayer or praises. Whatever He has done is for our benefit. The teaching of the Qur'an is that whoever thanks Allah and will make use of his energies will benefit therefore himself.

A Muslim should appreciate his own status and the high ideal set for his development. He must recognise Allah as his only God, seek to understand Him and cultivate in himself His attributes. This may be difficult for everyone to accomplish. To lighten the task, Allah has sent down Prophet Mohammed (s.a.w.w.) and his unparalleled infallible successors as models for us. They had cultivated in them the true attributes of Allah as an example for us to emulate. Moreover, He has taught us to pray five times a day repeating the words “Rab” (Sustainer), “Rahman,” “Rahim” and “Maliki Yaumi Deen” (Master of the Day of Judgement). These are the four sign boards for human progress. However poor a society be, if the wealthy Muslims cultivated the qualities of these four names in them, poverty would be eradicated from amongst Muslims. If every Muslim sincerely recited the chapter of “Ikhlas,” and kept before himself the lives of the high personages and Holy Names and took on the colour reflected in the Holy Names of Allah then the Muslim community would flourish. In the interpretation of the chapter of “Ikhlas,” some scholars regard the names of Allah in it as His exclusive names inherent in Himself and therefore inimitable. This may be so, but we would contend that the only exclusive name is “Allah”; all the remaining names are to enable us to create within us the qualities portrayed by them. The very fact that such propensities are found in our inner-selves proves that there is a provision in us to cultivate those qualities for our progress. The concept of there being no partner in Allah creates in us the zeal to become matchless mentors in any profession or craft.

By developing such qualities of Allah, a wretched and unknown person can become a shining star.

The quality of having no partner implies that there should be no parallel or equal. Is it not right to expect that to recite

this chapter repetitively may make a person unequalled and unsurpassed in his art, craft, trade or knowledge?

Have we not seen such persons in this world? The uniqueness of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) in his forgiveness and of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) in his courage and knowledge are clear examples.

The sad truth is that present day Muslims are not the kind of people to cultivate such qualities in themselves. Should a community believing in and worshipping One Allah be of this sort? Should people in such communities have the names, “Abdulahad” and “Abdulwahid”? It is difficult to comprehend how a community which has lost its zeal to excel and surpass all others in attainment of knowledge and craft, could create any impact by its cooperation or aloofness.

THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH

Chapter 112 of the Holy Qur'an on "The Unity" "Ikhlas" reads: "Say: He Allah, is One. Allah is He on whom all depend. He begets not nor is He begotten. And none is like Him."

Only those people truly believe in the principle of Oneness of Allah who have perfected themselves in every virtue and quality and have constantly endeavoured to attain perfection. We are capable of achieving the quality of oneness in our craft, arts, knowledge, scholarship, charity, courage, mercy, forgiveness, sacrifice, determination etc. There was a time when Muslims were unequalled in the entire world in all their virtues and qualities. They had not left untraversed any field of knowledge or craft. This fact is acknowledged by all historians, particularly, the fact that in crafts and scholarship Muslims were the pioneers. They opened the gates of sciences like astronomy, mathematics and philosophy. Alas! Muslims of today have lost all tendencies except to ape others. Hardly any Muslim possesses the style of oneness in any field. The Muslims have shown no progress in comparison with other communities.

SUFFICIENCY

Sufficiency is the quality of Allah to whom the whole creation turns for its fulfilment. Others depend on Him. He never has to turn to anyone for fulfilment of His wishes. Surprisingly, in spite of being believers in SAMAD, we bow to other people for trivial wishes. But if we had cultivated in ourselves the quality of needlessness we would find that thousands of our wishes could be fulfilled by ourselves without the need of help from others. We must develop confidence in our power and strength and repose faith in Allah; then we will not need to be dependent.

HE DOES NOT BEGET NOR IS HE BEGOTTEN

Obviously the Names of Allah contained in this chapter are to annihilate the concept of polytheism. Although, we do not regard any person as the son of Allah nor any person belonging to His family, we attribute such relationship only to humans: yet the verse, “He does not beget nor is He begotten and there is none like Him” provides an invaluable lesson to the man believing in One Allah. Our children and family allow us to promote special relationships with place or country. These very people become a crucial test. The Holy Qur’an states, “Your wealth and progeny are all but a trial” (8:28). This verse has unravelled many secrets. High objectives, in which the interests of a state or a community may be involved, are left unachieved only because of the love for friends, family or wealth. The faith in Tauhid must be such that, a man would not let his children become an obstruction to his fulfilment of the commands of Allah. If the objectives of Islam oblige him to migrate from his country he should be ready to do so without reluctance or impatience. We love our country because our children, family and friends are associated with it. This is also one form of idol-worshipping. However, a person who has been able to cultivate in him the qualities of “He does not beget, nor is He begotten and there is none like Him” removes such polytheism from himself.

This does not mean that person should not be conscious of his responsibilities to his children, family and country or that he should neglect his spouse, his wife. A Muslim should fulfil these obligations more conscientiously than others for he worships that Allah who although on the one hand is not begotten, is, on the hand, figuratively, the father of the entire creation.

Just as the Holy Prophet has guided us to become “Abdulrab, Abdulrahman, Abdulrahim,” so has he strongly emphasised constant recitation of the chapter on Unity so that we develop uniqueness and brilliance in the fields of knowledge, art and craft, become independent in our needs and wants. While we are true sustainers of our children, family, friends and relations we must not be in any way distracted by them from the path of Allah so that, in that respect, we become unattached to relations by birth. This quality must be developed particularly in the service of Allah, His Prophet and the religion of Islam. This is also the training given in the pilgrimage of Hajj. By shunning our near and dear ones for the sake of Allah, we infuse in ourselves the true spirit of Hijrat (migrating from mundane to sublime).

The event of Kerbala is the best illustration of the application of “He does not beget nor is He begotten.” Imam Hussein (a.s.) the grandson of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) sacrificed his property, his home, his friends, family and relations for the protection of his faith. He lived fully the doctrine of detachment implied in “He does not beget nor is He begotten.”

The lives of the Fourteen Masumeen show numerous examples of the application of this principle. By their expression of love and consideration for their family, brothers, the poor and the needy they have illustrated how the idea of “Ab” (father) and “Rab” (Sustainer) are practised in life. Their examples of charity, love, mercy and forgiveness are so very well known.

THE NEED FOR TAUHID

There is no need to add further to the detailed discussion we have had on this subject. However, to sum up in one sentence, one would define that Tauhid is ability to control useless desires and to kindle within oneself such spiritual flame which has the colour and true reflection of the Holy Names of Allah. Once that level is attained, help, victory and fortune will follow you like your shadow. Did the Arabs have any type of strength or wealth or might? The poor, unknown, illiterate and unlearned became the masters of the world. However lowly your position today may be, yet you could not be worse off than the Arabs who lived before the advent of Islam. What was it, then, that gave them the reins of the entire world into their hands?

The answer is "Tauhid." Muslims all over the world will unanimously answer the question with the same word. Our position today, however bad, is far superior than theirs; they were steeped in distasteful polytheism from which we are spared today. However, after they had destroyed the idols, they had reached the heights which we have not able to attain. What is the level to be attained? It is the ability to oppose the soul which is prone to evil, and control one's sensualities and remain free of them. When one transforms low desires to high ideals of character and spirituality, one does not then need a sword, nor wealth nor secret machinations nor perfidy to achieve one's ends. Indeed the last two have been expressly forbidden. To attain one's needs one has to develop in oneself the qualities of Allah, obey Him as the Masumeen did and endeavour to take on His colour.

THE QUALITIES OF ALLAH

Consider for a moment if one could develop the qualities of Allah: “Fattah” (Opener), “Qabidh” (One Who Draws Back), “Basit” (The One Who Unfolds), “Rafi’e” (The One Who Elevates), “Qadir” (Mighty), “Muqtadir” (One Who Prevails), “Mujid” (The One Who Causes), “Razzaq” (The Provider), “Matin” (Firm), “Dhul Jalal Wal Ikram” (The Great and The Honourable), “Quddus” (Holy), “Rauf” (Kind), “Wahhab” (Bountiful), “Rahman” (Beneficent), “Shakur” (Grateful), “Sattar” (One Who Connives), “Ghaffar” (Forgiving), “Karim” (Generous). In the fields of science and marvels of the universe, one can be inspired by “Aalim” (Omniscient), “Hakim” (Wise), “Sabur” (Patient), “Khabir” (Conscious), “San’è” (Artist), “Khaliq” (Creator), “Bari” (Maker), “Musawwir” (Shaper), “Azizi” (Mighty), “Jabbar” (Powerful), “Mutakabbir” (Supreme). Live in a manner to be remembered well even after death as “Abdulwaris” (The Slave of The Inheritor), “Abdulhai” (The Slave of The Ever Living), “Abdulqayum” (The Slave of The Eternal), “Abdulbaqi” (The Slave of The Ever Remaining). Do good and correct the errors of others and illuminate the truth to become “Hadi” (the Guide), “Rashid” (Guided), “Shahid” (Witness). In other words we must worship Allah by developing such qualities and in this way make Allah our ultimate aim and ambition. If we do so we will live peacefully in this world without any dissension, mischief or rebellion. We will not need any arms and those carrying them will cower before us.

When a person passes these stages, he finds in himself divine strength. He becomes the representative of Allah on earth. He becomes at one with Allah, so much engrossed and conscious of Allah that he reflects His power the way iron takes on the qualities of fire without becoming fire. Similarly, Allah's infallible apostles can attain divine powers and virtues in this way and become His representatives on earth. Such was the status of the Holy Prophet and his pure successors. We have to follow the path of such people. Their greatest virtue was that they never disobeyed the commands of Allah; all their lives they remained sinless.

We have seen how the Holy Names of Allah can help us in so many ways in our daily lives and also for our spiritual development. If, instead of merely reciting and chanting these Holy Names in a ritual, we made them part of our day to day lives, we would advance very far. It is important for every Muslim to reach this level of Tauhid. It may be difficult but it is not impossible. In reality it is a level difficult to be attained by those which have become slaves of comforts and have not developed in themselves the qualities of self-control and self-sacrifice. Hazrat Ali (a.s.) has said that if instead of increasing our needs we reduced them, it would be easy to attain this level. At that lofty stage, man becomes free and fearless of all forms of death. However, this freedom is attained only by the person who has already passed through the stage of death - death of sensual desires, death of lust and anger. Even to cross this form of death is easy for the person who has created in himself the spirit of Hijrat, is able to part with dear possessions in the way of Allah and has tasted numerous minor deaths. To them it is tantamount to passing from one station to the next. Then why should one fear death? Every stage of development necessarily entails the death of the previous one. So long as the green vegetation, grains or fruits

do not get digested in the intestines of man they do not become his blood. The same principle of destruction and creation applies to the spiritual life and eternity of man. It is in the blood that feelings and sensualities are created and so long as they are not destroyed, character and high spiritual level cannot be achieved. Just as the destruction of fruit and vegetation creates blood, so does the destruction of the sensualities create spirituality.

The implements necessary for the crushing of these sensualities are the Holy Names of Allah which describe Him free of any limitation. The plan by which we have to erect our spirituality is founded on the Holy Names of Allah which describe His positive virtues.

The question which arises is how many modern Muslims have erected or planned their spiritual edifices in this way or how many Muslims have cultivated in themselves the qualities described by the Holy Names?

On the other hand, when we examine our shortcomings, we notice that all the evils of the world are found in Muslims. We have not spared any evil and, what is even more shameful is that we do not regard them as evil but look upon them in our society with respect!

After all this, it is easy to identify the remedies for our ills. To turn ones face away from Allah or to hold fast to Him are respectively the cause of our backwardness or progress. If there is any panacea for our progress today, it only lies in the practice of Tauhid.

The Holy Names of Allah have been discussed above and their arrangement, relations with all the commandments of Islam

and their being rooted in the concept of Allah Himself are awe-inspiring and provide strong proof for the Holy Qur'an as a divine book. A human book would not have provided such arrangement and description. Even other known divine books do not portray such wonder. Every word and every sentence of this Holy Book has association with Allah. The Book enjoins its followers to create in themselves the same attributes which Allah describes about Himself. It opens up avenues of virtue and charity and exposes evil and vice. Whatever laws, punishments or prayers it ordains, finds association with and roots in the qualities of Allah. Moreover, these qualities are so comprehensive that they embrace every factor of human life and worldly necessities. The most wonderful aspect, of this Book is that although its education, transcends all times and circumstances, its commands are never contradictory. Indeed a verse of the Holy Book itself says, "Had this Book been from any source other than Allah then they would have surely found much discrepancy in it" (4:82).

Such must be the beauty of any divine Book, because the word of Allah has two purposes: to provide the true and complete cognition of Allah and to provide the path for progress and reform of mankind in his every affair. So difficult is the task of combining these two purposes that, except for Islam all the religions have faltered. Consequently, they have separated the religious from secular affairs of man. Indeed some religions have gone so far as to regard the religious and secular affairs as mutually exclusive and have concluded that man cannot lead a religious life while pursuing his worldly affairs. The Holy Qur'an has resolved this dichotomy as well. It has taught the true attributes of Allah and has shown its connection with the true advancement of mankind. It has not regarded religion as contradictory to worldly affairs. According to the commands of Islam, the world is the field for development of man and religion provides the means for this development.

Religions that preceded Islam had taught that man can be born with the qualities of God. The Holy Qur'an has dispelled confusions created on this point and has demonstrated the path by which man can gradually attain in himself the qualities of Allah. It is only when the inner gem in man becomes fully developed and manifest that he reaches the pinnacle. The Holy Qur'an has established that the true difference between man and animal is that the passions and emotions can be transformed to take the divine colour and when they are fully developed, one notices in him the manifestation of divine existence.

It is not necessary that Allah should incarnate in man; man already has in him such energies that when fully developed, he can reflect divine authority and qualities. If this explanation is correct and the religions which regard man as a reincarnation of God cannot refute this fact, then is there any book other than the Qur'an which truly deserves to be called a divine book? The real service of a book from Allah is to provide such guidance and education as would enable man to create in himself the perfect reflection of the qualities of Allah.

It is clear that when the pivot of each command in the Book is Allah, then that book perfectly fulfils its real duty. Open the Holy Qur'an at any page, you will find reference to Allah, not only in its meanings but in the actual words as well. On every page one will find His qualities described or reference made to Him. What has happened to human intelligence that, despite the fact that this Holy Book has reference to Allah in its every sentence and every page, it is not accepted as the divine Book? Yet the Book of Esther in the Bible, which is divided into ten chapters without a single reference to Allah, is accepted as a divine Book!

Today, it is necessary to draw particular attention of the Muslims writers, advisers and religious scholars to the Holy Names of Allah described in the Holy Qur'an. This is an invaluable treasure. They must exert themselves to bring these treasures to light for, if presented to the Muslims, it will enrich them. All human energies can be developed through these names. The path for the attainment of these virtues are prescribed in the names themselves. Every particle on earth contains the colour and fragrance of these names. By a strong gust, the wind cleanses a plagued area, thereby demonstrating the effectiveness of "Subhan" (Pure), while the same wind is in the form of a tempest sinks large ships and fells huge trees and buildings demonstrating the qualities of "Jabbar" (Mighty) and "Qahhar" (Retributive). The same wind provides flowers and fruits to the trees proving the quality of "Rab" (Sustainer) while providing fresh air to the sick rendering them healthy to show the quality of "Shafi" (Reliever). These different qualities of Allah are thus manifested in His different creations in different forms. If a human being, in whom all these qualities are inherently present, developed them, he would be able to attain great heights. To enable man to reach the peak of progress, the Holy Qur'an has opened gates of recitation and contemplation which were the spirit of Sufism. Alas! The Sufis of today have turned this valuable scheme into a mere repetitive ritual of incantations.

The Holy Qur'an has commended chanting words of praise and glorification of Allah, but this does not mean that we should only repeat these names a thousand times night and day. Allah does not need such worship; any benefit derived from them must only be for the worshipper, provided he appreciates and understands their true meaning and effect. The Arabic word "DHIKR" means to remember someone and visualise him before your eyes. The Arabic word "Fikr" means to ponder over

and redress. The Holy Book has emphasised these two words so that we remember a particular name of Allah, and recite it in our prayers and focus our attention on the qualities we wish to earn so that we attain them.

For example, many times, in order to win love of the people, we are told to repeat such names of Allah as “Wadud, Fattah, Ghani,” etc., but the mere repetition of these names for a thousand or ten thousand times will not result in any advantage at all. Benefit can only be derived if in reciting these Holy Names repeatedly one ponders over their true effect and realities and the virtues and actions that befit the qualities of “Wadud” and “Fattah.” In other words, one has to ponder over what sort of actions would lead one to the qualities of “Wadudiyat” or “Fattahiyat,” what sort of means one requires to attain these qualities and what virtues the reciter will have to create in himself to deserve them. Moreover, the worshipper will also have to bear in mind the impediment to the attainment of these qualities in himself and should he discover them he would have to find ways of eradicating them so that his path to the attainment of these qualities becomes clear and smooth.

Obviously, for such recitation and contemplation, a far-sighted and intelligent mind is required and not everybody can easily comprehend this concept. Only that person who is aware of human nature and is in the habit of observing the mysteries of the world and its minute realities can, by the mere help of these Holy Names, relive his difficulties and attain his progress and success. However, after such great effort, there is the good tiding: “We shall certainly guide them to our paths” (29:69). This is the promise of Allah.

For such a simple but fruitful remedy, it is necessary to ponder

deeply over the Holy Qur'an. The Holy Book itself is the guide in given circumstances. The understanding of the Holy Qur'an augments and adorns the knowledge of the learned. The Holy Qur'an declares, "We have indeed simplified for you the Holy Qur'an" (54:17). This is meant to encourage us to understand the Holy Book.

It is not easy to understand a book which is not in one's mother tongue as is the Holy Qur'an for a non-Arab. Once one translates the word of the Holy Book into one's own language, one then needs only piety to unfold the mysteries in those words. In this respect too, the Holy Book is unique from all other books. The mysteries and realities of the Holy Book can only become apparent and clear to the pious. The Holy Verses are "Attain piety towards Allah and He shall teach you" (2:282) and "None shall touch it save the clean ones" (56:79).

If only one ponders over the verses of the Holy Qur'an, one will find them providing their own meaning. They will tell which of the virtues conform with the attributes of Allah and which evil one ought to avoid. Similarly, if one is in error, the Holy Book will suggest the names of Allah by which one will be able to correct the error.

We shall complete the discussion on this subject by a couple of examples to illustrate how by pondering over the Holy Names, one can solve one's difficulties and get on to the path of progress and development.

In the first chapter of the Holy Book we read a Holy Name, "Rab." To explain the true quality of this word, other three Holy Names have been mentioned; "Rahman," "Rahim," and "Maliki Yaumi Deen" (Master of the Day of Judgement). Firstly, we have to concentrate on the meanings of the words. In the Holy

Book four meanings have been given of the word “Rab”; to create something, to sustain something, to provide material for its sustenance and to make a thing undergo a process whereby the inner virtues in it are revealed. Briefly it means to create something, to grant capabilities to it and then to allow those capabilities to become perfect. In between these stages RAB makes provision for everything necessary to achieve them and to remove anything that can be impediment in their way.

The different forms of “Rububiyat” are demonstrated in these names of Allah: “Badii,” “Bari,” “Khaliq,” “Musawwir,” “Qayyum,” “Razzaq” (The Originator, The Creator, The Fashioner, The Self-subsisting, The Provider etc). All these qualities teach us that if we wish to attain perfection in any task, we should first keep in mind the four Holy Names and if we do so, we will not fail our endeavour. Similarly, to attain success in any task or to sustain anything, it is necessary to create the quality of “Rahmaniyat.” That is, before setting about to create anything, all ingredients required for its creation should be created. “Rahman” is a quality which provides everything that one needs, without deserving them and so it also includes the quality of “Rauf” providing for protection and defence against possible danger.

The quality of “Rahim” is that when a man puts to use the means and energies provided to him by Allah, he is rewarded ten or more times than what he actually deserves. If we acted on the same principle with our labourers the face of the entire world would change. The other qualities of Allah related to His “Rahmaniyat” are “Afuww,” “Ghaffar,” “Ghafur” (Forgiving). Thus the quality of a “Rahim” can be truly and effectively created in us only if at appropriate times, we exercise forgiveness. In the same way by being a Master of the Day of Judgement, He is “Jabbar,” “Mutakabbir,” “Malik,” “Muqtadir”

(Supreme, Great, King and Capable). In the same context, for reward and punishment the Holy Qur'an has narrated His other qualities: "Adil," "Qabiluttawabah," "Ghafirudhamb," "Sattar" (Just, Forgiving, Excuser of Sins, One Who Connives) etc. The principle of Allah in granting reward and inflicting punishment is that for every virtue He grants ten times its proper reward but in imposing punishment He only afflicts the deserved extent of punishment and, when appropriate, forgives absolutely. Although He is Just, His Justice is tempered by His Mercy and thus He gives more than the just dues for virtues. In the matter of vices, His "Adl" is tempered by His "Ghufran" (Forgiveness) and "Sattariyyat" (Connivance at sins).

The sum of all this discussion is that we too must create these qualities within ourselves and conduct our affairs with other people in the same light, refrain from vices in the same spirit and when someone commits an error or a sin, we must behave with him in the same manner. On such conduct depends the functioning of a society, community, nation or state. What should we do? What should we refrain from? How should we conduct ourselves when faced with an error or evil? The Holy Qur'an has answered these questions beautifully by describing three qualities: "Surely Allah commands the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindered and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion" (16:90); and in another verse He says: "Those who restrain anger, pardon men, for Allah loves the virtuous" (3:134).

In every action that has been enjoined, it is emphasised that justice must always be uppermost. Whenever someone else's right is involved, we must respect and fulfil it. The quality of Justice of Allah or His quality as a Master of the Day of Judgement embraces all relations, promises, agreements, trusts etc. in worldly affairs. The foremost virtue that can spread

peace and security on earth is Justice. Courts of Justice have been established to try cases and dispense justice. However, justice is a very ordinary quality, compared to the quality of “Rahimiyat” which goes a step further and seeks even more. By the quality of justice we would award what is deserved, but if we follow the quality of “Rahim” we would not only grant the just reward but also ten or a hundred times more. And this is termed “Ehsan” (Favour) which becomes due for any favour done by others or in reciprocating a relationship or neighbourliness or friendship. The “Rahmaniyyat” of Allah is not a reward of any virtue. Neither does it seek a cause to prompt its granting, nor does it demand any gratitude. We have to extend good to others, beginning with our own children at home but not ending there; we have to extend the same conduct to our communal, national and human brothers.

In worldly life, the quality of “Rahmaniyat” will, to a large extent, be noticed only in the relationship within the family; father with son or son with father or between brothers - these relationships do not call for gratitude or favours. The Holy Qur’an commands these three virtues and they are all embraced by the qualities of “Malik” (King), “Rahim” (Merciful), “Rahman” (Beneficent) namely:

1. to reciprocate a kind act;
2. to reward an act ten times more than its proper due; and
3. to do good or favours to others without any regard for reward or gratitude: in other words, to act with others in the same way as we do with our family members and children.

SHAMEFUL ACTS AND INDECENCY (“FAHSHAA”)

We have certain rights upon ourselves. Moreover, contact with other people gives rise to certain rights due to them and certain obligations on us. Not to fulfil these rights and obligations is indecency. It is a contradiction of Allah’s quality of Justice. Examples of these are: to lie, commit a breach of promise, make false allegation, evil, dishonesty, etc. to the extent that the Holy Qur’an also includes miserliness, anger, lack of self control, etc. in indecency.

EVIL (“MUNKAR”)

Apart from the rights mentioned above, everyone has the right to protect his life and property. These rights are created in a very simple way: for example, neighbourliness, which is not a result of any commercial transaction as such, creates rights and duties by itself. The Holy Qur’an describes any act which harms or denies these rights as evil. They are contrary to the quality of “Rahimiyat.” To provide food to a hungry neighbour is not an act based on justice but is a favour (“Ehsan”) in submission to the “Rahim” Allah.

Similarly, if we create mischief to harm a neighbour who may not have any legal right to prevent or fight it, yet we have no doubt wronged the neighbour and the Holy Qur’an calls this evil. Theft, robbery, illicit relations with another woman, etc. are all termed evils.

Like indecency, these evils arise out of relations with others. Just as justice and favour are done as a result of a relationship so do indecency and evil depend upon a definite relationship. Non-fulfilment of rights or duties is indecency and not to do a favour to someone who deserves it is evil.

REBELLION (“BAGHAWAH”)

This vice is worse than the other two already discussed. It is not directed against an individual but at the entire society. It is directed against the government which is the representative of the society. Such a sin opposes “Rahimiyat.” Just as the quality of “Rahmaniyat” affects all irrespective of whether they deserve it or not, the act of treason affects the whole society indiscriminately, involving even a person who does not deserve to be punished by this act. Similarly an unjustified invasion of one nation upon another or taking away the property of another nation in breach of an agreement are regarded as rebellion.

State organisations benefit the people and a rebellion against a peaceful government is an attack against the entire state, the entire nation. Even treacherous acts against communal institutions, jamaats and communal or national conferences are also included in this definition.

Then follow the other acts of evil like, when provoked by anger we act unbecomingly. Restraint against such an act is included by the Holy Qur’an under the quality of “Malikiyyat” (Kingship). When a King wishes to resist the evil of the subjects, he will not do anything that may destroy the nation for by so doing his own Kingship will not remain. The aim of a King in dealing with the wrongs of the subjects is to reform them. Thus the Holy Qur’an states that in resisting an evil, our aim must be to reform. If an evil can be overcome by an evil, then using evil as remedy is justice. But if reformation can be secured by forgiveness, then, through the quality of “Ghufran” (Forgiveness) inherent in the Master of the Day of Judgement, pardon must be granted.

The Holy Qur'an says, "And the recompense of injury is injury equal to it, but whoever forgives and makes amends, he shall have his reward from Allah" (42:40).

The above verse merely shows the remedy for evil. Then there is a peculiar occasion which helps provoke our anger, This is when a person committing an error or evil is subservient to us, and we immediately unleash our wrath on him because of his helplessness. It is an occasion which demands restraint. Islam commends that on such an occasion anger must be restrained and the quality of forgiveness invoked. But again, by merely controlling anger we do not become benign towards the evil doer. So in keeping with the quality of "Malikiyyat," we need to take one step further and following the quality of "Rahimiyat" if, in addition to such forgiveness, we also shower him with favours, we would be acting on the quality of "Rahmaniyat" which Allah exercises even on non-believers. The Qur'an has described the qualities of "Malikiyyat," "Rahimiyat" and "Rahmaniyat" in the verse "Those who restrain anger and forgive all men and Allah befriends such people who do good" (3:134).

It will be interesting to recall an incident from Imam Hassan's life (a.s.). Once when he was having a meal a bowl of curry slipped from the hand of his servant and was spilled over the face and the hands of the Imam. The servant immediately recited the Holy verse cited above on controlling anger. Imam Hassan (a.s.) restrained himself. The servant recited the verse "Forgive men." The Imam (a.s.) said, "I have forgiven you." The servant concluded "And Allah befriends those who bestow favours," Imam Hassan (a.s.) freed him from bondage and granted him 1,000 dinars as a parting gift.

CONVERTING THE DEVIL!

We have already mentioned how polytheism is created by uncontrolled anger and have cited the Holy Verse on the restraint of anger. The devil is of fire and has a natural inclination to provoke rage. Strangely enough, we do not express anger before our elders or superiors and, indeed, have at times to restrain ourselves even when they commit serious blunders. On the other hand, if we are provoked by a poor person or someone under our authority then our anger knows no bounds and we become totally under the control of the devil who then makes us do as he wills. This is a form of polytheism. Here is an occasion for converting anger into love. At that time we need to bow down before the command of Allah and create in ourselves His qualities of “Malikiyat,” “Rahmaniyat” and “Rahimiyat.” In accordance with the Holy Verse, we do not only have to restrain our anger, but forgive him and even grant favours. In so doing we will make the devil submit to Islam.

Muslims must remember that Islam has forbidden them to bow before any one except Allah and disobedience of this command is polytheism, a sin which can never be forgiven.

“Allah has made the moon and sun subservient to man, and the day and night and whatever is in the heavens and on the earth are all created for the service of mankind.” We have already examined the verses of Qur’an on this subject. Man has been elevated to this status because he is the “Best of Creation.” The only superior to mankind is Allah so that man needs only to obey the commands of Allah. The rest of the creation has to obey man. This should be the sole aim and determination of a Muslim. It is easy for man to control wind, water and all other natural elements, but it is difficult to control our own passions, emotions and desires. This is why a tradition says that such a conflict with oneself is the Greater Struggle (Jihad-e-Akbar).

THE FOLLOWERS OF “RAHMAN”

It is not easy to create in oneself the qualities of “Rahmaniyat.” At this stage man begins to converse directly with Allah: “God, Most Beneficent, taught the Qur’an” (55:1 and 2). At the level of “Rahmaniyat” a person becomes a medium of favour and grace to the other human beings. Through his existence, the mercy of Allah is bestowed on the rest of mankind and at that level all his energies and properties are dedicated to mankind without any wish for reward, right or gratitude. He becomes the repository and defender of all the favours bestowed by Allah upon mankind and forsakes all affinity or relationship even with his own personal property. His acts of sitting, standing, moving, eating, drinking, praying and his joys and sorrows are all for the pleasure of Allah. The personalities perfect in the quality of “Rahmaniyat” are called the Masumeen (the Infallible ones). The Holy Book itself bears testimony to the life of the Holy Prophet in the Holy words: “Oh Prophet, Say: my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and death are all for God, the Lord of the worlds. He has no partner, as I am commanded, and am the foremost in submission to Him” (6:162,163).

The door to such attainment is open for every individual but the extent of a person’s achievement depends on his efforts and endeavours. The way to obtain energy through this gateway is also explained in the verse itself. What is more surprising is that while other religions have prescribed difficult solutions like self-immolations, renunciation of the world, leading hermetic life in forests and destroying natural feelings through vigorous self-denial to reach this level, the Holy Qur’an speaks about the ordinary aspects of human nature and worldly conduct which are not difficult to attain and to which ordinary qualities of man can be directed and guided to create in him

the highest virtues. The Holy Qur'an in the chapter "Furqaaan" has discussed these ordinary aspects of human life in which the followers of "Rahman" have been commanded to do simple acts of virtue to a person who not only does not deserve them, but, on the contrary is liable to punishment. An instance is the command, "And when the ignorant address them, they say to them "peace be on you" (25:63). Thus when the ignorant behave improperly with the followers of "Rahman," they are not only to be forgiven but also to be wished peace. This advise educates us on how to deal with such occasions in our lives, to welcome intolerable situations and develop in us the quality of "Rahmaniyat."

WAYS OF FINDING SOLUTIONS TO OUR PROBLEMS

Briefly, the Holy Qur'an has shown us how to take on divine colour. Of course it is necessary to ponder upon the Qur'an. In particular, at the time of adversities and difficulties seek the solutions from the Holy Qur'an. Today we face many problems. Why do we not resort to the Holy Qur'an for their solutions? The solutions lie in seeking from the Holy Qur'an a name of Allah pertinent to the task we wish to undertake and then look for the other qualities of Allah connected with this name and ponder over them together. The best time for this exercise is after midnight. Recite the Holy Qur'an at that time and reckon if our lives and paths go contrary to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. If we find that they do, we must correct ourselves first. In this way we would be able to achieve whatever we wish.

In the following verses of the Holy Book, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) is shown the solution to the problems he encountered in the early days of Islam at Makah. They are the first ten verses of Chapter 73, "The Wrapped Up" (Muzammil):

1. "You the wrapped up in your mantle
2. Rise to pray in the night except a little
3. Half of it, or lessen it a little
4. Or add to it, and recite the Qur'an as it ought to be recited
5. Surely we will send down to you a weighty word
6. Surely the rising by night is the firmest way to govern the soul and the best corrective Word
7. Surely, you have in the day-time a long occupation
8. And remember the name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him with exclusive devotion
9. The Lord of the East and the West - there is no God but Allah, take him then as the Disposer of Affairs!

10. And bear patiently what they say and avoid them with a dignified avoidance” (73:1-10)

After these verses, the Holy Qur’an describes the enemies of truth who were conspiring to uproot the freshly laid foundation of Islam. At that time, Islam, faced the danger from their hands and tongues. If Muslims today believe that Islam is still in danger of those seeking to destroy it by means of their tongues, then why are they hiding in a corner? Allah will, no doubt, grant success to those Muslims who are doing their best to assist Islam, but we seek to invite their attention very forcefully to this Holy Chapter. If their days are occupied in other pursuits, the Holy Book has permitted them to do so. But for Allah’s sake they must leave their comfortable beds after midnight, clear their minds of political thoughts on non-cooperation, boycott, etc and pray the pre-dawn Tahajjud prayers in accordance with the commands of Allah. They should look up to Allah for their protection and not to any other human being. They have been recommended to recite repeatedly; “There is no God but Allah.” The Holy Verse is, “He is the Sustainer of East and the West, make Him your Disposer of Affairs; There is no Allah except He.” We will come under the protection of the Sustainer of the East and West only if we abandon all other human beings and look to Him alone.

The above Holy Verse will show the real intention behind the recitation of the tasbih “La Ilaha Illa Allah” after the pre-dawn prayers.

“And remember your Sustainer, and disconnect your relations with the others and become only His.” To attain the qualities of Allah and abandon all else, we must wake up in the early hours of the morning and recite the Holy Qur’an softly and clearly, so that we have sufficient opportunity to reflect on the verses.

Further on, in Verse 20, Allah says, “Therefore read Qur’an as much as is easy” and in another place is stated, “Verily the recitation of the Holy Book before sunrise will bear their testimony” (17:78). The meaning of all these Verses is that you must focus your attention only towards Allah and concentrate on the word “rab.” Acquire what is necessary for the achievement of this quality and shun what must be avoided. Read the Qur’an as much as possible to discover the best and easiest solutions to the problems of the community. This may not be a simple course but the recitation of the Holy Book at dawn will render the task lighter.

Do you think that by calling public meetings and by calling those whom you regard as your enemies bad names, you will solve your problems? Never.

In the public meetings of Muslims today, prestige is sought and earned by use of abusive language! Alas, any person amongst us can become our leader if only he can stand up in a general meeting and use abusive language against the government or an individual and be prepared to serve a sentence of imprisonment as its result. Such acts are sufficient to procure him a certificate to be our leader!

We are not opposed to public meetings nor to making the government aware of its mistakes in a proper and fair way. Indeed this is the duty of a Muslim. However, to use unbecoming language and curses is not proper for a Muslim. Consider the injunction of the Holy Qur’an in this respect, “And bear patiently what they say and avoid them with a dignified avoidance. And leave me and the Rejectors, the possessors of ease and plenty, and respite them a little” (73:11). When this command was given to that leader he was engulfed in difficulties a thousand times more seriously than what

confront us today. How much more applicable, therefore, are the commands to us today? We must cultivate self-respect, determination, courage, fortitude, and generosity to adorn us. The respect contained in such virtues cannot be compared with uttering abuse in public meetings.

In the above Verse two commands have been issued: to recite the pre-dawn prayers and then to leave matters in the care of Allah. We must ascertain an appropriate name of Allah and by its repetition cultivate its virtue in us.

Such is the way to spend the night, and the following day must accomplish the thoughts of the night. Even today we need people who must be engaged in such service. In the Verse 20 of the same chapter there is a reference to “And so does a party of those with you” (73:20). When different groups of Muslims are engaged in various occupations, one group must occupy itself with the welfare of the community.

We are surrounded with problems and difficulties. Why do we not make the Holy Qur’an our guide? Even today there is no shortage of people who wake up after midnight to recite the pre—dawn prayers. Unfortunately the majority of them only keep their selfish aims in mind; some resort to the prayers only for their self—enhancement and the attainment of their personal desires; some do so only to obtain leadership of the worshippers. Do they not understand that the attainment which they regard as dependent on religious exercise and the matters on which they rely to obtain the fame they seek are available in the Western bazaars so easily? To entertain heartily a crowd and discover the inner secrets of others are arts which are today being sold in numerous American shops and are being exported to Europe. The satisfaction that the Sufis create in people in India is achieved also in the Western world today.

Amongst us such an activity has at least a semblance of religion about it; in the West it is purely mercenary.

The important point to note is that there are various paths to reach ones destination - some straight and simple, others long and dangerous. But the aim of a Muslim is much loftier. These processes are merely for our self-satisfaction and self control attainable both by Muslims and non-Muslims. A hypnotist can reach very high level in self-control which is only the first step in the ambition of a Muslim. To the Muslims self-control is the first step towards spiritual advancement while the secular person regards it as his final destination. Followers gather around him so full of praise for him that he develops conceit and arrogance thereby closing all the doors to his advancement.

Many people fall prey to processes that provide inner satisfaction. The problem is that while on the one hand, it is the soul of prayer, on the other hand it can be realised in a number of other ways, through songs, poems, natural beauties, meditation etc. One may find inner pleasure in religious songs, another in “qawalis,” a third in “gazals” and the fourth in aesthetic songs of an idol-worshipper. This is worth pondering on by persons who go to Sufis to obtain satisfaction from them.

Islam, in keeping mosques simple and prayers and worship devoid of any songs or musical tones, has done so to rescue the Muslims from being misled by such forms of entertainment from the real objective, which is worship.

If you look at a Hindu chanting a religious hymn you will notice that he obtains real spiritual pleasure from it. It will astonish you to see him sit at the feet of an idol singing songs full of polytheism, and you will gradually come to the conclusion that this spiritual satisfaction indicates that he

is really in prayer. But that satisfaction by itself is nothing. Attainment of satisfaction does not by itself justify the means employed which must be tested in other ways. For that matter even after performing prayers (namaz) that satisfaction is obtained. But mere attainment of such satisfaction is not proof that the means used are proper. If that was the criterion, then even songs, poems, "gazals," etc. can provide such satisfaction and they would then be comparable to Namaz.

That is why Islam has divested daily prayers of all such matters. That a Jew, a Christian or a Brahmin comes out of his place of worship pleased and satisfied is not proof that such satisfaction is as a result of the worship, because besides worship there is song and music in those places. On the other hand, a Muslim definitely attains such satisfaction from his prayers when he attains contact with Allah, because this satisfaction has been derived through prayer alone, there was no other distraction in the mosque to engender it.

The net result of all this discussion is that one should not accept the propriety of the means without properly examining them nor should the people through whom satisfaction is received be regarded as spiritual without examining their propriety.

What we need is not wealth or government but the treasure of spirituality and lofty character which we have lost and, consequently, have become weak, narrow minded and dependent.

A good number amongst us have set eyes on petty wealth, small piece of land, little honour and modest position. These are not necessarily improper; indeed if obtained in the lawful and religious way, they are a grace from Allah. However, if they are attained by compromising character and self-respect,

they are despicable. If wealth obtained by any means can be regarded as virtue, then even immoral transactions would be regarded as lawful business. However, a reasonable man would sacrifice wealth for honest poverty. If it is improper to obtain wealth by sacrificing honesty and piety, then to obtain title and prestige by compromising the self-respect of a community and a nation is tantamount to compromising one's character.

Honesty is slipping away from the community. Demoralisation has already taken roots. Impeccable character is losing ground. There is urgent need to recover this treasure.

We urge the leaders of the community to direct their attention to this fact. It is not sufficient merely to control the platform of the community, nor is mere criticism of others or finger pointing. It is important and necessary to bear this in mind so that the community can attain its true status.

It is most unfortunate to find politically inexperienced students leaping into the field of politics. It is possible that some of them may turn to be heroes but there is a danger that raw minds may lead them to useless and improper criticisms. The difficulties that lie ahead call for firmness, self-control and patience but they seem to fall prey to the habit of bare criticisms and causing confusions. The leaders of the community must be far-sighted. We are not experts in political science but we know that the qualities we require are of determination, self-control, patience, firmness, broad mindedness, contentment, courage, consideration and far-sightedness. To attain these qualities only Tauhid can help us. We must strive to create in ourselves character consistent with the attributes of the Holy Names of Allah which alone will guide us appropriately and within lawful limits. If we understood the doctrine of Tauhid and based our lives on it, we would never have to depend on others.

