

DIALOGUE ON ISLAM

**Syed Rashid Ahmed Jaunpuri
On
The Form and Spirit of Islam**

M. Harunur Rashid



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*To
My Mother*

Preface

Hazrat Syed Rashid Ahmed Jaunpuri is a spiritual leader of our time. He practices what he preaches and he preaches what the Prophet (pbuh) of Islam stood for. He earns his own living and refuses to depend on the charity of his admirers and followers. He is a grandson of Shah Karamat Ali Jaunpuri (ra) whose lineage is traced back to Hazrat Abu Bakar Siddique (ra), the first Khalifa of Islam. From his father's side, he traces his lineage to Hazrat Ali (ra), the fourth Khalifa of Islam. Shah Karamat Ali Jaunpuri (ra) preached Islam in Bengal and Assam during the mid nineteenth century and his grandson claims to be carrying on the same mission in Bangladesh.

What is so unique about this man who travelled from Jaunpur, a historically important city in Uttar Pradesh in India, to what then was known as East Pakistan in 1963? He is a spiritual leader but has no pretension to that name. He is 110 but has a sixty plus look. Age has not withered him and he works round the clock without any fatigue. He believes in miracles but has not made miracles his chief attraction, though his ceaseless work-schedule at his age is itself a miracle. He earns from his businesses a lot of money but spends most of it for the destitute. He lavishes most loving care on speaking before the Friday congregation at a mosque he has founded at Mirpur, Dhaka. And he brings before his audience in his deep resonant voice the spirit of Islam, sometimes mercilessly lashing at the lapses which have caused a chasm between the essence of Islam and the present generation of Muslims who claim to be its followers.

What then is the essence of Islam? Hazrat Syed Rashid Ahmed Jaunpuri contends that Islam stands on the simple belief in the

truthfulness of the Prophet (pbuh) of Islam. For a Muslim Allah exists because he has put his faith in the words of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who stated ‘There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Messenger’. This belief being the first fundamental principle of Islam, one can hardly deny that his status as a believer in Islam stands on a razor’s edge viz., the veracity of Prophet Muhammad’s assertion. The Holy Quran as a book of revelation too is dependent upon the veracity of the Prophet’s claim that it is Divine Revelation. So, the first basic principle of Islam, *Iman* or faith is built around the belief in the words of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

What we have stated above is an infallible truth about Islam. But there are Muslims who do not consciously realize this truth. For them, the following catechism may be of some use:

Why do you believe in Allah?

Because, the Prophet (pbuh) has asked us to believe in Him.

Why do you believe in the *Kalema*?

Because the Prophet has asked us to put our belief in it.

Why do you say your *salat*?

Because the Prophet said it is ordained by Allah.

There is nothing in Islam which a Muslim can claim to have derived directly from Allah. All his rituals and his observance of the Faith have come to him through his Prophet. So this belief in Allah being the Omnipotent and he himself being his Messenger is an axiomatic truth. The truth comes through a mortal and the axiom is of no value if the mortal is not given credence. People of other religions may worship this Allah and may have chosen to give Him other names, but a Muslim’s way to Allah has got to be through his Prophet. For the followers of the Prophet who took upon themselves the rigours of persecution during the first phases of the preaching of nascent Islam, two things were real and permeated their whole being – the intense

love of the Prophet and an unflinching faith in the sovereignty of an invisible Allah. Their faith emanated from love for and faith in the Prophet. To them these Qur'anic verses were very much real: 'To the *Mumins* their Prophet is dearer than their own selves' (*Sura Ahzab*, 6). Equally tellingly did the following words of the Prophet (pbuh) ring out loud in their ears: 'Those who do not put their love of the Prophet above their love for themselves, their wealth, their parents, their children and everything else, are not Muslims' (Bukhari, Muslim). Today, very few consciously realize that their Allah would not exist if the Prophet had not spoken the truth. Unfortunately, this fact is often forgotten by Islamic academics too around the world.

Syed Rashid Ahmed Jaunpuri concedes that the Prophet (pbuh) is a mortal, but he emphatically asserts that he should not be confused with an ordinary mortal like us. 'Both diamond and pebbles are stones, but one is worn on the crown and the other is trampled under feet', he says. He frequently quotes from *Sura Maida* the following ayah: *Qad ja'a kum minallaha nurun wa kitabum mubin* – Unto thee have come a Light and a clear Book. Those who drum up the Qur'anic verse where the Prophet has been asked to state that he is a human often tend to forget the rest of the ayah where it is stated that to him come divine revelations. Further, they forget that undermining the Prophet or any other prophet as a mere human being is tantamount to loss of faith (*Sura Tagabun ayah 6*). In the Qur'an the imperative 'obey Allah and the Prophet' (*atiullaha wa rasulih*) – comes as co-ordinates. A Muslim cannot obey Allah without obeying His Prophet.

Having thus put the basic axiom in order, Syed Rashid Ahmed then goes on to explain the basic tenet of Islam – the *Kalema*. The *Kalema* is not simply stating that there is no deity but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger. He contends that *la ilaha illallah* is the essence of creation. The universe is the manifestation of Allah's *Dhat* – the *Dhat*

is invisible, eternal. Allah has manifested Himself in His creation and He is immanent in everything contained in the universe (*Sura Nisa*, 126).

One is ephemeral, but the other is eternal. This is what the Qur'an states in many an *ayah*, the most glaring of them being '*Kullu man a'laiha faan, wa yabqa wazhu rabbika zuljalale wal ikraam* (everything shall be destroyed, only the face of Allah, the mighty and the magnificent, shall abide – *Sura Ar-Rahman*, 26).

Once someone puts his faith in the axiom stated by the Prophet, one has to accept all other corollaries coming from him. Allah claims in the Quran that He is the Light of the Universe (*Sura Noor ayah 35*). In one of the Hadith Qudsi Allah states – *Khalaqtu Muhammadan min noori wajhihi* (I have created Muhammad from My special Light). In another Hadith Qudsi Allah states – *Lao laka lama khalaqtul aflaaq* (O Prophet, I would not have created anything if I had not created you). If you add to this another Hadith, you begin to see the reality as hidden in the Kalema: *Awaluma khalaq Allah noori* (Allah first created my Light). And the Prophet hastens to add – *ana min noorillah kullu shayyim min noori* (I am from Allah's Light and everything has been created from my Light).

The question is one of belief in the axiom and there cannot be a half-belief or a quarter-belief. One has to believe in it as a whole or not believe in it at all. But as you accept what is stated above, you see that the *Kalema* is a binary truth – Allah's *Dhat* being the CIPHER and the Prophet along with the whole manifestation being the numerical unit ONE. This is the truth inherent in every atom of the universe – the positive and the negative giving the atom its entity. This is the inherent truth of the creation of human beings or for that matter any other being in the universe – the male acting as the positive force and the female

providing the indispensable negative force. If this is the truth about the manifested universe and if we accept this as the truth, we must admit that Muhammad (pbuh) is our window on this Truth. And let us not forget Truth (*al-Haq*) is one of Allah's manifested names.

Syed Rashid Ahmed is not an ordinary religious demagogue who usually sends his audience to sleep. He speaks with a lash in his tongue and his criticism of our failures is so true and so real that the audience smarts under his lashes. But once someone has received his lashes he keeps coming back. It is the truth that draws him like a magnet. One of the things he keeps harping on is the question of *shirk* – or associating Allah with other things denying Allah's sovereignty. The denial takes a great many subtle forms. The office boss is considered to be the sole authority for our promotion and transfer. Men in authority are dreaded. A notorious anti-social occupies a high place in the social hierarchy and we don't protest his excesses. These are all cases where human beings are feared more than Allah the Almighty. And this is a kind of *shirk* or substitution of deities. It is so subtle a process in our mind that we do not even own up to it.

We turn towards the black cube in Makkah and during *Haj* go round it seven times for *tawaf*, but if the owner of the house is forgotten, it then lapses into a kind of idolatry. Man has perennially distanced himself from his deity – stone, trees, sun, moon, statues – in order to worship it. When our Prophet abolished these deities and introduced to us an invisible, all-powerful, all-seeing Allah, it was difficult for the early Muslims to forget their idols. They would still carry small idols in their armpits. So the Prophet introduced the system of raising both arms while commencing prayers. These idols have not left us – they still persist in different subtle forms – this is what makes us value the black cube in Makkah more than its Owner. For a Muslim his prayer is a compulsory ritual, but it is often forgotten that the ritual has a soul

inside. That soul is a realization that the Deity we are bowing our heads to is immanent, a force that flows in everything of the universe, even the one who is prostrating himself before him. Once he is completely immersed in Him, directions to which one bows his head become meaningless. Asked when is man separated from Allah a *buzurg* once replied –‘when he says his prayers’. For a true *Mumin* (not just a Muslim) there is no direction, no space to which he can turn his head and bow. But the concept itself is not permissible by Shari’a laws. And herein comes the question of *tariqat*, *haqiqat* and *marifat*. This is what Syed Rashid Ahmed constantly tries to explain to unfold the inner truths of Islam as propounded by our Prophet (pbuh).

The focal point of Syed Rashid Ahmed’s vision is love. And he claims that his entire philosophy of life is permeated by the Qur’an and Sunnah. The word *insaan*, he says, is derived from the root *uns* and it means love. Allah says in the Qur’an that He has created man from one man and one woman and has spread them over the whole world having divided them in different sects and communities (*Sura Hujurat, ayah* 13). So humanity is bound by the common bond of fraternity. And He being the Sustainer of this universe (*rabbul a’lamin*), has made Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) the *rahmat* or divine blessing of the universe (*rahmatallil a’lamin*). So there is no room in Islam for being parochial – the message of love and peace that the prophet gave is addressed to all mankind, not just Muslims. There is, therefore, no room for hatred in Islam. ‘A man filled with hatred for others cannot belong to any religion, let alone Islam’, Rashid Jaunpuri affirms.

Man is predominantly an animal with animal propensities influencing his conduct. But Allah did breathe his Spirit unto man and created him to worship Him– *Wa ma khalaqtul jinn wa ins illa le’abudun*. But Rashid Jaunpuri says the word ‘worship’ is a literal translation of the Arabic word *le’abudun* – it really means getting to know as intimately

as possible the Universal Spirit. This is why all religion so emphatically insists – ‘know thyself’.

How do you go about knowing yourself is a question that has always bothered man ever since he was created. The long chain of prophets since Hazrat Adam (as) has tried to instill in man this simple but immensely intricate lesson. Man is a peculiar creation – more than half animal, only a quarter or even less than that, angel. He is made of four elements – air, earth, fire and water. These elements refuse to mix with one another, but strangely enough, they have been made to coexist in the human frame. All our earthly desires and propensities take their origin from these elements. If man gives himself away to these relentless desires, he is no more than a beast (*Sura A’raf*, 179), the Qur’an asserts. So one of man’s chief struggles is to overcome these desires and to be master of himself.

This is a kind of silent *Jihad* or holy war he has to wage all his life. Once he is able to control, but not eliminate these desires, he is ready to meet the spirit that abides in him.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has given us a code of life enshrined in the Shari’a. The Shari’a disciplines man and brings his way of life under certain practices which ennoble him and the environment in which he lives. But mere Shari’a, devoid of *Tariqat* may lead to spiritual and corporeal aridity. *Tariqat* is the vital sap of Shari’a without which Shari’a renders itself into a vast wasteland devoid of the creative spirit. *Waju* or ablution is a compulsory pre-requisite of Islamic prayers. Washing hands and faces in particular way is a manifested ritual – one may do a thousand and one ablutions and yet may remain impure at heart. If the heart is impure, no prayer can bring the human spirit closer to his Lord. So in *Tariqat*, they insist on another *wadu* or ablution, which is *Tauba* or asking God’s forgiveness and seeking his help to

keep away from sin. Similarly all the canonical rituals of Islam may degenerate into meaningless physical exercises, if the spirit behind each ritual is not invoked. So Rashid Jaunpuri's first teaching is to be steadfast in *Taqwa* or belief. But *Taqwa* is not simple belief – it is a blend of love and fear of Allah as the Beloved. Next to this he would like his follower to attempt a harmonious and balanced seeking of Shari'a and *Tariqat*. When this balance is struck in worship, a devotee is ready to encounter Truth – the *Haqiqat*. And as a natural consequence comes the next stage which is total immersion in the Universal Spirit – the *Marifat*.

Hazrat Rashid Jaunpuri's vision of life and universe may be seen in a three-tier frame – the Mysterious, the Eternal and the Material. On top of this frame is the Mysterious, something that precedes Allah's manifestation and creation of this universe – the *Dhat* as they call it. The *Dhat* has no beginning and no end – it is a nothingness, indefinable, mysterious and beyond human understanding. The Eternal is Allah's own manifested reality that Allah promises will endure after the Day of Judgment, but in a broader sense this life too is a part of that eternity. The Material is the manifested reality, which is subject to death and decay and will be finally destroyed. Syed Ahmed Jaunpuri does not view these three separately, but he considers all three as part of a Universal design. And at the very center of this great design is man. Allah in his inscrutable *Dhat* had fallen in love with Himself and wanted to see Himself. He created light and that light was Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Allah manifested himself in all created things and created man in his own likeness having breathed his spirit unto him. And now he wanted man to be like Him – to bedaub himself in Allah's colour. How would man make himself like Allah? So again it is Allah who calls Muhammad (pbuh) '*uswatun hasana*'. Allah's own likeness on earth, the ideal man has to emulate.

It is in this emulation that the modern man encounters a lot of hindrances. The foremost among these hindrances is the conflict between the inner and the outer selves that each individual has to either struggle to resolve or let them alone. Those who are insensitive to this conflict go to the mosque, say their prayers and perform all the rituals to the letters, and yet when they come out into the open and meet the challenges of contemporary life, they simply quietly give in. Religion for them becomes a kind of convenient mask they wear to project an image of pretended piety. They indulge in corruption – all kinds of corruptions without any qualm of conscience. But those who struggle to reconcile the two selves, have a difficult journey to negotiate. If one aims at that *uswatun hasana*, he has to struggle hard to effect this reconciliation of the outer and the inner selves. Huzur Jaunpuri draws our attention to this contradiction in our life and scathingly criticizes the way in which we have made religion a museum piece – something that we go and visit but never emulate in our practical life. As a result the Quran lies buried under shining clothes on equally magnificent *rehels* or wooden stands – it fails to inspire us in our practical life. Mosques replicate and become architectural pieces of excellence, but life goes on in its own rhythm, never touching the fringe of religion. This is the contradiction against which Huzur Jaunpuri wages a relentless war.

But how do you resolve this contradiction? First of all, one has to be determined to resolve this contradiction. He has to put his absolute faith in Allah and his Messenger (pbuh). Then he has to emulate the life of the Prophet (pbuh) : Huzur Jaunpuri considers three things as integral to a virtuous life – a desire for purity, remembrance of Allah and an urge to achieve proximity of Allah. This he has received as an inheritance from his forefathers who came from Madina Munawara. In order to achieve these three goals, he prescribes three lessons to his disciples, followers and admirers. One, he wants them to maintain

wadu or ablutory purity throughout the waking hours of their life. Two, he wants them to remember Allah in every breath of their life through a method called *pas anfas* (a breathing exercise that turns the word Allah into a part of the heart beat). Three, he wants them to say their *Tahazzud* prayers at dead of night when the whole world is asleep and they are face to face with their Creator. When someone follows these three lessons having been aglow with an intense love of the Prophet (pbuh), one achieves peace and the desired reconciliation is effected. There remain no barriers between life and religion.

In all religions, pious men and women look upward while praying to God. Seeking the Creator in an ethereal heaven is common to all religion. Seeking takes different forms in different religions. Some renounce the society and go to the woods. Some practice celibacy. But the Prophet of Islam has asked his followers to look for his Creator in his own environment, in the radiant smile of the children, in the misery of the poor, in the agony of the sick, in the animals and insects and in the entire eco-system. A truly religious man has responsibilities towards all of them which he can hardly deny. On the other hand, physical desires have not been written off as something ugly. Desire is an essential part of existence, the only thing is that man has to rein in his desires and be a master of his animal propensities. There can be no devotional practice without desire, Huzur Jaunpuri affirms. But man must not pursue desire like animals, but as prescribed by the Holy Book.

Huzur Jaunpuri is most critical of the tax-free business that goes on in the name of *Piri-Muridi* or master-disciple relationship. Most of these so called *Khankas* or seats of the *Pirs* impart erroneous lessons to the disciples. He emphatically states that nothing is above the Qur'an and Sunnah. If there is anything that contradicts them, that should be forthwith given up. The Qur'an has enjoined on us to hold tight each

other's hands and thereby uphold the Islamic *Ummah* or Muslim brotherhood. These *Khankas* spread dissention and widen the difference between one sect and another. Huzur Jaunpuri, however, does not think that the institution is redundant. He rather draws our attention to the Qur'a nic injunction to look for a *wasila*. In the Hadith we have been asked to look for the *Imame zamana* or the leader of the time. If one does not search for the Imam of his time, his death may not be that of a Muslim. So this is an obligatory search which must go on as long as one is alive. If he dies during his search, his death would be that of a *shaheed* or martyr.

The readers will please remember that this is an apology for an introduction to this book containing some of the basic teachings of Syed Rashid Ahmed Jaunpuri. No introduction would ever sum up the many-coloured glass he holds up to his followers, nor would any book ever carry the charms and vigour of his resonant voice. This is only a drop of what he has been preaching during the last few decades in Bangladesh. The best introduction to his teaching is the man himself. Nothing could be his substitute.

The dialogue form in which his teachings have been cast is an age-old custom. One may remember the dialogues of Plato who expounded the philosophy of his master Socrates in his dialogues that are among the finest literature in the world. The names in these dialogue are fictitious, but the Huzur of the dialogues is Syed Rashid Ahmed Jaunpuri himself. This book is the result of close co-operation of many persons. I thank those who have been demanding a book like this in English. Some persons in their intense love for Huzur Jaunpuri have undertaken to work for its dissemination. Mention must be made of Barrister Md. Aminul Huq, Engineer Nabi Newaz, Begum Selina Doja, Haji Ishtiaq Hasan, Begum Rahimunnessa, Janab Abdul Qader, Haji Abdul Hye, Haji Abdul Khaleq, Moulana Abdul Matin and Moulana Fazle Rab.

Last but not the least is Col Khondoker Ataur Rahman whose sacrifice for the institution that Huzur Jaunpuri is building is beyond measure. I convey my thanks to Syed Muhammad Anwar-ud-Doja and Syed Humayun Kabir for having been appreciative of all my writings. Mention must be made of Sheikh Shahidul Islam for going through the manuscript and offering his valuable suggestions. Thanks to Khondoker Mohammad Ali for his neat computer compose and to E M Md Iqbal Akhter for aesthetically making up the pages.

My gratitude goes to Almighty Allah who has given me the ability to write something for the dissemination of the teachings of my Huzur. Let me state it in all fairness that I owe to my Murshid all that has gone into the making of this book.

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Frontiers of Good and Evil

Amin : Huzur, something has been bothering me for quite some time. The more I think about it, the more disquiet it gives me. It frightens me lest I should lose my faith. I can share it with you if you grant me leave.

Huzur : Say it out. I wonder what it is that makes you so restless.

Amin : Everything in this created universe is contained in Allah and He has asked us to pursue good. But He is the creator of both good and evil. If good is contained in Him, evil too is part of Him.

Huzur : Good and evil are both contained in Him. The conflict between good and evil is His creation too. That too is His pleasure. Your poet Kazi Nazrul Islam called Him "a big child playing indifferently with the universe." That in a way sums up the truth about Allah.

We all with our petty happiness and sorrow, pain and suffering cater to His pleasure. What makes you restless is how you can ascribe evil to Allah who is all good. But if you look closely into it, you will find that good is never complete without evil. What would be happiness worth if there were no suffering? Or what would be good worth without evil?

Amin : Why then Allah wants us to keep away from evil?

Huzur : Everything about this universe had its function determined

by Allah with the lone exception of man. Everything is dancing its way with the rhythm of a Great Force. If you close your eyes at dead of night and try and feel the pulse of the universe, you will feel that someone is breathing slowly and everything even you are moving gently with its rise and fall. But there is an essential difference between you and the rest of the universe. Allah has breathed His spirit in you while He created you. His Spirit in you speaks a particular language, but the language spoken by your flesh and blood is different. Both have hunger, both yearn for something. One wants to keep pace with the rhythm of the infinite space, the other makes you earthbound. The flesh in contrast to the Spirit has its own logic and seeks its own satiety. So in this corporeal frame, man has, on the one hand, the innocence of angels and on the other, the propensity of the beast. This propensity is what we call *nafs* which is in fact the name of a power. It has different names and the lowest propensity is known as *nafse ammara*. This is the power that tempts us, leads us astray. It happily reigns in its world of lust, greed and vengeance. There are five other *nafs* referred to in the Holy Quran: *nafse radia*, *nafse mardia*, *nafse mutmayinna*, *nafse lawama* and *nafse mulhima*. *Nafse Mulhima* has been referred to in the Hadith as well. But these are beneficial forces and help men in keeping *nafse ammara* under control.

Amin : *Nafse ammara* then is deadly sin and fighting it constitutes the essence of ascetic practice and religious devotion.

Huzur : Yes that's right, but a misconception in this regard is almost universal. In their fight against this evil, most people wish its complete eradication. But one who does not have this

power in him need not undertake any austere ascetic practice. Such practice is irrelevant to a eunuch and saying your prayers behind a eunuch Imam is unlawful in Islam. You must have seen in the newspapers the other day that an Egyptian youth, driven mad by desire, cut off his male organ in order to punish himself. Sex urge made him deviate from his concentration and he came to the conclusion that the organ was a nuisance and he had better do without it. But unfortunately, no one told him austerity and devotion were of no relevance without this power in man.

Amin : Huzur, most religious leaders refer to this *nafse ammara* as though it were a despicable thing and as such should at all costs be shunned.

Huzur : The power itself is not despicable. What is despicable is the deed it succeeds in alluring you to commit. The power lives in the deep recesses of your mind in the form of a desire or wish. The literal meaning of *nafs* is desire.

Allah has given you the freedom of what path you would allow your desire to take. You could be a debauch and be a slave to your desires. Also, you could fulfil your desires in a lawful way if you so wish. The matter is a kind of *ebadat* or religious practice. Many pious people consider it hateful to sleep with their wives and live under the delusion that *salat*, fasting and *zikr* alone make for religious devotion. But this is a mistake, because every *halal* act or lawful action is conducive to life and is a form of *ebadat* or worship. Remember, Hazrat Ali said that if a Muslim has intercourse with his wife after making necessary ablutions and then dies before taking his obligatory bath, he will have the status of

a *shaheed* or martyr. So Islam, like the concept of celibacy in Christianity or Buddhism, does not support eradication of socially sanctioned sex urge.

Amin : Huzur, how can we conquer this evil?

Huzur : Don't consider it an enemy of yours. If you want, you can make it subservient to you. It will then be loyal to you. For this the most effective weapon is *zikr* or remembrance of Allah. Even *Salat* or obligatory prayers are not effective against it. *Roza* or fasting helps keep it under control and is the second-most effective weapon after *salat*.

Amin : Huzur, I feel much relieved as you have dispelled one of my misconceptions about Allah. This mistaken idea has caused me much disquiet. But now everything seems to fall into a neat order. And now perhaps we can say man's striving then is not to become angels, but become man in the real sense of the term.

Huzur : O yes, angels are not greater than man. Allah has bestowed greatness not on angels, but on men. He had created man as the best of creation, as *ahsane taqveem*, or as the perfect incarnation of beauty. Man does not know himself, that is why he wants to be an angel. If he could know his own self, he would have wished to be man rather than an angel. And if you want to know what being a man means, look at the leader of the two worlds, our Prophet Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (pbuh). His life contains for you *uswatun hasana* or a perfect ideal.

Verse 21 of *Sura Ahzab* says: *Laqadkana lakum fi*

Rasulillahi uswatun hasanatulli man kana yarjullaha wal yaomal akhira wa zakarallaha kasira which means there is a perfect ideal in the life of the *Rasulullah* for those amongst you who are afraid of Allah and the Day of Judgment and spend most of their time in the remembrance of Allah.

If we can put that ideal in front of us, our life too would be beautiful, meaningful. Note that here too there is an emphasis on *zikr* or remembrance of the Spirit.

Amin : Huzur, why is *zikr* being so emphasized?

Huzur : Because *zikr* is love – love of Allah. If you take the human *qalb* or heart as a vessel you have to admit that a vessel is never empty. Even when there is nothing, it has air in it. If you pour water in it, water will get the air out. Similarly, constant practice of *zikr* gradually drives away all worldly illusion from your *qalb*. Worldly enchantment and spiritual love cannot be contained in the same vessel.

That is why a *mumin* or a Muslim with deep conviction leads a two-fold life. In his earthly life he will live vigorously emulating the virtues of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). But he will have an inner life too which will flow like an undercurrent murmuring the names of Allah and Rasul all the way. When both these lives will find a perfect symmetry in an individual, he will have found *uswatun hasana*. He will then on his own understand the frontiers of good and evil. For, he will then be immersed in the Universal Self where this manifested drama of good and evil will fade into a complete meaningful whole.

Beauty, Unity and the Sublime

Amin : While explaining Ayah no 15 of *Sura Maidah* you stated that it was one of the tasks of the Prophet (pbuh) to reveal some of the hidden knowledge and in this connection you referred to the word '*hikmat*' occurring in ayah 151 of *Sura Bakara*. The word *marifat* does not occur in the Quran – it is represented there by the word *hikmat*. You gave us your word that you'd explain this in detail. But in the meanwhile you had a very bad cold and your voice went hoarse. I remember you had a similar cold in November 1993 and your larynx did not permit you to proceed beyond the word *Al-Hamd* while explaining *sura Fatiha*. It took long to regain your voice. Huzur, is there any hidden connection between the two incidents?

Huzur : I'm afraid, I'm not going to answer this question. But it is true that there is some occult knowledge which Allah does not want his favourite servants to reveal. Allah bestows His knowledge to whomsoever He wills, but it is not His wish that it should be revealed to all and sundry. But what you've stated is true – I had a bad cold and my voice broke down. This year too I seem to have a similar bad luck. On both occasions I meant to speak on some occult things. This is all true, but I would not know if there's any connection between the two.

Amin : You seem to have partially regained your voice this morning. I'll be happy if you speak on *Al-Hamd*, if it is not much of a trouble to you.

Huzur : I'm afraid I'll have to speak softly. I enjoy talking to you all and I don't care for my personal convenience. *Sura Fatiha* starts with the word *Al-Hamd*. Imam Razi syas that *Al-Hamd* is the essence of the Holy Qur'an – indeed of all the revealed Books. *Hamd* is sometimes a *sunnah*, that is, enjoined by the Prophet, but not compulsory – though on some other occasions is a *fard* or compulsion. In our mandatory prayers, *Al-Hamd* is a *wajib*, or a compulsion of the second order. During recital of the *nikah*, *khutbha* or marriage sermon, it is a *sunnah*. When somebody sneezes, it is *sunnah* to say *Al-Hamdulillah*. The word *Al-hamd* is above all time-concept and as such it transcends time. *Al-Hamd* is perpetual, it does not have a past, present or future. That is why *Hamd* is never used in any human context – when human praise is referred to we say– *madhe sarai* not *hamd*.

The general meaning of *hamd* is praise. Whose praise? Praise of Almighty Allah – all praise belongs to Allah. The Holy Quran commences with this simple word. But why is this praise? Because all the bounties of creation have been bestowed on man. Human life itself is a fine balance, a balance between the outer and inner worlds. Everything has been created as complementary to each other – nothing has been created without any purpose. That is why concealed within *Hamd* are three exalted states – *jamali*, *kamali* and *nawali*. *Jamali* stands for beauty, all manifestation have been willed by Him and are therefore beautiful. *Kamali* is unity and is integrally connected with the concept of beauty. Whatever is beautiful must needs have unity – nothing is beautiful without unity. And wedded to these concepts of beauty

and unity is *nawali* or what you call in aesthetics, the sublime. Nothing attains greatness without a touch of the sublime. The Bible calls it beatitude or a state of Holy Grace. All the bounties of creation have been bestowed on man without his having wishing them for himself and human mind knows no limit to these bounties. This is completely beyond the ken of his intelligence and understanding.

Amin : Huzur, we utter the word *Al-Hamadulillah* at every other breath. But I never knew this simple word was so wide in meaning, scope and connotation.

Huzur : According to Hazrat Mohiuddin Ibn Arabi *Hamd* means the beautiful. *Hamd* is boundless just as beauty is above all explanation. Beauty has no explanation save and except itself. Only those who have perceived *Hamd* have been able to perceive the beautiful. So how would one praise beauty if one has not visualized *Hamd*. Our Prophet (pbuh) said – ‘I have seen Allah with my own eyes and in full consciousness’. As a man your privilege is that you can praise the Prophet (pbuh) and the Prophet’s privilege is that he can praise Allah. Allah Himself is beautiful – beauty is an attribute which pertains to Him alone. That’s why *Hamd* is impossible without a perfect blend of the three – the beautiful, the whole and the sublime.

Amin : This mysterious word is amazing. Please, proceed.

Huzur : All the mystery of the creation is contained in the word *Hamd*. When you prefix the Arabic character *Mim* to the word *Ghani*, it becomes *Mughni* which means immensely

wealthy. Likewise, when you prefix *Mim* to the word *Hamd* it becomes *Muhammad*. Now try and guess what *Muhammad* means and who is the epitome of the beautiful. When *Hamd* is changed to a form it turns into *Hamed* or the one who praises. And when it is manifested it becomes *Mahmud* or the praised one. The Arabic characters *Ha Mim* occur in the beginning of seven Quranic *suras*. These are called *muqatteyat*. Hazrat Mohiuddin Abdul Qader Jilani (ra) has hinted at the fact that the characters *Ha Mim* stand for *Hamed* and *Mahmood*. All the eleven *muqatteyat* or mysterious characters are different forms of *Hamd*.

Amin : Please tell us something about these *muqatteyat*.

Huzur : These characters have not been explained by our Prophet. The saints have dropped occasional hints here and there. The *muqatteyat* are of two kinds – *muqatteyat-e-afali* and *muqatteyat-e-afaqi*. When the characters are pronounced in isolation they are called *muqatteyat-e-afali*, such as *alif lam mim* or *ha mim* etc. On the other hand the word *Allah* is a *muqatteyat* but the characters here are not pronounced in isolation. We get the four characters together – *alif, lam, lam, ha* and that makes the sound *Allah* which does not, like the other *muqatteyat*, mean anything. *Allah* means *Allah* and it has no other meaning.

Whatever has been manifested by the word *kun* (be) is contained in the word *Allah*. This word has been called *Sayere aasma*. Hazrat Abdul Qader Jilani said that the word *Allah* harbors the four names of *Allah* – *Allah, Lillah, Lahu* and *Hu*. They say *Allah* has 99 name – these are all *sifats* or attributes and there is no limit to these attributes. These

stretch to infinity. And Allah is as boundless as His creation – a great Mystery. This Mystery existed in nothingness before manifestation and in sheer delight it once said to itself – ‘I would like to see myself in your self, That you is *noor-e-Muhammadi* or the halo of Muhammad. That halo is *Hamd* and from that halo has been created the entire universe.

Profanation of Purity and the Religion of Man

Amin : Purity is deemed one of the highest qualities in all religions. One cannot approach the Universal Soul without purity.

Huzur : Purity refers to a state of the mind. It may or may not have any relationship with outward cleanliness. I would not call it a quality, because quality is always associated with the good.

Amin : So you are suggesting that purity could at times be estranged from the good.

Huzur : O yes, when estranged from the good, purity is not worth its name; but an individual may, even in that state, consider himself pure. The Holy Quran warns against these so-called ‘pure souls’: *alamtara illallazina yuzakkuna anfusahum balillahu yuzakki maiyasha’u* (4/49). ‘Haven’t you seen those who consider themselves pure? Purity is what Allah bestows on whoever He wills’.

Let me tell you a story. A saint was going along a very narrow strip of road lying between two water bodies. The saint had a white robe flowing down to his ankles and he was going to attend his *Jum’a* prayers. This narrow road was good enough for a single person. The name of this saint was Hazrat Mirza Jane Jana Shaheed (ra). Having advanced half-way through that narrow road, Hazrat Mirza Shaheed saw a dog coming from the other direction. Horrified at the thought of getting desecrated by the touch of the dog, Mirza

Shaheed stood stone dead with his snow-white robe tucked up. He made way for the dog standing almost at the edge of the road and the dog got by. Hazrat Mirza Shaheed now heaved a sigh of relief and let fall his robe to his ankles as before. But no sooner had he taken a step forward than he heard the dog yelling at the skies. A saint as he was, he understood animal language and he clearly heard the dog saying : O Allah, for what good deeds have you created this saint a man and for what sins of mine have you created me a hateful dog. If you had not created me an ugly hateful beast, this saint would not have avoided my touch. Overwhelmed by remorse the saint threw himself at the feet of the dog and begged its pardon. So you see, purity could at times degenerate into vanity and that might cut you off from the eternal bonds of life i.e. from love of Allah's creation. You will certainly meet some of these 'pure souls' as you go inside mosques and temples. To these persons purity of clothes, rose-water, incense and attar are more important than Allah's creation.

Amin : So these radical purists hate Allah's creation for lack of purity in the sense they understand the word.

Huzur : Precisely, It is really strange that these radicals don't for once realize that Allah is present in everything: *wa kanallahu bikulle shai'im muhita* (4/126). So bereft of love for Allah's creation, purity too could be a kind of sin. A *mumin* or a devout Muslim always prays to be absolved of this sham purity. What these so-called pious persons hate in the name of religion and purity is Allah Himself. What they consider impure and untouchable and as such keep away

from, is none other than Allah. Hatred, however, is not always pejorative though in your scale of values you always tend to associate hatred with the evil and the ugly. But hatred too could be beautiful bathed in the light of purity. The hatred of one who despises sin is a sterling quality, isn't it? The hatred that consumes men against tyranny and injustice is hatred alright, but hatred of a special kind devoted to the service of humanity.

So tell those men in white robes wearing the sweetest attars and perfumes that the perfume which is devoid of love is profanation in the eyes of Allah. In fact, none of us should be proud of purity. Purity is a gift of Allah, which Allah alone bestows on men – *Wa lao la fadlullahe alaikum wa rahmatuhu mazaka minkum min ahadin abadan wala kinnalaha yuzakki maiyasha'u* (24/21). 'Not one of you would ever/Have been pure: but Allah/Doth purify whom He pleases.' So you see, you may wear the cleanest clothes and pretend to be pure, but purity save what is bestowed by Allah has no value at all. Remember, those who consciously consider themselves pure, do so because they consider others impure. This conscious purity is a kind of sin. Humility is a clear perception of one's smallness compared to other persons or things – that in the eyes of Allah is nobility, soft, suave and humble.

Pride and Perseverance of Greatness

Amin : Huzur, I'm sorry I'm a little late. I had been to Mr. Karim's place where I was invited for dinner. He's a good neighbour, an excellent person, almost a *farishta*.

Huzur : It is real good luck when you get a good neighbour.

Amin : Mr. Karim is a very pious person, says his prayers and gives generously to the poor.

Huzur : Well, Amin, why do you compare good men to *farishtas*?

Amin : Well, we call good men angels or *farishtas* for sure, but why I don't really know.

Huzur : People say so, because there is a general belief that *farishtas* are greater than man.

Amin : Yes, I think you're right.

Huzur : But, are *farishtas* really greater than man? Who has been called the greatest of creation by Allah?

Amin : Man, of course.

Huzur : Well, then you admit *farishtas* are ranked lower than man.

Amin : Yes, Huzur, the inference is correct.

Huzur : Well, in that case when you compare a good *farishta* you

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have to say such *farishta* is like a man.

Amin : Huzur your logic is sometimes very confusing.

Huzur : Well, I haven't said anything difficult. You say men are the greatest of creation. *Farishtas* too have been created by Allah. Well, in that case, men are greater than *farishtas*. What is so difficult about it?

Amin : Your logic is irrefutable. But how about a man who is a killer, or a rapist or a tyrant— is he too greater than a *farishta*?

Huzur : That's a good question, but you should rather ask if he is really human. Comparison with a *farishta* is inappropriate, because *farishtas* have no freedom of will. They are doing whatever they have been assigned from time immemorial and there is hardly any room for any deviation. The case is completely different when you have man.

Amin : I beg your pardon, Huzur.

Huzur : Man has, on the one hand, a body and on the other, a mind. The body has five sense organs and five organs of action. The senses have no values or judgment of their own – these are mere tools that men use for their own needs. Because of these corporeal elements or *anasirs* men have in their nature six propensities or *nafs*. These propensities give rise to animal desire in men. Like other animals, men too do not have to learn three things from anybody else – sex, sleep and eating. These three things are innate in human beings and are his instincts. From the point of view of the body,

man is an animal and when he is possessed by propensities alone, there is hardly any difference between him and an animal. But he can't degenerate into a beast because of his rationality. His rational mind teaches him to distinguish the good from the evil. But whether he will pursue good will depend entirely on his own will and action.

Amin : That is to say, man is neither good nor bad by birth.

Huzur : Precisely. A quality or a *sifat* is not a part of human nature. He has potentialities for both virtue and vice. In order to realize those potentialities, he has been given an excellent machine like the body. You must have heard of Plato and Aristotle. Plato thought virtue was innate in men, but Aristotle, his disciple, thought virtue is something you achieve through persistent action. When man uses his body to achieve these virtues, he becomes an ardent ascetic and what he does is called ascetic practice.

Amin : *Salat* or obligatory prayers, *Roza* or Fasting, going for *Haj* or giving *Zakat* to the poor – don't you think these are zealous religious practices?

Huzur : O yes , these are practices, but ascetic practice is a profounder thing.

Amin : I beg your pardon, Huzur.

Huzur : *Salat, Roza, Haj, Zakat* these are Sharia canons and are obligatory. Even when you are regular in these practices, you may not attain complete control over your *nafs* or instinctive desires. Ascetic practice is needed to curb your

desires. Man can attain a golden balance between the body and the mind through constant rigorous practice. When you disturb this fine balance, you contract disease of the body as well as of the mind. Such diseased persons are those who are completely possessed by earthly desires.

Amin : This delusion, then, is what creates a wall between man and his sins.

Huzur : Yes, But when this delusion gradually dissipates through constant and rigorous practice, man gains an insight into things. This is what the religious scholars have called the ‘third eye’, and when one gains this insight, one starts seeing the Supreme Being in oneself.

Amin : All men should not then be called the greatest of creation.

Huzur : Men’s pretension to this name in a kind of pride or *ria*. This is immensely self-gratifying, but to be very honest, are all men really human? Being man is a matter of rigorous practice. One has got to be a man in the first place – being the greatest of creation is a distant goal. You can never call the place from where you start your destination. This world to man is like a beautiful woman whose charm dazzles him. Ascetic practice in Islam does not mean getting away from the charms of this woman. A *mumin* will stay by this coquette but will not be ensnared by her. Herein lies the uniqueness of Islam’s search for humanity. He will like a swan wade through mud without getting its white feathers spoiled. When you have all the desires and yet when you have complete control over them, you attain greatness – that is where you become a man in the real sense of the term.

Amin : But in this perseverance to become a man, *satan* is an inevitable temptation and leads us all astray.

Huzur : There are three realities that follow men at every step, but men are blissfully unaware of them.

Amin : What realities, Huzur?

Huzur : Allah, Death and Satan are three realities that follow men like their own shadows. Allah is with them every moment, but men don't remember Him and that is why he can go astray. Death is stealthily walking behind him like his own shadow, but he is oblivious of death and hence can live a life of lust and desires without any remorse. That Satan is seated within him is another reality he is happily unaware of. If men consciously thought of Satan as reality, he could have saved himself from his temptation. So this forgetfulness of realities is what you call life. That is why you are so much afraid of death. Remember, a *mumin* never dies, he tastes of death and there is hardly any difference, for him, between life and death. A *Mumin* does not inquire if life is meant for death, or if death is meant for life. He knows life does not mean this corporeal existence, nor has death any relevance to this earthly body. In a more profound sense what you call death is another form of life.

Shadow in the Water

Amin : I was wondering what we lacked in life. Life is full of problems, problems vary from person to person. Individuals always complain of what they don't have in life. But then I thought if there was such a thing as was lacking in every individual. After much soul searching I came to the conclusion that peace was the thing which nobody could claim as his own.

Huzur : Yes, you're right. Nobody has peace in life, though everybody frantically looks for it.

Amin : What then is peace, Huzur? What is its nature?

Huzur : You can't really define peace, it has no meaning, no exact explanation. You might, of course, explain it in your own way, but since peace is an abstract quality, you can't really define it. But if peace is the name of a feeling, its source then is the human mind. Feelings are bound to differ from person to person. Suppose, the mind is like a pool of water. Throw a stone right in the middle, and you'll see waves circling out on all sides. This you might call lack of peace or turmoil of the mind. When the waves gradually disappear and the pool becomes a sheet of glass – that we would call restoration of peace. But you'll notice that the commotion in the water varies given the size of the water body – a pond, a lake, a river or the sea. What you call peace in the sea is commotion for the river and what you call peace for the river is commotion for the pond. But all would perhaps agree that peace is a kind of feeling and the chief condition to having

that feeling is equilibrium. A complete balance between the exterior and the interior is what is needed for peace. When the inner and outer notes agree with one another, the music you get is called peace.

Amin : What should we do to attain peace?

Huzur : If your *Qalb* or heart is the source of all commotion, you must then try to rid your heart of commotion itself. You have in your nature four elements – air, water, fire and earth and these elements do influence your character. These lead to desire of different kinds – earth gives rise to earthly desires, fire breeds fiery qualities, air tends to make you imaginative and water makes you gloomy and pensive. The sum total of all these is illusion – a desperate, mad rush for material fulfillment which gathers like dust on your *qalb* and blurs its transparency. The dust on the *qalb* generates commotion, restlessness. If you would like to have peace, you must clean this dust and bring back the transparency of your soul. What is needed here is will – a genuine will to reform yourself. You see, how many good turns you have done in your life is not half as important as the tendency of doing good. That is a surrender to the domain of the good and the beautiful. When you surrender your desires to the good, it gradually generates a kind of tendency which leads you to peace.

Amin : In order to attain peace, do we need any ascetic practice?

Huzur : Yes, you do. You are separate from your body – your mind can never be loyal to you unless your body is subdued and made to conform to your will. That's why the formal aspects of religion – the *Sharia* obligations have got to be fulfilled

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with utmost devotion. And you have to add to this *zikr* or the remembrance of Allah. Initially, *zikr* has to be done loudly. By saying it aloud you will find that the sound *Allah* has gone deep into your *qalb* and your *qalb* will brighten up by the light of that word. The dust on your *qalb* will then completely disappear.

Amin : What are the ways to get peace in life?

Huzur : There could be three ways of getting peace – one could attain peace for himself and this is just personal happiness. One could render peace to others and be happy thereby. This is sacrificing one's happiness for the sake of others, just like our Prophet (pbuh). And the third is earthly happiness– and here you might destroy other's peace and be happy – a kind of burning sensation where the individual goes round the fire of hell. Now choose what peace you want for your self.

Amin : We frequently refer to conjugal unhappiness. Would you say something about this?

Huzur : There too you'll find this lack of balance. Our Prophet had assigned a very exalted status for women. Under their feet, he has asked the children to look for their heaven. He has called the husband and wife each other's apparels. He has asked the husband to love and respect his wife and the wife to be loyal to him. Thus the wife by her love and affection is supposed to turn the household into a paradise. But when the husband maltreats the wife or the wife neglects the husband, the balance is tilted. The nuptial bond which is supposed to be a symbol of peace, turns into a veritable hell. If you look at the world in our Prophet's time you will

realize what an exalted place has been accorded to women by Islam. You have either confined your women within the four walls of your house or have allowed them license to shamelessly expose themselves. Neither is the way of Islam. Nascent Islam was nurtured by both man and woman. The first convert to Islam was a woman. You tend to forget all this and that tilts the balance. Look for peace in your soul and you'll see that the troubled waters would become quiet. The calm waters would, like a glass, show you your inner self. Perhaps then you'd realize that the 'I' hidden inside you is not yourself. The glass would tell you who that 'I' is.

The Form beneath the Symbol

Amin : On many an occasion you have referred to truth having a simple outer crust beneath which there is a profundity which evades the common man. The common man does not rack his brain about any deeper significance, but one who is in love with truth must delve deep into it – he must have the truth, the mystery behind the simple facade. What is the real significance of ayah 15 of *Sura Maidhah* which states– *Qad ja'akum minallaha nurun wa kitabum mubin*? The simple meaning is– ‘a light has come unto thee and an open book, but is there any deeper meaning underneath this simple statement?’

Huzur : The Holy Quran has seven layers of meaning and quite frankly, I don't know much to be able to explain this. But if you look at it you'll find that the key word here is light or *noor*. A light has come from God unto you. If you cross refer to the ayah in *Sura Noor* where Allah defines Himself, you will find something very interesting. What is Allah? ‘Allah is the light of the universe’ – *Allahu nurus samawate wal ardh*. And further bring in here as a parallel reading that famous Hadith where the Prophet (pbuh) says – *ana min nurillah wa khalafa kulluhim min nuri* (I am created from the light of God and this universe has been created from my light). Now you have to try and understand the real identity of the Prophet – what he really is. We all know him to be a messenger of God or a prophet. But his status among the prophets is unique which is testified by Jesus and Moses. Jesus said he was not fit to untie his shoelace (Gospel of Barnabas Chap 44). In St John (16/7) the coming of the

Comforter was forecast meaning Prophet Muhammad.

You have to carefully note here that here it has not been said that a light has been created for you and it has not been said a prophet is being sent unto you. The Quran states a *light* from God is *being* sent unto you along with a clear and open book. God enjoined unto him to say that he was a man like ourselves— *Qul innama ana basharum mislukum (Sura Kahaf, 110)*. Since that light has lived among we humans, there is no reason to believe that he was an ordinary human individual like us. Some people regard him as being ordinary just as our forefathers had done. But the Quran is not silent about them too. Sura Tagabun, ayah 6 states that those who called the prophets ordinary men are indeed *kafirs* (infidels).

On the other hand God himself testifies—‘Verily those who plight /Their fealty to thee/Do no less than plight/ Their fealty to Allah/The Hand of Allah is/Over their hands (*Sura Fath/10*). Note that God calls the hand of the prophet His own Hand. So you have to watch out about the meaning of the ayah where the prophet is referred to as being *noor* or light from Allah. Also note that there is a simultaneous reference to the Book and the *Noor*. Muhammad is the incarnation of the light of Allah and Muhammad is also the incarnation of the Book. Those who regard him as being just an ordinary human like us are suffering from delusion. And I don’t think they have studied Muhammad the man either very clearly.

Amin : But Huzur, all Muslims love the Prophet, don’t they?

Huzur : Yes they do, but simple protestations of love and getting immersed in the soft light of love are not one and the same thing. I don't think a Muslim is quite a match for the profound love and regard as evinced by a non-Muslim.

Amin : Who, precisely, do you mean?

Huzur : Why, haven't you read that book by Stanley Lane-Pool. Look with what affection he describes Mohammad (pbuh):

Muhammad was of middle height, rather thin but broad of shoulder, wide of chest, strong of bone and muscle. His head was massive, strongly developed. Dark hair, slightly curled, flowed in a dense mass almost to his shoulders, even in advanced age it was sprinkled with only about twenty gray hairs, produced by the agonies of His "Revelations". His face was oval shaped, slightly tawny of colour. Fine long arched eye-brows were divided by a vein, which throbbed visibly in moments of passion. Great black restless eyes shone out from under long heavy eyelashes. His nose was large, slightly aquiline. His teeth, upon which he bestowed great care, were well set, dazzling white. A full beard framed his manly face. His skin was clear and soft, his complexion 'red and white'. His hands were as 'silk and satin', even as those of woman. His step was quick and elastic, yet firm as that of one who steps 'from a high to a low place'. In turning his face, he would also turn his whole body. His whole gait and presence was dignified and imposing. His countenance was mild and pensive. His laugh was rarely more than a smile.

[Lane-Pool, Stanley. *The Introduction to the Speeches and Table talk of the Prophet Muhammad*. London. 1882]

Those of you who call him a man – have you ever painted him with such affection and love? Have you ever looked at the features of his character with such devotion? Lane-Pool further says –

He was gifted with mighty powers of imagination, elevation of mind, delicacy and refinement of feeling. He was more modest than a virgin behind her curtain, it was said of him. He was most indulgent to his inferiors, he would never allow his little page to be scolded whatever he did. Ten years, said Anas his servant, I was about the Prophet, and he never said as much as *uff* to me. He was very affectionate towards his family. One of his boys died on his breast in the smoky house of the nurse, a blacksmith's wife. He was very fond of children; he would stop them in the street and pat their little heads. He never struck any one in his life. The most expression he ever made use of in conversation was, what has come of him? May his forehead become darkened with mud. When asked to curse someone he replied, "I have not been sent to curse, but to be a mercy to mankind." He visited the sick, followed any bier he met, accepted the invitation of a slave to dinner, mended his clothes, milked the goats and waited upon himself, relates summarily another tradition. He never first withdrew his hands out of another man's palm and turned not before the other had turned. He was the most faithful protector of those he protected, the sweetest and most agreeable in conversation. Those who saw him were suddenly filled with reverence, those who came near him, loved him; they who described him, would say I have never seen his like either before or after. He was of great taciturnity, but when he spoke it was with emphasis and deliberation, and no one would forget what he said.

This is what our Prophet was in real life. We have not studied him properly as a man let alone in his essence. And essence does not mean you are going to regard Mohammad as Allah. What he really is, is only known to Allah. Allah is Allah and Mohammad is Mohammad – both are unique in their respective spheres. I have tried to show how a non-Muslim can lavish so much love on him. Remember here that famous saying by La Martine –

‘As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?’ (La Martine, *Histoire de la Turquie*, Paris 1854 p.277)

Amin : Granted Allah is Light, but is he really formless? If that is the truth why then does the Quran refer to His hands and eyes?

Huzur : Allah certainly is formless. His hands and eyes and nose are only metaphorically referred to. But even the formless has a form. The word Allah has no meaning. Allah refers to a formless entity. Look here I am saying formless entity. Nothing is in fact formless. Formless is a word – the moment you utter the word it brings behind it a form – it conjures up a form. The word is the symbol of that form. Maybe the form is formless but it is there as being a symbol. The symbol may vary from country to country, but that does not affect the form behind the symbol. Allah has different names in different communities – the Chinese call Him *Shang ti*, the Hindus call him *Iswar*, the Christians call Him God and the Muslims of course Allah – words are different but the form behind the symbol is the same. When the

Hindus call Him *Iswar*, does the One who happens to be the Allah of Muslims cry out – no I shan't respond if you call me *Iswar* – call me Allah. Or when a Christian calls Him God does He turn his head away? Don't forget God has created all these differences amongst humans. He has created mankind from a single pair of man and woman and has divided them into nations and tribes (*Hujurat/13*). In this universe He is immanent everywhere and in everything. And He has made Muhammad (pbuh) the *rahmat*, that is, the grace and comfort of this whole universe. Those who really know this multi-dimensional Allah, do not call Him Allah (*man arafallahu la yaqula Allah*). They would like to break the barrier of the sound itself and would like to feel that vast emptiness whose pleasure has led to the creation of the universe. Some are pursuing that emptiness on their own. But those who have seen the incarnation of that emptiness in Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) would like to get dissolved in his love. They seek that nameless, formless Being in his love. To that formless Being a poet addresses the following lines:

Tera husn se mujhe keya garaz

Teri zat se mere ishq hai

Tujhe dekhne ki hai arzoo

Tu kheza me ho ke bahar me

(I have no interest in your form

I am in love with the formless Being,

Desire to see You burns in me

No matter where You are – in Spring or in

Autumn.)

Intuition and Art in Islam

Amin : I have often thought of discussing with you a few things regarding art and literature. Islamic scholars usually betray a kind of prejudice against the creative artists and their works. But what do you think of the poets?

Huzur : The Holy Quran has called the poets liars and it has been enjoined not to trust them. Perhaps the *ulama*, that is, the Islamic scholars emphasize this point when they speak about creative arts. But the Quranic *ayah* has a historical context. During the time of the Prophet, each tribe had its own poets and they would extol their own tribe while undermining the enemy tribe by an endless series of vituperation. Such malicious poems were composed against our Prophet (pbuh) and their sole aim was to prove that he was a liar and a lunatic. In this general context the Quranic verse testifying that the poets are liars was revealed to the Prophet. But let us not forget here that Hazrat Ali as well as a few other companions of the prophet (pbuh) used to write verses. Besides, there is a Hadith and this one is a Hadith-e-Qudsi meaning a direct revelation of Allah. It says, *asshuarau talamizur rahman* which means the poets are disciples of Allah Himself. Poets receive their inspiration and their training from Allah. So the idea that Islam is inimical to the poets is misconceived.

Amin : Huzur, some of our poets think religion is outdated and creativity is something modern, hence religion should have little to do with the arts.

Huzur : A poet's creativity starts from the same point as that of a man of religion provided religion means religion in the truest sense of the term, its aim being union with the Universal Soul.

Amin : Sorry Huzur, I didn't quite get you.

Huzur : You see, religion without intuition is no religion at all. The rituals of religion and religious feeling or piety are two different things. The rituals that never penetrate into the real feel of religion are lifeless and must needs be cruel. Our Prophet (pbuh) has warned us against these lifeless rituals, 'Do not exceed the limits of true religion', he said. Because those who had done so in the past have met with destruction. However, the feeling I was referring to has its beginning in intuition and intuition is something that all men share, though in varying degrees. Even animals and insects have intuition. The ants come out of their holes before a deluge or a storm. You call it instinct, but that too is a form of intuition. Intuition or instinct whatever name you give to it, is not something you can develop yourself. It is a built-in mechanism which is roused by a stimulus that helps to throw open the doors of intuition. The capacity to be roused differs from one individual to another. Poets are roused more than others which is why they are poets. But interestingly enough, at this stage of emotional response to a stimulus, the poet and the ascetic stand on the same ground. The difference lies in the fact that the poet gives vent to his feelings through a medium, the ascetic harbours it in his mind like a selfish being.

Amin : But the poets who bring in the similes, the metaphors and

the wonderful end-rhymes – don't they have anything to contribute to their creative works?

Huzur : But you don't really enjoy the poems of those whose own contribution is more than their inspiration. Poems that endear and endure are those where the poet himself is less seen to interfere. I don't mean that the poet is a mere medium – a mere talking machine and that he has nothing to contribute. When he renders an inner vision concrete for others to sensitively grasp it, he bears to bring upon his music and imagery a particular mold, a form. And this music inheres in everything, in every tangible object of the universe. The Quran refers to this music in *Sura Muzammil*. On the other hand, what is known as *tasawur in ilme tasawuf* is nothing but visualizing a form (that of his sheikh or spiritual Guru) through contemplation. The poet in true sense is an ascetic. How can one be a poet if one does not have music and image in his soul. The ascetic too has music and picture in his soul.

Amin : What do these music and image hold up to us?

Huzur : O Amin, is it not you who speak of truth and beauty. At times, of course, some artists cater to the sensual underlining nudity for cheap popularity. But nudity in its vulgar sense does not hold up the truth. Beauty that takes leave of the truth is no beauty at all, not even in your aesthetic sense. Where utility lurks behind a creative effort, what you get is not art. It is the same with an ascetic. If his contemplation or prayer is riddled by earthly desires and selfish motives, his prayers will not be answered and what he does is neither contemplation nor prayer. The Poet's vocation is also a form

of *ebadat*, form of devotion. Perhaps the poet does not consciously realize that, but truth is truth and it does not alter only because one is ignorant about it.

Amin : Huzur, what then is the essence of art?

Huzur : All aesthetic feelings have their source in Allah. Two of Allah's attributes are Beauty and Truth and a compound of these two is *Ehsan* or good. Your poets are pleased when they say in Sanskrit – *Sattyam*, *Shivam*, *Sundaram*, But they consider it rather outmoded when Huq (truth), Jamal (beauty) and *Ehsan* (good) are referred to. They are afraid of losing their secularism. It's a pity that our poets do not keep track of their own treasures.

Amin : Would you please, explain this treasure you refer to?

Huzur : Well, take this word Allah which has no meaning and which in fact is a mysterious sound. It has three letters – *Alif*, *lam*, and *he* – *alif* is called a *harf-e-jalali*, *lam* is called a *harf-e-jamali* and *he* is called a *harf-e-kamali*. These are letters symbolic of virility, suavity and unity and these are the basic principles of not just creativity, but the creation of the whole universe. In Physics you talk of the positive charge and the negative charge and when the two combine in a whole you have an elemental force and its metamorphosis. The Vedic literature has termed the two forces as the *Purusha* and the *Prakriti*.

Allah himself is a poet. The poets often forget that and that's why truth evades them. The Quran is inimitable poetry and He who has composed it has the key to all mysteries. Let

me conclude with a *Hadith-e-Qudsi*: 'I was hidden inside a treasure house, I was Myself a treasure house. I loved Myself and wanted to know Myself. I transformed Myself and tried to know Myself by my manifested form.'

Allah's Nature and the Silkworm's Cocoon

Amin : Huzur, you referred to *ayah 30* of *Sura Rum* and spoke of the nature of Allah. But Allah's nature, that sounds rather strange, doesn't it?

Huzur : Not if you carefully note the meaning of this ayah. Allah says here that He has created man in His likeness and has enjoined on man to imitate his nature: *Fa'akim wazhaka liddini hanifa fitratallah hillati fatarannasa alaiha la tabdila li khalkillah zalikaddinul Quyyim (Sura Rum, Ayah 30)*. Translated it means – 'Set yourself with utmost devotion to your Faith and imitate the image of Allah according to which He has created mankind; His creation permits of no change and that is the straight Religion'.

Amin : If man has been created in God's own image, why would he go astray?

Huzur : I'm afraid, your idea of the nature of Allah is not very clear. Note what Allah has Himself said in a Hadith-e-Qudshi: 'I was hidden inside a treasure house, I willed to see myself and hence I manifested myself. From an inscrutable nothingness Allah manifested Himself in the domain of attributes – the Universal Soul became immanent in every atom of the universe. Having created man in his own image Allah has put mankind in the very centre of his creation. Good and evil, the beautiful and ugly are opposites that co-exist in the Universal Spirit. These opposites abide in human nature as well, but Allah has put *faham* or conscience between these opposites so that he has a freedom of choice.

He can choose between the two. But basically man is a part of the Universal Soul. What alienates man from a perception of the spirit is *avidya* or ignorance. Man is a prisoner of his *nafs* or desire and does a kind of *tawaf* or whirling round in this prison. Not only our religion, but the *Upanishads* too says the same thing. Dr Radhakrishnan in the introduction to *The Principal Upanishads* says – The individual is in a sense, created by God after His own image and in His own likeness, but he has his creaturely form. We do not know our possibilities. The individual ego is subject to *avidya* or ignorance when it believes itself to be separate and different from all other egos. The result of this separatist ego sense, *ahamkara*, is failure to enter into harmony and unity with the universe'. (*The Principal Upanishads*. By S. Radhakrishnan). In our religion too we are always speaking about this *nafs*. If you can't get rid of this *nafs* or desire, you can't get anywhere near the Universal Soul. Without freedom from bondage of these desires you shall never attain Allah's *Qubiyat* or proximity. In your search for heaven and hell you are all simply wasting your time. When you establish a real rapport with your own nature you are in paradise, failure to do that is hell.

Amin : But what do you really mean by one's own nature?

Huzur : Look, the Arabic word for man is *insaan* which derives from the root *uns* meaning love. By manifesting Himself in man Allah has given man the bounty of his love. This love inheres in man and constitutes his real nature. God abides in every man and beacons him to His nature. But the selfish man does not respond to His call, he being like a silk-worm that out of its own secretion builds a cocoon inside which it

sleeps peacefully. Neither knowledge nor understanding can pierce through that self-imposed prison. But one whose eyes are drenched in the light of God is imbued with love. Our Prophet (pbuh) took on himself the weight of that heavenly love.

Amin : Do you refer to the Quran here, Huzur?

Huzur : O yes, that's right. The Quran is Allah's love, so is our Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). This love agreed to bear the weight of that love while the whole universe refused to accept the weight of the Quran. That is what the Quran says – *Lao anzalna hazal Qur'ana ala jabalillah raitahu khashium mutasaddium min khashiatillah (Sura Hashar, 21)*, which means – if I had sent down the Quran on a mountain, it would have crouched in fear and rent asunder. But our Prophet agreed to take on himself the weight of this love, the Quran. God manifested all his attributes in him thereby making him the manifested image of Allah. And he has thus been made an ideal to be pursued. So if you want to look for God's character or His nature, look at our Prophet's character. If you want freedom from the bondage of your prison you have to set out on this road to love. The poet says –

Mita de apni hasti ko

Agar tu martaba chahe

Ke dana khak me milkar

Gule guljar hota hai

(If you want an exalted place

Annihilate your self

Just as the seed having been

Dissolved in earth makes a garden come to life).

Love is Truth; Truth, Love

Amin : Huzur, something is bothering me for the last few days – what is truth? The more I think the more I'm getting confused.

Huzur : A philosopher, that's what you're trying to be, but I'm a simple man. How would I know the answer if you are asking me. Well, have you ever thought that there is truth because there is falsehood. There is light because there is darkness. So from that a simple deduction would be what is not false is true.

Amin : But Huzur, truth is a dynamic reality which is changing every moment, at least that is what we gather in the light of human understanding.

Huzur : O yes, you're right. But the basis of your argument is human understanding. If you want to grasp the truth through your senses, truth of course is liable to change. What you see as ice this moment is water next. So what you know for truth through sheer senses is the name of a state. When governed by space and time, that state does not give you the truth. The truth lies in its essential mutability.

Amin : Excuse me sir, the concept of Allah being the truth – is that subject to mutability too?

Huzur : O yes, Allah inasmuch as He encompasses the universe as a manifested reality is subject to mutation. Allah has endless forms and forms are changing every moment. But Allah has

another entity which is formless and which lies beyond this manifested reality. We know that as his *Dhat* or essence. We cannot comprehend that *Dhat* with our sensory perception – it lies beyond human understanding. I have told you several times that with our limited sensory perception, we cannot comprehend Allah either in his smallness or in his vastness. But man has another ability which we call his intuition. By ascetic practice man can sharpen his intuitive faculties and can grasp some such truth as is not conditioned by space and time. Everybody does not have access to such truths. Truth, therefore, has revealed itself through prophets, His messengers. Man with his understanding cannot comprehend the formless very easily. That's why man has looked for the truth in such material things as the stone, the trees, the moon and the sun. In the long line of messengers our Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) is the last to reveal the truth. Truth fell in love with Itself and wanted to see Itself in manifestation – the manifested form of the Formless is *noore Muhammadi* or the light of Muhammad. So if truth is Light then Muhammad is a fragmented part of that Reality. Muhammad, therefore, is a mystery behind this manifested universe – a fundamental principle of creation. Don't forget falsehood and darkness is a part of Allah's entity – that too is God's creation. But the light of Muhammad was created to dispel that darkness. This too is a freak of Almighty God – His pleasure if you will and He alone knows the meaning of it all.

Amin : How would we know the truth then?

Huzur : It is through the truthful that you get to know the truth. Only those who have known the truth can let you know the truth.

Amin : But who are they?

Huzur : Look at the Holy Quran that defines the truthful: ‘Only those are believers who have believed in Allah and His messenger, and have never since doubted but have striven with their belongings and their persons in the cause of Allah: Such are the truthful.’ (*Hujurat : ayah 15*)

Note the persons referred to have been called *mumins* and not *mussalmans*. They are steadfast in their belief and don’t ever doubt the existence of Allah and His Messenger. They are ever ready to sacrifice their life and property for the sake of Allah and his Prophet. And these are the persons who have been dubbed the truthful. You perhaps now realize that without receiving the truth no one can be truthful. No one can sacrifice his life and property unless one gets absorbed in something. This is called in Arabic *istagraq* or complete immersion. Just as sugar gets dissolved in water, a *mumin* too gets immersed in Allah and His messenger. Allah’s another appellation is al-Huq or the Truth. So one who gets lost in the Truth is the truthful. That’s what the Quran says.

Amin : But Huzur, falsehood sometimes wears the mask of truth?

Huzur : Yes it does. But those who wear masks deceive others – their only aim being deception. Look what the Quran says about them: ‘The hypocrites – they think they are over-reaching Allah, but He will overreach them: When they stand up to prayer, they stand without earnestness, to be seen of men, but little do they hold Allah in remembrance (*Sura Nisa, ayah 142*).’ So these hypocrites want to deceive Allah and are deceived by Him. They wear long robes but religious

robes are a kind of quicksand – you set your feet on them and you are lost. What you are then left with is the robe itself. Get away from these sham devotees. These are the *munafiqs* or hypocrites. In their bid to deceive Allah they become victims of self-deception. They keep up their social bearing and outward show. People know them for religious leaders – they value this public image and they work hard to keep up this public image. Love of the Prophet is not important to them. They smell *shirk* in the love of the Prophet. Beware of these shirk-obsessed religious leaders. Try to feel the truth within your soul and you'll see that truth lies concealed in love. Truth that does not have love is not truth at all – and you could say in the same breath, love is not love if it does not have the truth. Meditate on him whom Allah has called his loved one – and meditate with all the intensity of love. You will perhaps some day realize love is truth – truth, love. Perhaps then you will cease to care for any other truth than this.

Desire in a Desireless Abode

Huzur : Happy New Year, Amin!

Amin : Well? This is not the Bengali new year, nor is it new year by the Christian Calendar. Why this greeting, Huzur? You aren't cranking a joke, are you?

Huzur : Not at all. Let me say it once again, Happy New Year!

Amin : Huzur, I can't make it out. Would you explain it a bit.

Huzur : Why, don't you remember it is the first of *Muharram* today – new year by the Arabic calendar.

Amin : Now I get your point. O yes, it is the first of Muharram. Happy New Year to you, Huzur!

Huzur : I am not surprised you took so long to realize a simple thing. It happens like this when many intimate things get lost from the bounds of our known experience. You observe the Bengali New Year with due solemnity – that's your culture. The Christian New Year is alien to your culture, but you greet it with crackers and fanfares. But the people of a state whose official religion is Islam is totally unaware of the *Hijri* new year – isn't that strange? You didn't exchange greetings, nor cards nor were there any celebrations – what is appalling is that you don't even remember the date. And yet we all are Muslims, aren't we?

Amin : Your are right Huzur. By Muharram we all tend to remember

the *Ashura*, the tragedy of *Karbala*. That the month ushers in the New Year is often forgotten.

Huzur : During our Prophet's (pbuh) time Muharram used to be observed with a lot of merriment like our Eids though many perhaps are unaware of this. Muharram used to be a festive occasion when they would eat well, wear new clothes and laugh and be merry. Because this month has a great significance. A number of great events took place in this month. Hazrat Adam's (as) sins were forgiven, Hazrat Yunus (as) (Jonas) came out of the entrails of a big sea fish, Hazrat Ayub (as) (Jacob) got well after a prolonged suffering from an incurable disease and Pharaoh Ramses II got drowned in the Nile with his Army. Hazrat Yusuf (as) (Joseph) was freed from jail and Hazrat Nuh (as) (Noah) first set foot on the soil after that dreadful deluge – all these took place in this month. And remember the destruction of this world, the Doomsday is going to happen in this month.

Amin : Huzur, why then do we wail and cry in Muharram – I mean why this *marsia*?

Huzur : That is because of a later incident – the tragedy of *Karbala* where Hazrat Husain (ra) and his followers were killed and they became martyrs – *shaheeds*. We observe the month as time of grief and sorrow. The *Shiates* bring out *tazias*, processions and wail in public which is known as *matams*. But this too is a kind of ritual and not the sign of genuine love for Hazrat Husain, the grandson of the Prophet (pbuh). Because true love abides in the human heart and is not a thing to be brandished in public. Some of us too try to imitate them in their *marsiya*s and *matams* – but such

activities are not in consonance with the *Sharia*.

Amin : Huzur, what then is the message of *Muharram* – what should we stress on in this month?

Huzur : Look at what the Quran says in *ayah* 153 of *Sura Bakara* – *Ya ayohallazina amanustayinu bisabre wa salah innalaha mayas sabereen* – ‘O the faithful, pray for help through patience and *salat*, certainly Allah is with those who patiently persevere’. The following *ayah* until *ayah* 157 goes in the same vein – “Don’t consider those slain in the way of Allah dead, for they are living though you don’t perceive it. Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits of your toil, but give good tidings to those who patiently persevere and say, when afflicted with calamity, ‘To Allah we belong and to Him is our return’. They are those on whom descend blessings from their Lord.”

These *ayat* are frequently recited in prayers by the Imams of *masjids*. We listen to them and that’s where it ends. We listen to the Quran with profound interest but then the next moment our interest vanishes into the thin air. That is natural when interest is not followed up by perseverance and ascetic practice. And short of that you cannot expect God’s grace to bathe you in its mellow light. If you look into the above *ayah* you will notice that patience has been pinned down as the best criterion for devotion and virtue. This is what endows on you the supreme reward – Allah’s *qurbayat* or God’s proximity. Mere verbal commitment is not enough, you have to go through the ordeal, the ultimate test of fortitude. Calamities will befall you and dangers will lie in wait at every turn of the road, but you have to regard them

as Allah's *rahmat* or grace. If you emerge unshaken by the blast you will have proved that you are completely immersed in Allah. Such an ordeal took place on the banks of the Euphrates in the month of *Muharram*. Surrounded by the enemy, exhausted by hunger and thirst, Hazrat Husain (ra) made ablutions with his own blood and said his prayers. Here was patience par excellence and steadfast belief bowing to the Almighty. This is the lesson of *Muharrum* which we ought to emulate.

You cannot get any closer to Allah by wailing and taking out *tazias*. Religion gives you an inner light which is not to be put on public display. When you have that light in you, you have fortitude and then even if you are treading on fire like Hazrat Ibrahim (as) you smile and say *Hasbunallahu wa ney'amal wakil* – Allah is enough for me. Incidentally Hazrat Ibrahim (as) too was thrown into the fire in this month. So Muharram is the month of sacrifice and patience. A worshipper would immerse himself in Allah in order to be ushered into his presence. When the devotee rids Himself of his material and fleshly desires, a different kind of desire gets lodged in his heart. That desire is not the desire of the servant but the Desire of the Lord. Allah Himself finds His place in the servant's desireless abode.

Come Home before the Storm

Amin : To be despondent is tantamount to blasphemy – that’s what Christianity tells us and the punishment due for that sin is ‘damnation’ or hell fire. Is that, Huzur, in keeping with our religious belief too?

Huzur : Yes, to despair of Allah’s mercy, His Grace may be considered to be a denial of belief in Allah. The Quran is very explicit about this – *wala taiyasu mir raohillah innahu la yaiyasu mir raohillah illal Qaomul kaferoon (Sura Yusuf. ayah 87)* which means ‘do not despair of the mercy of Allah, because it is only the non-believers who lose faith in the mercy of Allah’.

Amin : Huzur, why is despair considered to be a great sin?

Huzur : Because, when you despair you negate the endless bounty of Allah. Allah’s power of forgiveness is limitless, unbounded. Despondency is a denial of that power and hence is a kind of *shirk*. And when one commits *shirk* one becomes a non-believer as you obviously know. God with his unbounded mercy knew very well that men would transgress because He had granted them freedom of will. Just as a father eagerly waits for the return of his wayward child, Allah too wants His servants to get back to Him in penance. He is very fond of penitent tears of repentance. He forgives man as soon as he repents. That’s why He is a boundless sea of mercy, And he assures man of this mercy in ayah 53 of *Sura Zhumar – Qul ya ebadeyallazina asrafu a’la anfusihim la taknatu mir rahmatillah innalaha yagfiruzzunuba jamiyan innahu hual*

gafurur rahim– ‘ Say, O my servants those of you have transgressed against your own selves – do not despair of Allah’s mercy. Allah will forgive you all for He is most merciful, beneficent’.

Amin : Huzur, why is so much importance attached to repentance, Allah is great and what’s the harm if he forgives all?

Huzur : Yes, He can forgive all if He so wills it. But in that case what would have happened to the little theatre which He has created with little moving dolls He has fashioned out of dry earth? Particularly, When He has given them their freedom of will with a host of other things like good and evil, truth and falsehood and the beautiful and the ugly.

Amin : But what’s there in repentance?

Huzur : That’s a different question. Look at life – it has three distinct periods – childhood, youth and old age. Nature has three periods – past, present and future too. From the point of view of time, man and nature have the same standing. When you have travelled for some time, the space where you stand is in your judgment the present. What you have left behind is past, and what lies ahead and what you obviously don’t see is the future. But note carefully, every past has a past of its own with a corresponding present and future. Sanskrit grammar has a tense which is called past’s past. So from all these you may come to the conclusion that the time sense is relative to humans and nature. It is a delusion induced by our own experience. In reality there is just time which is ever present. I am giving different names to the same time in the light of my experience, that is, my own motion. I view

time from the point of view of my own motion and the world views time from the point of view of its own motion. Every star and every planet has its own time which is in accordance with its own motion. But what is time in boundless space? Is time moving or is it we who are moving and seeing time from our own perspectives?

These are difficult questions that do not have easy answers. Anyway, I was trying to say something about repentance. Every man lives his life in the light of his own time sense. Some are in love with the past, they love to go over the past with great affection. Some are futurists – they dream of the future and the shape of things to come. And there are still others who enjoy the present, caring very little either about the past or the future. They are the Epicureans whose ideal is eat, drink and be merry. They think this is life and since there is nothing after death, make the most of what the present moment has to offer. But I was talking of repentance. And it is relevant to this concept of time. Repentance does away with this illusory time. To the devotee in tears, the past fades into the present and the future comes and holds the hands of the present. The devotee sees the present as the sum total of his past sins and this realization makes him repentant. But what is repentance if it does not have a reference to the future – if it does not undertake to prevent recurrence of past deeds? True repentance, therefore, makes the individual face a moment of Grace – a moment that obliterates the time sense, a moment that wishes the present to perpetuate, to be the only reality about him. That is how a repentant soul becomes a part of the eternal present, eternal time. And this is where he finds his peace, the blissful presence of Time itself. As long as we are guided

by our own time sense we fall an easy prey to delusion that hardly touches the fringe of the eternal. This failure to touch the Eternal is what the Christians call damnation. We call it hell.

Allah who resides in man is eager to get us out of this hell, even though some of us may not be even aware of their sins. The Holy Quran says – *wa anibu ila rabbikum wa aslimu lahu min qabli aiya'tiakumul azabu summa la tunsarun* (ayah 54, Sura Jhumar). This means 'turn to your Lord and surrender to Him before you are overtaken by punishment from whence you will not be rescued'. Like a worried father, Allah too is anxious for the return of the prodigal son, the wayward child. Allah seems to say – 'Come back, O my child before the storm comes; look at the mighty waves that are surging ahead to devour you. So come home before the storm breaks.'

Empty the Glass before You Fill it

Amin : Our Prophet (pbuh) claimed that Islam was his person, his body. I don't quite see why.

Huzur : The saying has a deeper significance. Our Prophet (pbuh) is the incarnation of whatever beauty, whatever sublimity there is in Islam. A body has two aspects – one is the visible human frame with its limbs and the other is its *Ruh* or soul which is invisible. By claiming Islam. as his body the prophet has drawn our attention to this dual aspect of Islam having a body and a soul. Look at the five canonical pillars of Islam – *Iman* (belief), *Salat* (Prayer), *Roza* (fasting), *Haj* (pilgrimage) and *Zakat* (charity), where you have these dual aspects, the body and the soul. *Iman* and *Salat* are devotional practices that relate primarily to the spirit, the *Ruh*, *Roza* and *Haj* are basically physical *ebadat*. *Zakat* refers to wealth and since wealth is gotten through physical labour, *Zakat* may also be treated as a corporeal *ebadat*. But such dichotomy is not absolute, because one cannot claim that the body has nothing to do with belief and prayer.

On the other hand, though *Roza* and *Haj* are basically physical hardship, you can't really say they have nothing to do with the spirit. And though *Zakat* is giving away part of your wealth, its relation to the spirit cannot be set aside since the question of honesty and good intentions is there in any earning of wealth. In reality Islam is a sum total of all these – a sublime whole and our Prophet (pbuh) has claimed Islam as his body in order to give us an unflinching belief in his being an incarnation of the creed itself. Islam is his vital existence

and any harm done to Islam would be a blow on him. If one loves it, it would be tantamount to loving him. And you cannot get any nearer to God's love if you don't love him – this is what God has stated many times in the Quran.

Amin : In few days time, many would be going to *Makkah* for *Haj*. But I have noticed some people, though wealthy, do not wish to perform *Haj*. They come up with excuses like debts and other problems, but they are building their houses alright.

Huzur : Amin, love is something you cannot teach – people fall in love, love is something you don't learn from books. One who is in love with the Prophet, will not think much about his scant resources, he will be drawn towards the house of Allah and the *Rouza Mubarak* of the Prophet. One who has the means but does not perform *Haj* will meet an unseemly death, the death of a *Jahil* or a non-Muslim. This is a saying of the Prophet mentioned in both *Bukhari* and *Muslim Sharif*. So those who invent excuses for not going to *Haj* should beware. No Muslim should trade his *Iman* or belief for anything in the world.

Amin : Huzur, *Iman* reminds me that it is a very difficult thing. *Iman* is something like a bird at large and it is difficult to keep it in the cage of the mind. You run the risk of committing *shirk*. What's more you've told that forgetting Allah even for a moment is also a kind of *Shirk*. If *Iman* is a bird it is on its wings all the time – difficult to keep it within the mind's cage. For how long can we really keep Allah's remembrance burning within us during the waking hours of a day?

Huzur : You are right, Amin. Keeping Allah in mind is very difficult. But if you can bring yourself to thinking that there is nothing which is outside Allah's presence, you will see Allah wherever you turn your face. There is a tradition from Hazrat Abu Horaira (ra) and in it our Prophet says *Iman* or belief has seventy layers of which three are most important. If you contemplate on these three, you achieve the reward of all the seventy layers.

The greatest portion of these is the *Kalema* which begins with *la* or negation. Believing in this negation is very difficult – most of us don't really and truly believe in this negation. If you can't negate fully, you can't affirm fully. If you want to fill a glass with water you must make sure about its being empty. Emptiness is, therefore, the pre-condition of fulfillment. In the spiritual world you cannot become rich, unless you become the poorest of the poor. Our affirmation is not whole and unconditional, because there is imperfection in our negation.

Amin : Huzur, you were telling about three parts of *Iman*.

Huzur : O yes, the other two are relatively simple. If you find a stone or a thorn lying in your way and if you remove it thinking that it is *sunnah* or the way of the Prophet (pbuh), it would be a part of your *Iman*. And the third thing is a sense of shame which according to a Hadith is a part of *Iman*. One who is shameless is devoid of *Iman* or belief.

Amin : Huzur, the other day you suddenly said something about the *Al-Aleen*.

Huzur : It is better not to discuss it, for it is esoteric knowledge. I don't understand much of it – they have been referred to in ayah 75 of *Sura Swad*. They are neither men nor angels – but they move around like human beings. There are twelve dimensions of the universe and each of them is in charge of one of these dimensions. They are subject to birth and death. If there is any negligence in their discharge of duties, the world will be destroyed. Don't rack your brain about them. Love the Prophet (pbuh) and accept Islam in its entirety – that will give you salvation.

Where are Heaven and Hell?

Amin : Huzur, the Christian clergy are highly educated in contrast to ours who do not seem to grasp well the religion they preach, let alone other branches of knowledge. The Christian clergy, however is well informed and highly educated. How would one inspire men to the ways of Allah if his mind is not liberated from the shackles of ignorance, if he does not try to understand the mysteries of science and if he does not realize the greatness of Allah in the light of his curiosity about this boundless universe. So the only thing they are fond of harping on is the reward or the punishment in the next world – they seldom speak about the essence of religion – about the inalienable connection between religion and human life. They simply point at hell and terrify men or at best hold out the temptation of paradise in lieu of religious formalities. Well, what is hell, Huzur?

Huzur : I have not seen hell, so how would I know what it is like. There are descriptions of hell in the Holy Quran – I’m afraid I don’t understand much of it. But I understand this much – absence of peace is hell. In worldly terms what we know as lack of peace is hell and that hell has been haunting us since our birth.

Amin : Excellent! The English playwright Christopher Marlowe in his play ‘Dr Faustus’ gives a wonderful idea of hell. Asked where is hell, Mephistopheles, a character in the play replies – ‘This is hell, nor am I out it?’

Huzur : Yes, that’s beautifully put. Poets have intuition and they can

grasp many hidden mysteries by their intuition. If you think deeply, you'll realize we all are carrying our own heaven and hell along with our existence.

Amin : Huzur, you said you don't understand well the Quranic description of hell – are there any ambiguities or lack of clarity?

Huzur : No, there are no ambiguities, but what you deem as clear, is not all that clear to me.

Amin : Well?

Huzur : The Quranic description of hell is symbolic. We have been told about hell fire, because we know from experience that fire is unpleasant. But can we really understand what the degree or the intensity of that heat is? You have heard about the heat generated by the atomic bomb at Nagasaki – it was so intense that the skin of the people living quite away from Nagasaki got so badly singed that their skin came off. What was that heat compared to the sun, yet you cannot even imagine the extent of its intensity. The sun's temperature at its photosphere i.e. at the farthest point from the centre of the sun is around 6000 kelvin. At the centre of the sun the temperature rises to some 13 million kelvin. We know – water boils at 373 kelvin. Now you have to imagine what the intensity of heat is like at 6000 or 13 million kelvin. Human mind is incapable of even imagining such intense heat. So how would we know what that heat is going to be like in the next world, which we fail to comprehend in this created universe.

This is why I have told you, I don't know what hell is like.

Dialogue on Islam

I don't even try to understand. I just keep saying – 'O my Lord, forgive me my sins and my failings. Punish me if you will, but don't send me to any place where you are absent. And also if You feel like rewarding me, don't send me to a place where You are absent'.

Amin : Huzur, it looks like we are haunted by our selfish motives even in religious thoughts and practices. We all would like to go to heaven. But from your wishes I clearly understand that between the two places, if Allah is in hell you would gladly go to hell.

Huzur : I have not gone into such details. This body belongs to Him, if He wants to burn it, He certainly will. Who am I to say no?

Amin : Huzur, would you say a little more about the horror of hell.

Huzur : You have been told about seven hells in the Holy Quran. Our Prophet (pbuh) has referred to a hell which is even more terrible. It is a tradition gotten through Hazrat Ibne Abbas (ra). Our Prophet (pbuh) once said that there was a big hole in the spheres of hell. The seven hells pray to Allah at least 400 times a day in order to be exempt from that terrible hole.

Amin : For whom has Allah appointed this great hell?

Huzur : Our Prophet (pbuh) was asked the same question. In reply he said Allah has marked out that horror for five kinds of my followers – (a) those who show off their *ebadat* or devotion, (b) those religious scholars who show off their knowledge in order to impress people, (c) those wealthy people who give in charity in order to be praised by people, (d) those pilgrims

who wish to be known as *Hajis* rather than seek Allah's benediction, and (e) those martyrs who seek martyrdom for eternal fame rather than Allah's satisfaction.

So, I hope you understand how greatly did your Prophet despise this show of religion. He hated any pretension of religion. Our Prophet (pbuh) has been referred to in the Quran as someone who is *Uswatun hasana* or the perfect ideal – seeing whom is seeing Allah Himself and touching whose hand is touching Allah's hand. If we do not consider his hatred worse than the worst hell, our religious devotion would be of no avail. You wanted to know where heaven and hell are. In one sense our Prophet's hatred is hell, and his love is heaven. Now choose your heaven and hell from this. Get away from his hatred and be initiated into the world of his love.

The Playwright of Light and Darkness

Amin : Huzur, I have a bit of a problem.

Huzur : Well?

Amin : Almighty Allah has stated in the Holy Quran that He is immanent – He is present everywhere, in every object of the universe. Since He encompasses everything, the logical conclusion then is that He is both good and evil and Satan too is His creation. And if I may add Satan is a part of His being. He has given Satan the power to lead men astray and on the other hand He has enjoined on man to pursue good and has sent messengers in all ages to bring erring humanity back to His fold. Is not that something of a contradiction?

Huzur : I don't know what Allah's existence is like beyond this manifested reality – that is, what they call his *Dhat* or essence. With our crude senses we can only call it a nothingness – an endless void which is beyond time and space. Time and space can be explained away only in terms of His creation – His manifestation. He has manifested Himself out of pleasure. 'I wanted to know myself, that's why. O Muhammad, I created your light'. Allah says in Hadith-e-Qudsi. This act of creation is a singularity which cannot be explained by the rules of causation. Allah said, 'Kun' (be) and everything came into being. The created universe is, therefore, His manifestation. And the manifestation encompasses everything – good, evil, light and darkness – the two opposites that act and react on each

other and around this conflict is built the grand play which we call life. The playwright has assigned roles to the characters on the stage – some avidly follow good, some evil. The characters in a play cannot question the playwright about the validity or otherwise of the roles that have been assigned to them. In life too we cannot question the grand Playwright of the Universe about His will – whatever has been willed by Him has got to be accepted. But don't forget He makes a distinction between good and evil and has given man freedom to choose between the two. The concept of heaven and hell makes sense only in this context of freedom given to man. Angels don't get punished, man does – man gets punished for his misdeeds. But since He is the great designer of the play, He too suffers when His creation undergoes pain and agony. He wants man to come back to His fold – that is His pleasure, His love.

Amin : The tenets of our religion as embodied in the Quran and Hadith – all aim at correction of human conduct and character. Is that a fair summing up of the aim of our religion?

Huzur : O yes, it sums up not only our but the aim of other religions too. But this simple thing is not understood by men – they are busy looking for esoteric knowledge, they crave for *marefat*, but they refuse to understand this simple but very important lesson of our religion. Our Prophet (pbuh) has emphasized this point over and over again. '*Takhallaqu bil akhlaqillah*' – build your character after the character of Allah, said the Prophet. But where or how do you find the character of One who is invisible. Hazrat Ayesha (ra) was asked the same question and she replied – 'Why, have not

you seen the character of the Prophet (pbuh)?, And the Prophet himself has said, ‘Those who have seen me, have seen Allah’. So the ideal for an excellent character has got to be looked for in the Prophet (pbuh) himself. The Prophet (pbuh) has given us a great many indications for character building. He once said, ‘Do not retaliate ignorance with ignorance’. By this the Prophet meant that incivility should not be an answer to incivility. You know that Abu Jahel once slapped our Prophet (pbuh) on the face – but the Prophet (pbuh) did not slap him back. The nobility of the Prophet (pbuh) was such that the Arab Bedouin too bowed their heads in respect. We all claim we have *iman* or faith. But *iman* does not mean simply uttering the *kalema*. If some one really believes in the negation, the La with which the *kalema* starts and if he affirms the existence of *Ilah*, he is rid of all forms of selfishness and material longings. Such a person surrenders both his love and anger for the sake of Allah. This is why our Prophet (pbuh) said, ‘The wholeness of *iman* is achieved only when one dedicates his love and anger to Allah Almighty.’

You must have heard about the duel Hazrat Ali (ra) fought with a giant adversary in the Battle of the Ditches. Amar bin Abdoud emerged from the enemy ranks with his huge giant-like figure and threw his gauntlet to any who would take it up. His huge physical proportion was awesome and no one came forward. At this Hazrat Ali sought the Prophet’s (pbuh) permission to face him. The Prophet (pbuh) looked at him and signified his disapproval. The man kept on bragging and taunting the *muslims*. So Hazrat Ali (ra) sought permission for the second time. The Prophet restrained him, but when

the man's bragging rose to a crescendo, he gave Harat Ali his own turban and also gave him his own sword. The sword is that famous *Zulfiqar*. When the duel started, Hazrat Ali sprang on him and threw him flat on the ground by extraordinary skill. Hazrat Ali sat astride his huge chest and was about to cut his throat when the giant spat on his face. He knew this would anger Ali to such an extent that he would forthwith dispatch him without inflicting much pain. Hazrat Ali surprisingly let go his grip and slowly stood up. Amar was dumbfounded and looked at Ali completely bewildered. Ali could read his amazement and said, 'Amar, my sword is dedicated to the service of Allah, it is never used for my personal gratification. You have spat on my face – if I kill you now it will be my personal revenge on you. So I have decided not to kill you. You may go back to the company of your friends'. From this you can easily understand that a *mumin's* love and anger are both dedicated to Allah. This is why the Prophet has forgiven all those who have given him any personal offence, but he has fought all those who stood against his religion.

Amin : Tell us something more about the teachings of the Prophet (pbuh) for inculcating virtue in man.

Huzur : The Prophet (pbuh) said, 'He who feels jealous of other's wealth is indeed the poorest amongst you.' One who is eaten up by jealousy is an unfortunate wretch. No wealth on earth can satisfy his want. So we should be content with whatever we have and should express gratitude to Allah. When you say your prayers, say it with such passion as it were the last prayer in your life. You will then see an inner light will show you the path and you will be drenched in His benediction.

Dialogue on Islam

You will then realize that good and evil are both His blessings. Evil then would submit to your will.

The Temptation of Fame

Amin : Huzur, the other day you were discussing conceit or pride. There is a wonderful exposition of how pride can influence our consciousness in a religious play of the Christians. The play is Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* which deals with a historical event. It happened during the reign of Henry II of England. Thomas Becket was a bosom friend of the king. King Henry made him his Chancellor of Exchequer. Later considering his loyalty the king made him the Archbishop of Canterbury with a view to controlling such an important thing as religion. This is where it all started. Once appointed the head of the Church in England, Becket underwent a spiritual rebirth. He refused to allow the king to make God's religion a pawn of the king's whims. So the king's hired killers came to murder him and he gladly prepared himself to face death or martyrdom. When the killers came close to him it suddenly occurred to him that he was not really sacrificing himself, in death he was seeking fame, was harbouring in himself the inordinate ambition of becoming a saint – he was greedy for immortality and the adoration of countless admirers.

So self-analysis led him to conclude that the motive behind his martyrdom was a kind of extreme self-gratification and pride. So a deeply religious person like Becket could realize that his mind was overcome by a secret urge for fame. But the realization itself saved him from ultimate damnation. Huzur, would such a thing be considered sin in our religion too.

Huzur : O yes, certainly. Such pride could spoil a lifetime of dedication and devotion. Our Prophet has warned us about this pride. Let me relate to you a Hadith gotten through Hazrat Abu Horaira (ra) (Bukhari and Muslim). This is about the *ulama* (scholars) and the *ghani* (the wealthy) and the *shuhada* (the martyrs). Our Prophet (pbuh) said that on the Day of Judgment Allah would gather some people who had become *shaheeds* or martyrs for religion. Allah would ask them one by one – ‘well, tell me my servant, what was your motive behind your martyrdom?’ The servant would reply – ‘It was your satisfaction, my Lord.’ Allah would say – ‘That’s a lie, you sought martyrdom for fame and honour.’ Allah would then turn to His angels and say – ‘Grab this liar by the legs, dangle him aloft and convey him thus to hell.’ So the pride you have referred to is something terribly dangerous – it completely destroys the dignity of martyrdom. Good deeds are done for the sake of Allah – if they are motivated by any earthly desires they spoil themselves. It too is a kind of self-deception, but Allah is Omniscience. He sees through all pretensions.

Amin : Huzur, what does that Hadith say about the *ulama*, the religious scholars?

Huzur : Like the *shaheeds*, Allah would address the *ulama* one by one. Allah would say, ‘O scholar, why did you choose to become an *alem*?’

The *alem* or the scholar would reply. ‘I sought knowledge and whatever I learned I tried to teach others only to achieve your proximity, my Lord.’

Allah would say, ‘That is a lie. You became a scholar in order to be venerated as such, you pretended to be a wise man for the temptation of fame. Your desire has been fulfilled in the world. So, my angels, would you drag this man to hell hanging him by his legs.’ Pride of knowledge too would not be spared – we often forget Allah is all-knowing.

Amin : Huzur, I hear some of our religious scholars charge fees for their speeches, some of their cassettes are sold in the market.

Huzur : They must be very good speakers. I too speak in *mehfils* but I never accept anything for my deliberations. There should be no fees for religious preaching.

Amin : Huzur, What about the rich – the Hadith you said contained something about the wealthy.

Huzur : Allah would gather a group of rich men around him and would tell them. ‘O rich men, I gave you a lot of wealth, what did you do with that?’ The rich would say, ‘O Lord, we gave that in charity for your sake.’

Allah would reply: ‘You are liars; you wanted fame by being charitable. So my angels take them too to hell hanging them by their legs’.

So you can clearly see now that no good deed is acceptable to Allah unless the motive is clear; unless it is done absolutely for Allah’s satisfaction. Remember, the word Muslim too means one who surrenders. So a true Muslim would wholeheartedly pray before every *salat* – ‘My *salat*, my *ebadat*, my life, my death O my Lord are all dedicated

to You who is the sustainer of the Universe.’ Temptation for the fame of a *shaheed*, or the pretension of knowledge or the desire for fame as a generous person is something that takes us away from the love of Allah – from a total immersion in the *wazhu* of Allah. One who does not have that sense of unconditional surrender will have all his devotions wasted like the gathering dust on stone that gets washed away by a shower of rain.

Meeting the One without a Name

Amin : We have been pleased at your exposition of the word *al-Hamd*. But this is only a single word occurring in *Sura Fatiha*. Would you please tell us something more about the whole *Sura*?

Huzur : What I'm going to say about *Sura Fatiha* is not anything new, you can look up '*Tafsire Mazhari. Sura Fatiha* has another name – it is also known as *Suratus Salat*. Here *Salat* might mean prayer or *darud* (invoking Allah's benediction on the Prophet). This *Sura* is unique in the sense that it was revealed twice – once in *Makkah* and on another occasion in *Madina*. When Jibrail (as) (Gabriel) appeared before our Prophet (pbuh) he was in a deep trance. The archangel urged upon him to read. '*Ikra*', he said. The Prophet (pbuh) said, 'What shall I read?' At this the angel disappeared and came back in a trice with *Sura Fatiha*, The angel said 'This is how you are going to praise your Lord, The Almighty Allah', The second time when it was revealed, the Prophet (pbuh) was staying in the house of Hazrat Abu *Ansari* (ra) on the third day of his arrival in *Madina* after *Hizrat* (migration to Madina). The second characteristic of this *Sura* is that it was the only *Sura* that was revealed with *Bismillah*. Some think *Bismillah* is a part of this *Sura*, others, however, differ. Those who consider *Bismillah* as an integral part of this *Sura* start the last *ayah* from the word '*Siratallazina*'.

Amin : Huzur, the word '*hamd*' is an adjective, but it is preceded by the definite article 'al' (the), may I know why? 'Al' is

usually prefixed to noun, isn't it?

Huzur : Yes, you are right. This usage has also a special significance. The definite article 'al' is used only before this adjective – 'hamd'. 'Al' is used in the genitive too to mean ownership. *Hamd* has within its meaning the three tenses – past, present and future. That's why 'hamd' is never used with reference to a person or an object. 'Hamd' is a special word used only for Allah. When we refer to the praise of the Prophet (pbuh) we call it 'naat'. The praises that refer to the *walis* or friends of Allah are called 'mankabat.' And when praises refer to an ordinary individual we call it 'madhesarai'.

Amin : Huzur, *Sura Fatihah* does not start with the usual imperative 'Qul' which means say or recite. Since 'hamd' means praise of Allah, don't you think it would have been appropriate to ask the Prophet (pbuh) or the people to praise Allah?

Huzur : Here Allah is praising Himself. Here his identity is *Mahmood* or the one who praises, but when he asks others to praise Him he becomes 'Ahmad' or the praised one. When Allah transforms Himself from essence to form, he becomes Muhammad. Hence Muhammad is the vital link between *Mahmood* and *Ahmad*. But none of these names – *Mahmood*, *Ahmad*, *Muhammad* – belongs to Allah. Allah itself is no name. That is why a *buzurg* says *beismehimalla ismuhu*, that is, 'I begin in the name of one who does not have a name'. Hazrat Abdul Qader Jilani (ra) has said that those who know Allah does not call Him Allah.

Amin : Huzur, could you say something about the significance of this *Sura*?

Huzur : This *Sura* has seven *ayat*. Seven, as you know, is a mysterious number. It is indivisible – you cannot divide it by any other number except one. We know about seven heavens and seven hells and we also know about seven paradises. There are 14 angels guarding its reciter against seven earthly and seven atmospheric dangers. There are 140 letters in this *Sura*. So its reciter is protected from 140 kinds of diseases since every letter has a guardian angel. Its first ayah is called ‘*ayatul hamd*’, the second is called ‘*ayate tadabbur*’ and the third is called ‘*ayate ekrar*’ and the rest of the *Sura* is ‘*ayate doa*’. The word ‘amen’ is not a part of this *Sura*. The reward of its recital is endless. Hazrat Abu Horaira (ra) says (Bukhari) the status of *Sura Fateha* or *Suratul Hamd* is one with that of Allah. No other *Sura* is equal to it – it being the essence of the whole Quran. And if you note carefully you will find that it is the essence of all religions of the world.

Amin : No *salat* or *namaz* is offered without this *Sura* – it is obligatory, isn’t it?

Huzur : O yes, it is.

Amin : But people lining up behind the Imam do not recite this *Sura*, isn’t that a lapse of some sort?

Huzur : Some say that the followers behind the Imam would recite the *Sura* to themselves, not loudly. But our Prophet (pbuh) said the Imam reciting the *Sura* is enough for the rest of the congregation. Our Prophet’s words were confirmed by an ayah – ‘*wa iza Qoreal Quranu fastameulahu wa unsetu l’allakum turhamun* (7/204) meaning when any one recites the Quran listen to it attentively so that you get Allah’s

blessing. From this too we know that the followers in a congregation will simply listen to the recital of the *Sura* by the Imam. Remember, there are two parts of Salat – one for Allah Himself and the other part for the devotee. Allah Himself says that half of the salat belongs to Him and the other half to his servant. When a servant recites ‘*al-hamd*’, Allah calls out to His angels and says, ‘Look, my servant is praising me’. When Allah Himself attests to his servant’s allegiance, can there be any hell fire for him? When the servant recites ‘*arraḥmanir raḥim*’ Allah says to his angels, ‘Look here is my servant aglow with all my attributes prostrating in praise of me’. Such a prayer is called ‘*merajul mumenin*’ or a believer’s audience with Allah. Let Allah usher you all in his presence, *Ameen*.

Does the Foetus Know its Mother?

Matin : Many a time it is asked if Allah exists, and if He does, what is the proof. Would you say something about this?

Huzur : But before I answer your question, would you tell me if Allah itself is a name. The Arabic ‘al’ is a definite article and the word ‘lah’ is prefixed to this definite article, ‘al’. The word ‘lah’ is indicative of an existence. This is why Hazrat Mohiuddin Abdul Qader Jilani (ra) used to say those who know Allah do not call him so – *man arafallah la yaqul Allah*. One *bujurg* used to say *bismillah* like this – ‘I begin in the name of One who does not have a name’ – *beismehi mallah ismun*. When we say the word Allah we hardly remember that its main component is *lah*. We think that the word is a name and we remember Him in our *zikh*.

Matin : If Allah does not have a name, why then do we call Him – Karim, Rahim or Malik?

Huzur : These are attributes and do not comprise the wholeness of Allah’s entity. There are 99 such names in the Quran, but in reality the names are endless.

Matin : Huzur, I wanted some proof of Allah’s existence?

Huzur : I have not forgotten your question, but how do I give proof of the existence of One who does not even have a name? He is immanent in the whole universe, He is present in all names. Well, how do I give proof of His existence? But

remember Truth itself is its own proof. In your higher mathematics, there are some mysterious elements which they prefer to call axiomatic principles. Allah's existence too is an axiomatic truth which defies the chain of causation. Even when you can account for the creation of this material world, you will hardly be able to prove Allah's existence.

Main : Please tell me why.

Huzur : Who created Allah or if He is subject to the rule of cause and effect are questions that cannot be answered. Because God is a singularity. Everything in his creation is subject to the principle of cause and effect, everything is conditioned by some principles, but he is above all rules, because He Himself is a singularity. Man is proud of his intellect and reason, but his intellect and reason has a limitation. Allah is immanent in the whole universe and it is next to impossible to measure that amorphous greatness. Human intelligence cannot even conceive of that greatness. Likewise, man cannot measure His minuteness by his intelligence. So, the truth or otherwise of Allah's existence hardly waits for my recognition, because I can neither conceive Him in His greatness nor in His smallness. Einstein did not believe in God, but he has testified to the existence of a mysterious Force. He did not call it God, but has not disowned the mysterious beauty of that Force.

Matin : Huzur, would you please explain this concept of greatness and smallness of Allah.

Huzur : Human intelligence cannot comprehend the greatness of Allah. You know what a light year is, don't you? Light

travels at the rate of 1,86,000 miles per second. What distance does light traverse at this rate in one hour? It is about 669.6 million miles, isn't it? We are not trying to be precise, but roughly speaking that should be the figure. What distance would be traversed in a day? 16.07 billion miles, isn't it? And now tell me what distance would light travel in a year? A little more than 5.86 trillion miles. This is what we call a light year. There are many stars from which light has not yet reached our earth. When light from those stars would reach us is only known to Him who is beyond our comprehension. So much for greatness. We don't have any idea of his smallness either. We have just been talking about quarks. His smallness is even minuter than that. I hope now you realize how helpless we humans are before His greatness and His smallness. This is why Allama Iqbal has said, *sitaron ki age jahan aur bhi hain* – (there are galaxies beyond the known stars.)

Matin : But Huzur, what is the proof that He exists?

Huzur : You see, you cannot bathe in the sun if you cover yourself with a blanket, can you?

Matin : No, that's not possible.

Huzur : Those proof-seekers are like those blanketed sunbathers. The greatest proof of Allah's existence is you yourself. If you hide yourself under a blanket, you will have a nice little darkness inside. But that doesn't prove the non-existence of the sun.

Matin : Huzur, there is a difference, I can see the sun with my bare eyes, but I don't see Allah.

Huzur : Alright, let's take the case of a foetus inside its mother's womb. If the foetus could speak and if it were asked about the existence of its mother, what would the foetus say. It is inside a dark cell and it would fail to have any idea about what's outside the cell. The foetus could very well say, 'I don't believe in the one who I don't see' – Man's condition in this created universe is exactly like that. He is in God – in God's immanence. He finds himself inside this bigger cell which is our earth with its atmospheric protection against the ultraviolet rays of the sun. How would he prove something as long as he is inside that something. From our ignorance we can say like the foetus about his mother – Allah does not exist. When you say that you deny your own existence.

The Poor Rich and The Rich Poor

Matin : In one of your speeches you compared life to a flowing river. This reminds me of Heraclitus who said, 'No one steps twice into the same river'. I liked the saying but I did not quite understand what he meant.

Huzur : This is a very profound saying. You may come back to the spot where you had a dip, but you never go back to the same flow of water. That's why it is said that we never bathe twice in the same river. Water flows like time. Moments go past without any interruption. And once gone they don't come back. No one knows where time had a beginning, nor is it known where it will end. Time was there before the creation of this earth and time shall be there even after the destruction of this world. Allah said, 'I am time'. This is why strict adherence to time is a kind of *ebadat* or devotional practice in Islam. Everything has an appointed hour. There is a time for compulsive *salat* five times a day, there is a time for *Hajj* too. But beyond its appointed hour *ebadat* loses its originality.

Matin : Originality? I'm afraid I didn't quite get what you mean.

Huzur : You see, seasons go by a cycle of time. Fall winter, spring and summer all come by one after another at a fixed time. In spring, nature puts on a colourful garb, flowers blossom. Once the spring is gone, certain seasonal flowers cease to bloom. You may cultivate the same plant in a green house under conditioned temperature, perhaps flowers too would bloom, but they will not have the same touch of spring.

Likewise, when you miss a prayer, you may say *kada* prayer, but it will not have the same taste. *Kada* prayer will be something like the flowers in a green house. *Haj* is bound by the compulsion of time – it has got to be at a certain time of the year. *Tawaf* during *Jilhaj* along with *sayee* gives it the glory of *Haj*, but the same *tawaf* at other time of the year is simply called *Umrah*. Our Prophet (Pbuh) was acutely conscious of time – he kept his appointments to the minute and he never wasted time. Look at human life – our childhood, youth and old age, these too are different facets of time. Just one *sazda* (bowing before Allah) made in time may please Allah more than a thousand made out of season. There is a Hadith from Hazrat Abu Horaira (ra) according to which our Prophet (pbuh) said that Allah simply laughs at the devotion of those old men (past their sixtieth year) who had not been mindful of their prayers in youth. In other words, those who have wasted the vigour of their youth on trifles are not likely to please Allah in their old age. On the other hand, there is another Hadith in the *Muslim sharif* where it is stated that when a youth bows his head before Allah, Allah calls out to his angels and says, ‘I forgive all the sins committed by the young man.’ So even repentance which comes rather late in life will be of no avail. But the funny thing is man never repents without having lost the appropriate time for repentance. They crack jokes at religion in youth, but come to the fold when it is twilight. Allah has warned against such frivolous cracking of jokes in the 5th ayah of *Sura Jukhruf*.

Matin : Huzur, this *sura* starts with the letters *ha mim*, do they have any specific meaning?

Huzur : These are known as ‘*Muqatteyat*’. These are some mysterious sounds. Some of these are pronounced separately, namely, *ha mim ayen sin Qaf*. On the other hand, the letters in the word Allah too are *muqatteyat*. We pronounce them together and from there we get the word Allah. That’s why the word Allah has no meaning. Some of the *walis* (friends of Allah) have spoken, though not quite openly, about the meaning of these *muqatteyat*. Seven *suras* of the Quran are preceded by the *muqatteyat ha mim*. Hazrat Mohiuddin Abdul Qader Jilani (ra) has stated that the meaning of *ha mim* is *Hamed Mahmud*. Allah is swearing in the name of the Quran. In the beginning of *Sura Jukhruf* Allah’s displeasure is explicit as He quite angrily addresses the transgressors who crack jokes at His beloved Muhammad (pbuh). Allah says, ‘Do you who crack jokes at my beloved friend want that I withdraw this great book which is the essence of all religions?’ Remember, Allah is not simply addressing the unbelievers here, He is addressing those believers who have expressed their allegiance to Allah but are not mindful of the teachings of the Prophet (pbuh). Disobeying the Prophet is tantamount to cracking jokes with him. You have a misgiving about the followers during the time of our Prophet (pbuh). All those who became Muslims by laying their hands on the Prophet’s hand were not his *Sahabis* – many of these converts were not strict adherents to the teachings of the Prophet. *Sahabis* or companions were those who were ready to sacrifice their lives and property for the Prophet (pbuh) and would follow him like a shadow. Insincere *muslims* were as many in those days as there are now in our society – in fact the insincere far outnumber the real believers.

Matin : Huzur, how do we avoid being insincere?

Huzur : Firstly, you have to attempt a bit of balancing of your tongue and heart. When you believe in something and say something quite different, you are being deceptive – a cheat, that’s what you are. Man does this deception endlessly not just with others, but with his own self too. When you are able to analyze your self, criticize yourself and by that painstaking process bridge the gap between your tongue and your heart, you attain the status of *mumin* or believer. It’s a kind of Jihad you wage against yourself. And then you have to initiate yourself in the supreme cult of sacrifice – sacrifice everything for your Prophet (pbuh). When you will be ready to sacrifice your life and property for your *Rasul* and when your acumen and hard labour will be devoted to the well-being of your fellow beings – that would be sacrifice for Allah Himself. When you would be mentally ready to sacrifice everything, you will see sacrifice has not rendered you poorer, rather you have become the richest man on earth. Because then the Lord of riches would be yours. Look at the *sahabis* of our Prophet (pbuh) – there was no difference between their inner and outer lives. They laid everything at the feet of the Prophet. Can’t we too say, ‘O my Omniscient Lord, you are reigning within and without me’.

Getting Lost in Truth

Amin : Huzur, may I ask you a question?

Huzur : O yes, with pleasure.

Amin : Allah is great, unique and invisible. He is great both in macrocosmic and microcosmic sense. But each of us has an idea about God as a creator. That idea or perception of God differs from person to person. So would it be wrong to state that each man's idea of God is his measure of his Creator?

Huzur : No, it certainly would not, because the perception of God as a creator that a scientist may have got from his contemplation of the boundless universe and its known and unknown galaxies is bound to differ from the perception of God that an ordinary villager may have, who may not even have visited a big city. We look at things from our own existence in space and time which is relative. So perception of truth too is likely to differ from person to person. Truth is the name of a quality – it is one thing to accept truth and quite another to be truthful. On the other hand, getting immersed in truth is completely different. If truth is a lamp, one may see the light from a distance and may recognize it as truth. The perception of truth of those who stay at a distance from truth is certain to differ from one another. But one who speaks the truth must come within the circumference of truth itself. The farther you are from the still-point of the cycle of truth the more likely you are to have an illusion of truth. But when one gets lost in the still-point of truth, one becomes Truth itself. This is total

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immersion in Truth and there remains no illusion at all to blur one's vision.

Amin : Huzur, how can we ordinary individuals qualify for this perception of truth?

Huzur : Man is born with this innate capacity for perception of Truth. At his birth man is nothing but a part of that great Truth. His experience and environment alienate him from his childhood glory.

Amin : Wordsworth, the English poet, has stated the same thing in his 'Immortality Ode'. But can man retain this truth in his selfish and sensual life?

Huzur : There is nothing which man cannot attain by dint of perseverance. Inside the mosque, there is a heavenly atmosphere – pure, pristine and placid. But we are content to keep it within the four walls of the mosque. The world outside the mosque is at variance with that atmosphere.

Amin : Shall we then accept this contradiction and be content with it?

Huzur : O no, certainly not. If you accept the truth you have to follow it both inside and outside the mosque. You simply will have to have determination in pursuing the truth. You will then see that all your earthly actions too would become part of your *ebadat* or devotional practice. Allah would accept such earthly preoccupations as *ebadat*. You would then feel within yourself the atmosphere of the mosque even while walking through a crowded bazaar. There shall remain

no difference between your inward and outward being.

Amin : Huzur, tell me what ascetic practice can resolve this contradiction in human life?

Huzur : Love is the best of all ascetic practices. The perseverance which is devoid of love is of no consequence. Life is a difficult way walking along which man has to be cautious, man must think and contemplate. This is a kind of taking stock of oneself – a kind of fighting a duel with one's own self.

This is why the Quran reiterates – *layallahum yatafakkarun*, O men, think and contemplate a little. This is called *mahasaba* or self-analysis, self-evaluation. One who is capable of self-analysis will understand the meaning of that Hadith in which the Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said – ‘Do not make use of one obscenity to get rid of another’. Evil cannot eradicate evil. The good deeds you do with the help of ill-gotten money will not absolve you of sins. If you do not earn your living according to the tenets of religion, your charity will not be acceptable to Allah. And secondly, there will be no *barkat* or blessings of Allah in your spending. Thirdly, if you leave behind ill-gotten wealth, this will haunt you after your death. So that proves that no good deeds done with ill-gotten wealth will ever be acceptable to Allah.

Amin : Huzur, the Hadith seems to be very rigorous, doesn't it?

Huzur : O yes, but look at the other side where it is stated that honest businessmen shall be raised with the prophets, the truthful

and the martyrs. From this you can now conclude who vitiate the social environment and what Allah has kept in store for these wicked people. Allah will talk to each and every individual separately on the day of judgment barring, of course, three kinds of people: one, those who show off wealth by wearing clothes that flow down below their ankles; two, those who do someone a good turn and remind him of that; and, three, those who keep to falsehood in order to multiply wealth. Here the environment we are speaking about is the environment that strikes a balance between the outer and the inner life of man. Those who pollute this environment shall not be forgiven on the day of judgement – all these transgressors will be punished. So an environment has to be created which is free from doubt. Remember, a *mumin* never swears by anything. He follows truth and in his search for truth, he one day gets lost in Truth.

Passport to the World of Light

Amin : In your last Friday address you have, while speaking on the element of praise in human society, warned us about it.

Huzur : Yes, I have. But you have to distinguish between praise and adulation. Praise is saying something in admiration or approval of something. But adulation which is also praise is aimed at winning some favours. So adulation is flattery which exaggerates real or imagined qualities of a person. Praise is appreciation of deserving qualities. It is better to praise someone in his absence. Criticism on the other hand should always be done in the presence of the person against whom criticism is directed so that he gets an opportunity to correct himself. I personally hate those who flatter me in my presence.

Amin : It is said that some of the Arabs who became the Prophet's (pbuh) followers would flatter him in his presence.

Huzur : Yes, that's right. Such dissemblers were many and the Holy Quran has many a time warned against them. Abdullah bin Ubaiya and Abdur Rahman bin Mulzim were notable among these hypocrites. They would flatter him in his presence, but would say quite the opposite at his back. *Ayat 57 and 58 of Sura Ahzab* warn us against their deceitful ways – *innallazina youjunallahawa rasulahu la'anahumullahu fidduniya wal akhi-rawa a'addalahum azabam muhina* – Allah has cursed them in this world and the hereafter and has prepared for them a most humiliating punishment. Here a clear warning has been given against those who

annoy the Prophet, because annoying the Prophet (pbuh) is tantamount to annoying Allah Himself. These people are indeed doomed for ever. We can very well sense Allah's anger bursting out of the next few lines – *wallazina youjunal mumenina wal muminate bigaire maktasabu faqadih tamalu buhtanao wa is-mam mubina* – those who inflict pain on the real believers (male and female), have a great sin weighing on their conscience. From this it can be easily inferred that the Prophet and his beloved disciples and the disciples of their disciples together make up a world of divine *rahmat* or benediction of Allah. This is a world of light, anyone who dares to harm anyone belonging to this world would come to great harm as they commit sin and a veritable doom waits for them. This is why the Quran is so insistent – ‘get yourself completely immersed in Islam’. Allah knew full well that the hypocrites were out to slander Allah, His Prophet and his followers.

About them the Quran states elsewhere – *youriduna liyutfeu noorallahe be afwahihim wallahho mitimmu nurihi* (61/8) – they want to blow out the Light of Allah, but Allah will complete his Light giving it full fluorescence.

Amin : The hypocrites are there in all ages – they were active at the time of the Prophet just as they are active today to undo Islam though they wear clerical robes in the name of religion. Let Allah save us from their evil influence. Huzur, how can we avoid being like them?

Huzur : No one can get into the World of Light without pledging unconditional allegiance to the Prophet (pbuh) of Islam. This must be supplemented by self-analysis and

introspection and a strict adherence to the ways of *ilme tasauf* or the esoteric knowledge. Without self-analysis you cannot get any closer to the mystic knowledge. *Tasauf* is a compound of *Shariat*, *Tariqat*, *Haqikat* and *Marefat*. There is no alternative to *ilme tasauf* if you want to cleanse your *qalb* or heart. *Tasauf* lends power of circumspection to the *qalb*, lends it purity and lights it up. This is why one of the traditions states – *attasaufo tazkiatul qalb* – *tasauf* is the purity of the *qalb*. One whose heart has not been cleansed by *tasauf* will be confined to the literal meaning of the Holy Quran. The Quran which is alive will never speak to such an insensate person. Our Prophet (pbuh) said that the Quran which has two forms – the manifest and the hidden. This hidden has another hidden form and the latter has seven layers of secret meanings. Without the love of the Prophet (pbuh) the mysterious curtain of the hidden will never be drawn. I don't know what Quran you are running after. The Quran is not confined to the *mihrrabs* of the mosques or the dusty bookshelves. The Quran which lies chained to the murky Arabic characters cannot show you the way. You have to follow the live Quran and our Prophet (pbuh) is the Quran incarnate. Those who follow the letters of the Book are to be pitied for their folly.

Amin : Huzur, our Prophet is no longer amongst us. How unfortunate we are that we could not touch the fringe of his sacred robe.

Huzur : There is a tradition for unfortunate fellows like us. Our Prophet (pbuh) said that those who do not look for the Imam (spiritual leader) of their time shall die the death of unbelievers.

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You have to look for him. If you follow the Imam of your time you follow Allah Himself. The Quran hints at them when it states – *Allahwaliullazina amanu youkhrejuhum minazzulumate ilannoor (2/257)* – Allah is a friend to the believers and he brings them into light from darkness. It is further stated in the same place – *Wallazina kafaru auliahumutta-gutu youkhrejunahum minan noore ilazzulumat* – those who deny Allah are friends of the liars and the transgressors who take them from light to darkness.

This points to the fact that Allah's Light has a sphere of its own. The passport to this world will be given by one who, out of profound love for humanity, has called us to enter that world. Let this Light enter into our hearts, Amen.

Appendix 1

Glossary of Technical Terms

Ahsane Taqveem	: an exalted status between Essence and manifestation of Allah
Anasir	: elements
As	: peace be upon him
Avidya	: ignorance
Ayah	: sign, a verse of the Holy Quran
Buzurg	: a respectable old man with devotion
Dhat	: essence
Ebadat	: devotion, worship, adoration
Ehsan	: good
Farishta	: angel
Haj	: pilgrimage to Makkah
Halal	: permissible under religious rules
Hamd	: praise of Allah
Hamed	: one who praises
Haqiqat	: truth
Harf	: letter
Hijri	: the Arabic Calendar starting from the exodus of the Prophet to Madina
Hikmat	: knowledge
Huq	: truth
Imam	: religious leader
Imame Zamana	: the spiritual leader of a particular age
Iman	: faith
Insaan	: man
Istagrak	: immersion
Jalal	: angry
Jamal	: beautiful

Jihad	: holy war
Ju'ma	: congregation, congregational prayer on Friday afternoon
Kalema	: creed (there is no object of worship but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet)
Kamal	: complete, unity
Khanka	: the seat of spiritual leader
Khutbah	: sermon, speech
Kun	: be
Mahmood	: the praised one
Marifat	: divine knowledge
Marsia	: elegiac song
Masjid	: mosque
Matam	: wailing
Mubarak	: holy, sacred
Mugni	: immensely rich
Mumin	: a steadfast believer
Munafiq	: dissembler
Muqatteyat	: abbreviation
Nafs	: desire, libido
Nawali	: sublime
Nikah	: marriage
Noore Muhammadi	: the light by which the Prophet was created
Pbuh	: peace be upon him
Piri-Muridi	: master disciple relationship
Prakriti	: nature
Purusha	: the eternal male
Qalb	: heart
Qurbiyat	: proximity
Ra	: in case of the Prophet's companions it means one on whom Allah is pleased, but in case of others it means, let Allah's blessing be on him.

Rahmat	: benediction, infinite mercy
Raoza	: mausoleum
Ria	: pride
Roza	: fasting
Ruh	: soul
Sahabi	: companion
Salat	: prayer
Sattyam	: truth
Shaheed	: one who dies in a holy war or sacrifices life for a religious cause
Shaikh	: a spiritual leader
Shariat	: canonical rules of Islam
Shirk	: associating Allah with anything
Shivam	: good
Sifat	: attributes
Sundaram	: beautiful
Sunnah	: tradition, action or words of the Prophet
Tahazzud	: non-compulsory late nightly prayers
Taqwa	: steadfast belief
Tariqat	: way to spiritual ascension
Tasauf	: esoteric knowledge
Tasawur	: visualizing an image of the Guru or Murshid
Tauba	: repentance, turning away from something
Tawaf	: circumambulating the Kaba
Tazia	: models made of paper and tinsel carried on shoulders or floats during Muharram
Ulama	: religious scholars
Uns	: love
Wajib	: mandatory but of the second order
Wadu	: ablution
Zakat	: charity as prescribed in Islam
Zikr	: remembrance

Appendix II

Moral and Religious Precepts by Hazrat Syed Rashid Ahmed Jaunpuri

1. Do not transgress the proper bounds of religion. Love God's creation, for therein lies the essence of all Faith.
2. Do not renounce humanity for self-interest.
3. Sinful desires are a great frailty which drains away the will and spirit of man.
4. Your character is an eloquent letter of introduction.
5. The company you keep most in life shall most tellingly influence your character.
6. Love has no tongue. Love that prattles most is most certain to be proven false.
7. Success of love inheres in patience.
8. Those given to sinful desire are a disgrace to love.
9. Defaulters have no room in any faith, for they are indeed the enemies of religions.
10. How long will you go on fending for the stomach alone? Have pity on your soul which is dying of hunger and thirst.
11. Do not ever order about those on whom Allah has bestowed grace. Do not say to these holy men: 'Please pray for me,' or 'Invoke God for a special blessing for me'. They have no special time for you. Remember having been admitted in their presence is itself a blessing.
12. O those of you who have achieved earthly success, can you really claim to have conquered everything? If you have, why then do you give in to your sinful desires? Verily, you are treading along a path that leads to damnation.
13. What you take for light, is in fact the illusive will-o'-the-wisp and

what you take for water is indeed a mirage.

14. Remember, the prayer that gloats over itself is indeed futile.
15. O friends, let the body attend to earthly pursuits, but allow the spirit to get immersed in God.
16. O you who are proud of possessions! Lord of the universe may dispossess you in a trice.
17. Humility and courtesy are not weaknesses, but Divine powers that have in the past and shall in the days to come, conquer all brute forces.
18. O, free and learned men of the world! Has man ever been free from bondage? Allah alone is above all bondage. That is why in the Holy Quran Allah has called himself 'Samad' meaning, 'one who is not dependent'.
20. O friends, time is the essence of life. There cannot be a greater friend than time, nor a worse enemy.

Translated by: Prof. M. Harunur Rashid.

Appendix III

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Shijra Sharif Spiritual line of descent

1. Huzur Habibnana wa Syeedana Aqai wa Mawlai Ahme Mujtabha Muhammad Mustafa Sallaho Alaihe wa Sallam.
2. Hazrat Abu Bakar Siddique (RA)
3. Hazrat Salman Farsi (RA)
4. Hazrat Imam Qasem Ibne Muhammad (RA)
5. Hazrat Imam Jafar Sadeque (RA)
6. Hazrat Imam Musa Kazem (RA)
7. Hazrat Imam Ali Reza (RA)
8. Hazrat Khawaja Maruf Karkhi (ra)
9. Hazrat Khawaja Abul Hasan Sirri Siqti (ra)
10. Hazrat Khawaja Junaid Bagdadi (ra)
11. Hazrat Khawaja Abu Bakr Siblee (ra)
12. Hazrat Khawaja Abul Qasem Nasirabadi (ra)
13. Hazrat Khawaja Abu Ali Dakqaq (ra)
14. Hazrat Khawaja Abu Qasem Kushairi (ra)
15. Hazrat Khawaja Abu Ali Farmadi (ra)
16. Hazrat Khawaja Yusuf Hamdani (ra)
17. Hazrat Khawaja Abdul Khaleque Gazdawani (ra)
18. Hazrat Khawaja Aref Rewagari (ra)
19. Hazrat Khawaja Mahmud Injir Faghnavi (ra)
20. Hazrat Khawaja Ali Ramitni (ra)
21. Hazrat Khawaja Baba Sammasi (ra)
22. Hazrat Khawaja Syed Bahauddin Naqshband Bukhari (ra)
23. Hazrat Khawaja Muhammad Yaqub Charkhi (ra)
24. Hazrat Khawaja Obaidullah Ahrar (ra)
25. Hazrat Khawaja Muhammad Zahed (ra)

26. Hazrat Khawaja Darvesh Muhammad (ra)
27. Hazrat Khawaja Muhammad Amkangi (ra)
28. Hazrat Khawaja Muhammad Baquibillah (ra)
29. Hazrat Mujaddide Alfesani Shaikh Ahmed Faruqui Sarhindi (ra)
30. Hazrat Syed Adam Binauri (ra)
31. Hazrat Shaikh Abdullah Akbarabadi (ra)
32. Hazrat Shaikh Abdur Rahim Muhaddes Dehlavi (ra)
33. Hazrat Shah Waliullah Muhaddes Dehlavi (ra)
34. Hazrat Shah Abdul Aziz Muhaddes Dehlavi (ra)
35. Hazrat Shah Syed Ahmed Berelvi (ra)
36. Hazrat Shah Karamat Ali Jaunpuri (ra)
37. Hazrat Abdul Awal Siddiqui Jaunpuri (ra)
38. Hazrat Syed Rashid Ahmed Jaunpuri (ma)

