



The Light — U.K. edition

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Assalamu alaikum: Our next meeting —

Date: **Sunday 2nd May 2010**

Time: **3.00 p.m.**

Speaker: **Mr Shahid Aziz**

Topic: **The Promised Messiah
— The Evidence**

Dars-i Quran and Hadith:

Every Friday after *Jumu'a* prayers.

Meetings of the Executive:

First Sunday of every month at 2.00 p.m.

Meeting of the Jama'at:

First Sunday of every month at 3.00 p.m.

Friday prayers and monthly meetings are

webcast live on: www.virtualmosque.co.uk

Magnificent service of the Holy Quran done by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

Friday *khutba* by Maulana Muhammad Ali

[This *Khutba* was delivered on 20th May 1938 and published in *Paigham Sulh*, 26th May 1938, the 30th anniversary of the death of Hazrat Mirza sahib.]

“Say (O Prophet to the people): I exhort you only to one thing, that you rise up for Allah’s sake by twos and singly; then ponder! There is no madness in your companion. He is only a warner to you before a severe chastisement. Say: Whatever reward I ask of you, that is only for yourselves. My reward is only with Allah, and He is a Witness over all things.” (Ch. 36, v. 46–47)

When a man calls people around him to a message which is for their own good and betterment, instead of accepting his message or being grateful to him,

people oppose him and wish to destroy him. This becomes a general trend, so that everyone’s opinion turns against him, and none is willing to listen to him. Such an ugly image of him settles in people’s minds that they are not able to **ponder**. The above verses apply to this state of affairs. People are exhorted to stand up in twos or individually and, bearing in mind the pleasure of Allah, to ponder.

The fact is that when there is an adverse wind blowing against something, people cannot ponder on it rationally by gathering together. The hostile atmosphere does not allow thought and deliberation to be applied in the midst of a gathering. In those circumstances, the state of assembly casts a veil on the hearts and minds of those who are assembled. To remove those veils, people are advised to ponder in twos and individually, and ask: what is this man saying, what is the message he has come with? The Quran tells them that if they ponder in this way they will find that their companion is not mad, but he is warning you that your misdeeds are taking you to evil consequences, and he is asking you to refrain from them.

This is what Allah has said in the Holy Quran about the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

Today the same kind of wind of hostility is blowing against the *Mujaddid* of the age, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. In this atmosphere it has become impossible for anyone to say something good about him, or speak of him approvingly, in a gathering. People's thinking and mentality have become such that they are not prepared to tolerate any word of truth in this controversy.

High Islamic principle of judging by weighing

In these circumstances the Quran teaches the method described in the verse quoted above. The Quran had established the best principle, namely, that of judging by weighing both sides. This is a purely Islamic principle. Allah has said that on the day of Judgment the deeds of each person will be judged by this principle. Those whose good deeds outweigh their bad deeds will receive a good life, that is *jannah*, while those whose bad deeds exceed their good deeds will receive a bad life. This is, in fact, an excellent and wise principle appointed by Allah for judging human beings. If we too judge people using the same principle, then the world will be saved from many errors and mistakes.

Fault-finding by Christians and their imitators

Unfortunately, one people, i.e. the Christians, became indifferent to the value of good deeds and laid the foundation of their creed on the doctrine of atonement. They ignored the good deeds of others and whenever they had to deal with an opponent they spent all their energy on picking faults in him. Islam claims that religion has been perfected and completed in it, and that no one can produce anything like the Quran. Regarding the Holy Prophet Muhammad, it claims that he possessed the most excellent morals; and this is not merely a claim but today people are coming to accept that he elevated moral qualities to a height to which no one can be able to take them.

On the one hand, there are these claims and facts. On the other hand, if you read books on Islam written by Christians it appears from them as if Islam, the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad possessed no good quality whatsoever, but are full of shortcomings and flaws. Whatever these critics considered as weaknesses and faults, only these have been mentioned by them. For this purpose they have added falsehood to the truth. The tremendous benefits that were given to the world by Islam, the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad, are not even mentioned in their books.

Muslims following in footsteps of Christians

Muslims should have learnt a lesson from this. They should have resorted to the Islamic principle of weighing the pros and cons in order to judge if a person brought benefit to the world or caused harm. But alas, Muslims, coming under the influence of the deceptive techniques of the Christians critics of Islam, also made it their habit to indulge only in fault finding and searching out defects. Just as the Christians and the Arya Samaj collect in their books everything they consider to be wrong and objectionable about Islam, the Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the same is done by anti-Ahmadiyya writers such as Ilyas Barnee and others in case of Hazrat Mirza sahib and the Ahmadiyya Movement. They consider it a service to Islam to collect anything which they regard as a defect or weakness, or as an objectionable statement. They quote statements of the Qadianis about the Lahore *Jama'at*, statements of the Lahore *Jama'at* about the Qadianis, and stray extracts from the writings of Hazrat Mirza sahib, and without applying any thought as to what they mean, they allege that these are contradictory. This is their concept of serving Islam! They never mention the enormous benefits that Hazrat Mirza sahib and the Ahmadiyya Movement brought to Islam and the Muslims. They have abandoned the Islamic principle of weighing both sides. When you form an opinion about a person, look first at the benefits of the work that he did and the services he rendered.

Magnificent service to the Quran by Hazrat Mirza sahib

Here in Lahore the Taj publishing company has rendered a little service to the Holy Quran. A few days ago, this company invited the Prime Minister of the Punjab to its offices. It presented an address in his honour and he in his reply praised the company. What had it done for which it received this praise? It had printed the Holy Quran in a beautiful and attractive form. Indeed it shows that they have love for the Quran. But if you think about it, what is attractive is the paper, the ink and the print quality. Any other book printed to the same elegance with the same attention will look just as attractive. The true beauty of the Quran lies in the principles, the truths and the knowledge which it teaches. It was this beauty that Hazrat Mirza sahib saw, and it came to his view when all these matters had become obscure to the Muslims. He said [in a verse of poetry]:

The splendour and beauty of the Quran is the light of the soul of every Muslim,

The moon in the sky is the moon for others, our moon is the Quran.

He saw the beauty of the Quran. And when did he see it? When he read the Holy Quran and pondered over it, not hundreds of times but thousands of times. Hazrat Mirza sahib praised the Quran in words full of love and passion. His verse quoted above is used even by his opponents in their articles and lectures. An opponent like Maulvi Sanaullah used to begin his speeches with this verse. There is an anti-Ahmadiyya organisation here in Lahore. They invited people to listen to talks on the Quran, and on their poster advertising these talks they placed this verse at the head! To sum up, Hazrat Mirza sahib perceived the beauty of the Quran, and he made that beauty thoroughly manifest to people.

Refuted all criticism of Islam and the Quran

If he had so wanted, he could have merely praised the beauty of the Quran in words, in poetry and prose. He has done this to some extent. He has extolled the Quran and expressed love for it. He was a powerful poet with great mastery over poetic language, a fact which cannot be doubted. He could have spent all his life in praising the Quran by word only. But no, he was a practical man. Not only did he reveal the beauty of the Quran by writing poetry, he also lifted the veils which had been covering the Quran for a thousand years. He washed away all the blots put on the Quran by the opponents of Islam. He cleaned each and every smear, refuted each and every criticism. This is his first work, and a magnificent one.

Granted acceptance by God

People were greatly averse to his claim to be the Promised Messiah, and dubbed him as *dajjal* and *kafir* because of it. Whoever went to see him and joined him was regarded by these opponents as the worst possible person. We have seen this in Lahore, that if it became known about someone that he was an Ahmadi, people would turn against him. Yet despite this, people went to visit Hazrat Mirza sahib, and some became his associates like moths circling around a lamp, and sat at his feet, while there were others who became his devoted servants even though they were distant from him. They accepted being reviled by the rest of the world, and chose to bear the intense opposition, but did not leave his hand. There were also some who, while they did not become his servants, yet always praised him and did not hold their tongues because of the opposition. They continued to express the opinion that it is the height of injustice to speak ill of such a righteous man and servant of the religion of the Quran. In brief, Hazrat Mirza sahib did the most

magnificent work in disclosing the beauty of the Quran and answering objections against it.

Practical work of service to the Quran

It is to be regretted that today the thinking of the Muslims has turned away from the Quran. Material interests and love of worldly gain is becoming predominant. Muslims no longer have that love for the Quran which they had in their earlier history. But we must not be dismayed. The truth is that just as much the other Muslims have turned their attention to worldly matters, we must increase our efforts to the same extent. I think that we too have been remiss. We have not devoted full attention to the task of propagating the Quran.

One task of Hazrat Mirza sahib was to express in words the beauty of the Quran. But he did not merely rest content with sitting and writing poems and articles in praise of the Quran. He went on to lay the foundations of the propagation of Islam and the Quran. The magazine *The Review of Religions*, which he started in 1901, was the beginning of the practical work. Along with that, he created a community which spread the Quran as much as was possible within its resources. As compared with how much need there is for this work, the work done by our *Jama'at* is not of a great magnitude. Nonetheless, this *Jama'at* has produced translations of the Quran in three major languages for three great nations of the world. Firstly, the English language, a leading language of the world which is established in a large part of the world, secondly Dutch and thirdly German. These three languages cover a large part of humanity. This is the work whose foundation was laid by the Promised Messiah.

Lesson of the appeal by British political thinkers

A few days ago I read an appeal in the English newspapers for the dissemination of the Bible. Who has made this appeal? It is the leading political thinkers of Britain, such as Lord Salisbury, Lord Willingdon, Lord Halifax, and Lord Sankey. They write that it is now 134 years since the Bible Society was founded, and in this period it has translated the Bible into 722 languages and published 500 million copies of these translations. You can look at it this way that there is one copy of the Bible for every four people in the world. They have urged their nation to set aside internal differences of every kind and join together in this work. Can you imagine our Muslim political leaders having the courage to make a similar appeal to their people about propagating the Quran? Alas, they don't have that capability nor that foresight!

A Christian from Egypt tells a true fact

These days there is a visitor from Egypt here. I liked one thing he said. He met Dr Ghulam Muhammad, and he also met me. Having the appearance of a Muslim, he is in fact a Christian. He is a journalist, and editor of a Muslim newspaper in Egypt. He said to us: "Although I am a Christian, I have a low opinion of Christianity. I regard Islam and the Quran to be much superior to Christianity and the Bible". But along with this he also said: "The Christians are intelligent and the Muslims are foolish. If the Christians had a scripture as magnificent as the Quran they would have conquered the whole world with it. Their greatest weakness is the Bible, yet despite this they are spreading it in the whole world. On the other hand, Muslims have the Quran and they are completely silent!"

Useless objection to claim of Promised Messiah

This Egyptian visitor has no idea how far the Muslims have really fallen. Let alone serving and propagating the Quran themselves, if a person or a movement arises with such a mission, they rise up in opposition and become that person's or that movement's enemies. They cannot tolerate the claim of being Promised Messiah. They say that Mirza sahib used to do good work but he ruined it all by claiming to be Promised Messiah. I have heard great men say that Mirza sahib did good work but he should not have made this claim. A poet has written:

*Let someone be the son of Mary,
Let him give a cure for my pain.*

If someone provides a cure for pain, what is wrong with accepting him as Messiah? If you ponder over this, you will realise that this claim was essential in order to remove a stain on the religion of Islam. The stories about *Dajjal* and the concept of a violent Mahdi were a grave slur on Islam. This false picture of Islam was fixed in the minds of people. If he had not removed this stain and cleared this false concept, he could not have accomplished his mission of the removal of blots on the face of Islam for which he was appointed by God.

Humility and modesty of Hazrat Mirza sahib

Did Hazrat Mirza sahib make this claim in order to achieve honour? Certainly not. Before he made this claim, Muslims respected him. He knew that because of this claim everyone would turn against him. This is exactly what happened. However, this claim was made under the command of God, and he has written that he has no choice in this matter. He had to convey the command of God to people. I am surprised by those who say that this claim was made

out of conceit, to elevate his importance. I wish they had seen the humility and modesty in the character of Hazrat Mirza sahib. I was with him for many years. I and many others saw in this great *Mujaddid* the utmost humility and meekness, which in this age could not be equalled by anyone else.

We sat in his company, and we talked to him. He would never interrupt anyone. People would sometimes carry on talking incessantly, and some of them would just talk senselessly, but he never interrupted anyone. Sometimes disciples would be seated on a couch and Hazrat Mirza sahib would be sitting on the floor. He was informal and unassuming in the highest degree. He would serve people, whoever they were, as if he were their servant. Just read the events of his life. There are countless examples where, if someone was even a slight acquaintance, Hazrat Mirza sahib would serve him like his servant. To say that he hankered after

... disciples would be seated on a couch and Hazrat Mirza sahib would be sitting on the floor. He was informal and unassuming in the highest degree. He would serve people, whoever they were, as if he were their servant ... He was not desirous of greatness nor was he fond of making claims.

renown and greatness is the height of injustice. He was not desirous of greatness nor was he fond of making claims. He made his claims under the command of God, and his fondness was only for the service of Islam.

It is in the hands of Allah if the storm of opposition that is raging today would be changed by Him into acceptance of the movement. But for that we need to do two things. First, we must present our heart-felt prayers to God, saying:

"O God, people's hearts are in your control. There was a time when the Ahmadiyya Movement was very popular. Bring back that time, so that, instead of opposing the Movement, people are proud to support and join it."

Second, we must try hard to repel the environment of hostility that is prevailing. This requires sacrifice, both collective and individual sacrifices. ■

Sincerity (*Ikhlas*): The topmost prerequisite towards achieving authentic Islamic renaissance

By Prof. Henry Francis B. Espiritu

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“Surely We have revealed to thee the Book with truth, so serve Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience.” (Holy Quran, 39:2).

“All men will perish, except the scholars, and all scholars will perish except those who act in accordance with their knowledge, and all of them will perish except the sincere, and even the sincere are still in great danger of becoming hypocrite and if this happens, they, too, will perish.” — Prophet Muhammad.¹

The Spirituality and Sincerity of our Righteous Ancestors Resulted in the Golden Age of Islam

The golden era of Islam was the time when Muslims were the leaders of the world civilizations; unfortunately, this age has already sadly passed away. These past moments of victory for Islam have escaped from us because of our carelessness (*ghaflat*), love of self (*hubb-e-nafs*), love for fame (*hubb-e-jah*), and love for the world (*hubb-e-dunya*). The early Muslims were the acknowledged leaders of the world because of their spirituality and because of their sincere love for Allahu Taala and their obedience to the commands of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.). During these times of intense spirituality and sincere commitment to Islam, the *kalima*, “*la ilaha illallah*” was proclaimed from the lands of Arabia, to Africa, to Andalusia (Spain), to the land of the Balkans, Central Asia, Turkey, the Indian Subcontinent, Mongolia, China, until the Philippine islands. During these times of Islamic glory, the

Muslim civilization existed as a beautiful confluence of Arab, Turkish, Indian, Mughal, Byzantine, and Persian cultures showing that Islam is indeed a very cosmopolitan, tolerant, and universal faith. Our ancestors’ brave proclamation of God’s greatness (*Allahu Akbar*), and their sincere intention to propagate the message of Islam to the whole world, made Islam march from victory to victory winning the hearts of peoples by their message of oneness of God and unity of humankind. The spirituality (*ruhaniyyat*) and sincerity (*ikhlas*) of our righteous ancestors were the reasons why they were able to establish the “golden age” of Islam during their time. We owe our beautiful Islamic heritage to the Companions of the Prophet whose sincerity and spirituality made Islam victorious throughout the whole world during their time.

The Pitiful Situation of the Muslim Ummah Today as a Sign of our Spiritual Weakness

Islam came and spread to the world to bring dignity to humanity and to preach the liberating message of *tawhid* (monotheism) to all peoples. However, today, enemies from all corners attack Islam; and Muslims are becoming defensive day by day. We, Muslims, are given the command by Allahu Taala to be the model community in showing the path of unity, harmony, and solidarity; but today we are becoming divided and we have lost the ideals of *akhuwwat* (genuine fraternity) that characterized the conduct of the *Sahaba* and the *Tabi’en*. The Islamic *Ummah* that was once the brave protector of the oppressed and the poor is now becoming helpless due to its internal and external enemies. The *Ummah* which had once placed its trust and hope in Almighty Allah, is now becoming more and more dependent on the protection of this world’s mighty nations. Islam eliminated slavery from the world, but alas, we are now becoming slaves of the unbelieving economic and political superpowers! What is the cause of our degradation; and what is its cure? It is indeed high time now to diagnose our spiritual illness and together we will search for its cure; *Inshallah*, the *Ummah* will recover from this disease and begin once again to take the position of global leadership to bring the world towards peace, harmony, tolerance, understanding, and unity.

Diagnosing the Ummah’s Situation with the Purpose of Curing its Spiritual Sickness

To diagnose the spiritual sickness of the *Ummah*, we will begin by consulting our beloved Prophet, Hazrat Muhammad (s.a.w.) so that through his deep prophetic wisdom, we will receive helpful advice (*naseehat*) to cure our serious spiritual illness. Let me narrate this particular *hadith-sharif* coming from

1. *Hadith Sharif* from Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim; *Kitab-ul-Ikhlas*. Cairo: Egypt: Darul Kitab, 1973; pp. 294-ff.

the blessed tongue of our Holy Prophet, since it contains very helpful and beneficial insights in understanding the spiritual problem of present-day Muslims:

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) was asked by his *Sahabah* regarding the situation of Muslims in the future, specifically at the time when the Day of Judgment is near. Our Holy Prophet said: “A day will surely come when all unbelievers will unite against Muslims and will launch joint attacks against them.” The *Sahabah* asked the Holy Prophet, “Will the Muslims be less in number compared to the enemies?” Rasulullah replied: “Muslims will be spread throughout the world and will be numerous but their strength will be like a tiny ball of cotton, they will be powerless and helpless unless they repent and turn to Allah for help.” Another *Sahaba* asked, “O Prophet of Allah: What would be the cause of the weakness of Muslims?” He replied: “Your weakness comes from your love of this world (*hubb-e-dunya*), love of self (*hubb-e-nafs*), and love of fame (*hubb-e-jah*)”.²

From this *hadith sharif* of the Prophet, we can infer many important lessons for our own spiritual benefit. Firstly, the Prophet knew the spiritual weakness of the Muslims as the Day of Judgment approaches. This shows that our Prophet was truly given—by Allahu Taala’s permission—the capacity of knowing some aspects of *ilmul-ghaib* (unseen events); specifically those events dealing with the future situations of the Islamic *Ummah*. Likewise, this prophecy of the Prophet should make us aware that indeed, our time today is already near the Day of Judgment—this is because the Muslim *Ummah* has already become victim of the oppression of unbelievers. However, this *hadith* brings great hope for us Muslims because it contains the diagnosis of our sickness and the promise for the cure. The Holy Prophet said that the cause of our weakness is three-fold, namely, love for this world (*hubb-e-dunya*), love of self (*hubb-e-nafs*), and love of fame (*hubb-e-jah*). These three wrong types of love have removed the love for Allah and for His Prophet in the heart of careless believers. According to the Prophet, these loves of self, the world, and fame have made our faith (*iman*) and resolution (*niyyat*) as powerless as a tiny ball of cotton; this is the reason why today, the unbelievers are oftentimes successful in defeating Muslims.

Happily, our situation is not hopeless. The Prophet likewise announced the powerful cure for our spiritual cancer. He said that if we will repent and turn back to Allahu Taala, then He will aid and support the Muslim *Ummah* once again. “Repenting” means, to ask forgiveness to Almighty Allah for our carelessness (*ghafalat*) and to reject our exaggerated love for self, for fame, and for the world. “Returning back to Allah” means, instead of loving our self, our fame, and worldly things, we will endeavor to sincerely love Almighty Allah with all our heart, with all our spirit, and with our whole being. “Turning to Allah for help” means trusting and putting our confidence only in Allah as the Source and the Architect of all victories and successes that come to our lives. Thus, it is indeed very clear from this *hadith sharif* that the real source of the *Ummah’s* victory is in the genuine spirituality (*ruhaniyyat*) of individual Muslims. True spirituality begins with *islah-un-nafs* (reformation of our wicked self) and the practise of sincerity (*ikhlas*) in all our actions.

According to the Quran, Allah’s Help (Nasrullah) Will Depend on the Ummah’s Sincerity and Spirituality

Allah Almighty says in the Holy Quran:

When Allah’s help (*nasrullah*) and victory (*fath*) comes. And thou seest men entering the religion of Allah in companies. Celebrate the praise of thy Lord and ask His protection. Surely He is ever Returning to mercy (*At-Tawwaba*). — *Surah Nasr*, 110:1–3.

Surah Nasr is very helpful in understanding how the help (*nusrat*) of Allah comes to the believers, and what the believers can do to win Allah’s grace and favor. This particular *Surah* contains the definitive key that unlocks our understanding regarding the relationship between the sincere spiritual conduct of Muslims (*ruhaniyyat* and *ikhlas*) and Allah’s promise of *nusrat* (help/aid/support) and *fath* (victory) to the *Ummah*.

Maulana Muhammad Ali, in his renowned commentary of the Holy Quran, beautifully explains the context and the circumstance when *Surah Nasr* was revealed to the Holy Prophet. According to Maulana Muhammad Ali, the content of *Surah Nasr* describes Allah’s help and victory that He gave to the early Muslims when they triumphantly conquered Makkah without a fight or bloodshed. The victory (*fath*) being referred to in this *Surah* was the conversion of the whole Arabian Peninsula to Islam. After the conquest of Makkah, various deputations of Arab tribes came to the Prophet to swear their

2. Quoted from the book, *Ikhlas aur Tasawwuf (Sincerity and Sufism)*, by Shaykh Muhammad Maseehullah Khan. Deoband, India: Maktabatul Majlis-ul Ulama, 1946; p. 59.

allegiance (*bay'ah*) to him. The Prophet saw with his own eyes how the promise of Allah became true in his lifetime. Despite his overwhelming victory, the Prophet was reminded by Almighty Allah in this *Surah* that true victory comes only because of Allah's help (*nasrullah*). Following this great victory, Almighty Allah told the Holy Prophet to praise and worship Him (*fa salli li Rabbika wan-n'har*) for all the wondrous things that Almighty Allah did to Islam and to the Muslims. On the other hand, the Prophet was also required to ask Allah's protection (*wa-astaghfir*). What is this seeking of protection for? Why ask for protection after this great and overwhelming victory?

According to Maulana Muhammad Ali,³ this particular *Surah* teaches us to take shelter in Allah always, even if we think that we are achieving great things. This is because it is our human nature to easily forget Allahu Taala (the Real Giver of victories) when great achievements come. Oftentimes, great achievements lead us to desire for more victories so that we can use these victories for our selfish (*nafsaniyaat*) aims. Whenever achievements and victories come to our lives, *Shaytan* also wants to gain advantage from our victory and success; this is the reason why we need to ask for protection against pride (*takabbur*) of our power and self-vanity (*ujub*). We therefore need to acknowledge with gratitude that every worthy achievement comes from Almighty Allah, the True Provider of victory. In the words of the Holy Quran, "my reward is only Allah" (11:29).

From Maulana Muhammad Ali's exegesis of *Surah Nasr*, we can find three beautiful advices (*naseehat*) which will hopefully enrich our lives as Muslims. Firstly, this *Surah* shows to us that Muslims can be victorious only if they truly and sincerely depend on Almighty Allah's help. Without Allah's help, despite all our efforts we will never achieve anything. Secondly, we invite Allah's mercy and aid by living a genuine Islamic life—a life of loving submission (*ubudiyyat*) to Allah by following (*itteba'at*) the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. We earn the pleasure of Almighty Allah by being truly spiritual Muslims in thought, in word, and in deed. Thirdly, we can be assured of continued victory in our lives if we remain humble despite the achievements that come our way. Almighty Allah's help is guaranteed if we live a life of simplicity (*zuhd*)—this is the life modeled after the *Sahaba*, and characterized by self-denial, humility, and meekness even in the midst of tremendous victory.

Crucial Advice for the Muslim Ummah: Strive to Practice True Spirituality and Sincerity while Hoping Solely in Allah's Help

The Holy Quran, the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), and the spiritual examples found in the lives of the *Sahabah-e Kiram* and our early Muslim ancestors (*Tabi'en*) testify that the true power of Muslims was not dependent on military superiority nor of greater armed capabilities. The evil plans of the unbelievers were not able to overwhelm the *Sahabah* because of the *Sahabah's* pure intentions and sincerity. The *Sahabah-e Kiram's* sincerity was the reason why they were able to spread the liberating message of Islam to the ends of the earth.⁴ Victory is promised to those who "believe, do good, exhort one another to truth, and exhort one another to patience." (103:3)

In the same vein, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad—the great Punjabi saint and the reviver (*mujaddid*) of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet in the Indian subcontinent during the last century of the British *Raj*—gave a very crucial advice to the Islamic *Ummah* so that the present Islamic community will regain its spiritual and cultural pre-eminence in the world. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad advised Muslims to practise genuine sincerity in their spiritual life since it is the singular key towards achieving Islamic renaissance. Seeing the pathetic situation of the Muslims of his day, and their terrible condition of disunity and chaotic dissension in the ranks of the *Ummah*, Hazrat Mirza Sahib asked the Muslims to take Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq's life as a shining exemplar of genuine sincerity. The sole object of Hazrat Abu Bakr's life is Allah alone. Similarly, his hope of reward or ultimate desiderata is fixed in Almighty Allah alone. To quote from Hazrat Mirza Sahib;

"The remedy for idolatrous pride is true sincerity as manifested in the lives of the companions of the Holy Prophet. The life of the first caliph of Islam shows his pre-eminent station of excellence in exercising sincerity. Sincerity may be attained by preferring the worship of God to the worship of one's own self, by making God's pleasure to vanquish the pleasure of the ego; by renouncing the material and moral reward to be had from men and expecting solely God's good-pleasure. Hazrat Abu Bakr demonstrates his virtuous ascendancy in the exercise of sincerity from the time he

3. See his English commentary on ch. 110.

4. Maulana Muhammad Ali, *The Early Caliphate*. Columbus, Ohio: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore, 1999; pp. iii-iv.

entered Islam as the first Muslim until he breathed his last as the humble, frugal, yet exemplary Caliph of the whole *Ummah*. All throughout his life, he expected his reward and vindication only from God and not from men. God's pleasure alone is Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq's sole expectation in his pious life."⁵

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, in the above-mentioned quote, exhorted Muslims to aspire for the sole pleasure of Almighty Allah in all the good deeds (*a'amal-e-salihah*) that they are doing instead of utilizing these good deeds for one's vanity, pride and showing-off to others. Denying our egoistic propensities even in matters of worship is a potent medicine to ward-off our self-centeredness. By doing acts of self-denial, by constant practice of genuine sincerity (*ikhlas*), and by making Almighty Allah as the only goal and center of our life and existence, our individual spiritual reformation is already underway. God willing, if all Muslims will aspire to live a life of spiritual authenticity for the sake of gaining Almighty Allah's good pleasure, then the Muslim *Ummah* will be revived from the miserable state that it is in as of the present.

... good deeds if separated from sincerity will never have any spiritual value in the sight of Allah Almighty ...

The Muslim *Ummah* can qualify for Allah's help (*nusrat*) only after the attainment of a high state of spiritual cultivation (*ruhaniyyat*) which can only be achieved by undertaking the first step, which is self-reformation (*islah-e-nafs*). The promise of the Holy Quran that believers will receive the help and support of Almighty Allah is based on three conditions that Muslims should be able to fulfill, namely: moral purification (*islah-e-nafs*), sincerity of intention (*ikhlas-e-niyyat*), and cultivation of spirituality (*ruhaniyyat*). Righteous deeds (*a'amal-e-salihah*) acceptable by Allah are those actions that passed through the doors of moral purification (*islah-e-nafs*) and sincerity (*ikhlas*). So-called "good deeds" that lack *islah-e-nafs* and *ikhlas* can never merit Almighty Allah's favor. A good deed devoid of sincerity and moral purification will never produce reformation in the Islamic *Ummah*. In the words of Shaykh Muhammad Maseehullah Khan Sherwani Chishti:

Iman (faith) can never be perfected without *ikhlas* (sincerity). True spirituality (*ruhaniyyat*) means that one's *batini* (inner) intentions and *zahiri* (outward) actions are similar. Whatever deeds one shows externally should be similar to the *niyyat* that is internal in his *qalb* (heart) and *hal* (inner condition). Our external actions should not contradict our internal aims. Our aim should only be for Allah's pleasure; and therefore all our *a'amal-e-saleehat* (good deeds) should only be for the sake of Allah and not for showing-off (*riya*) to others. Only when our *zahiri a'amal* (external actions) and *batini niyyat* (inner intentions) are in perfect harmony, can we be called true *mu'min* (faithful one).⁶

Therefore, good deeds if separated from sincerity will never have any spiritual value in the sight of Allah Almighty. The *Sahabah* were able to achieve great work for Islam since their outward conduct was perfectly harmonious with their inner intention. Allahu Taala gave His blessings and help in all the affairs of the *Sahabah* because they lived the life of pure sincerity. We, too, can qualify for Almighty Allah's assistance if we can model our life with the sincerity of the *Sahabah-e-Kiram*.

The present situation of the Islamic *Ummah* shows that the unbelievers are constantly bombarding our way of life, our family, our belief system, and even our Muslim territories for total destruction. The enemies of Islam are targeting the whole *Ummah* with the view of annihilating it. We are left with two powerful remedies to cure this situation and these are: repenting (*tawbat*) of our carelessness and living the spiritual life (*ruhaniyyat*) with the Prophet and the *Sahabah* as our models. *Ruhaniyyat* and *ikhlas* are the two keys that will change the pitiful conditions that characterize present-day Islam. Living a truly sincere spiritual life is our real defense from our worldly enemies; no other kind of defense is more powerful than living a sincere and spiritual life in direct obedience to the will of Allahu Taala and His Holy Prophet. May Allah have mercy on us so that we will be able to live a life of genuine spirituality and sincerity. *Inshallah*, Allah will be compassionate to our miserable condition, and He will grant us His help and give us victory (*fath*) in this world and in the Hereafter. *Amīn, thumma Amīn*.

5. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *The Secret of the Caliphate (Sirr-ul-Khilafah)*. Lahore, Pakistan: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore, 1956; p. 25.

6. Shaykh Maseehullah Khan Sherwani Chishti Deobandi, *Shariat aur Tasawwuf [Shariat and Sufism], Volume 1*; translated by Allama A. S. Desai Sahib. Gauteng, South Africa: Ashrafiyyah Press, n.d.; pp. 34-37.