

Pathway To Medina

BY

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Translated into English

by

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P R E F A C E

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

The book is a collection of my speeches and articles relating to the biography of the holy Prophet. Since these were delivered or written at different times and for different occasions, some divergence was inevitable. But there is a unity in the diversity for whatever has been said in them is inspired by the same idea and sentiment. Their contents revolve round a single personality, that of the Prophet Mohammad. They appertain solely to his life and teachings, and his contribution to civilisation and gifts to humanity. And the underlying aim, too, is nothing but to produce in the minds a living awareness of his greatness and arouse the feelings of love and deep devotion for him in the hearts. Hence, it is hoped, no confusion or tiresome repetition will be felt in these pages in spite of the dissimilarity or variation of titles and mode of expression.

Most of these speeches or articles were, first, written in Arabic, and, then, translated into Urdu either by myself or friends, and published in various journals.

For a long time, I had been feeling that the attachment of a large number of men belonging to the educated classes in the Arab countries, particularly those who had come under the influence of Arab Nationalism, to the sacred Prophet who was the springhead of all their felicity and good fortune and to whom they were indebted for success and honour in both the worlds was weakening and getting reduced to a soulless formality. The warmth and earnestness of love had gone out of it, although it was distinctly set forth that the love for the Prophet should be stronger than the love one had for one's

dearest relatives or worldly possessions.¹ In the same way, it is demanded of us to show a greater regard and respect for the Prophet than for any other human being in the world. A very wise and elaborate arrangement has been made in the Shariat towards that end, and wide-ranging commands have been given.²

This development is most lamentable and portentous of a grave danger. It must be viewed with anxiety by all sincere Muslims who consider the Arabs to be the first and foremost custodians of this wealth, and believe that for the strength and solidarity of the Muslim World it was essential that they remained as such and the whole of the Ummat drew inspiration from them.

On these considerations, I decided to bring out a collection of these speeches and writings which had proved

1. It is related in *Tabrani* that the Apostle of God said : "None of you can be a true Believer unless his love for me exceeds the love he has for himself .. "

In a number of Traditions quoted in *Sahih Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, the love for parents, children and every other human being, also, is mentioned in the same context.

2. For instance, the Companions were forbidden to speak in a loud voice in the presence of the holy Prophet. As it is stated in *Sura-i-Hujurat* : *O ye who believe ! Lift not up your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor shout when speaking to him as you shout one to another, lest your work be rendered vain while ye perceive not.* (XLIX : 2).

Again, to call out the Prophet from his apartment has been denounced as rudeness and insolence. *Lo ! Those who call thee from behind the private apartments, most of them have no sense.* (XLIX : 4).

And, further : *Make not the calling of the Messenger among you as your calling one of another.* (XXIV : 63).

For the same reason, it was not allowed to marry the Prophet's wives after his death. The deep respect and reverence for the Prophet which was an essential attribute of a faithful Believer and conducive to the strength and security of Faith could not endure in that case. *And it is not for you to cause annoyance to the Messenger of Allah, nor that ye should ever marry his wives after him. Lo ! That in Allah's sight would be an enormity.* (XXXIII : 53).

beneficial and were widely acclaimed in the literary circles of the Arab World. I was encouraged by the hope that it might be of some use in rekindling the fire of love in frozen hearts and mitigating the alarming effects of exaggerated nationalism. It, indeed, was all that a non-Arab and distantly-placed Muslim could aspire to do.

I, further, thought that the narration of the events of the fervent devotion of the non-Arabs could be helpful in stirring the pride of the Arabs and producing in them a sense of destiny.

In the prevailing conditions, the most effective way, in our view, to frustrate the evil designs of the forces which, under the influence of Western materialistic ideologies, modern education and nationalism, had invaded the Arab World and even laid siege to the Harem¹ was that a new army was raised from the 'kingdom of love.' It was love, alone, that had repeatedly withstood the challenge of unripe intellect and superficial knowledge, and whose unruly flame had, time and again, burnt down the thick underbrush of negligence, apathy and egotism. Perhaps, it was for such a situation that Iqbal had said :

From the kingdom of love, I raise a new army,
For Harem is threatened by revolt of the intellect.

Hence, I completed the present volume during the Haj, in 1384 A. H., and handed it over to Sheikh Mohammad Namnakani of Maktabatul Ilmiya, Medina for publication. I called it *El-Tareeq-ila-el-Medina* as it, once again, showed to the Arabs the way to the blessed town that was the last rallying point of Islam. It, so to speak, gives the call to the Arab admirers of Modern Civilization to go back to the real fountain-head, and can be said to be a commentary of the following verse from Iqbal :—

Lead the lost deer back to Harem²,
Bestow, again, boundlessness of desert on the lover of
this town.

1. Meaning the sacred enclosure in Mecca.

2. Here it denotes the sacred territory in Medina.

I requested my friend, Ali Tantaawi, ex-judge of the High Court of Syria, who, in my opinion, is the greatest present-day scholar of Arabic to write the Foreword, and he was kind enough to agree. The introductory remarks, in themselves, make a valuable contribution to the book and are a source of honour to me.

The Urdu edition of the book was brought out under the title of *Karwan-i-Medina* and now it is being produced in English for the forces of nationalism and the effects of Western education and modern materialism are making their inroads everywhere and harming the warmth and fervour of the hearts which is the most precious asset of Muslims and the greatest resource for meeting the challenge of hostile movements and ideologies.

It is, earnestly, hoped that the English edition will prove equally helpful in stirring the hearts of modern-educated Muslims and fanning the flame of love.

Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Daira-i-Shah Alamullah
Rae Bareli (U.P.)
August 7, 1981

FOREWORD

Dear brother Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi,

There is a proverb among us, the Syrians, that "a letter is known by the address it bears." Before I could open your book, its title, *El-Tareeq-ila-el-Medina*—Pathway To Medina—sent forth a wave of warmth and vigour within me, and it appeared that I had gone back by thirty years in the journey of my life. I felt that I was in the desert-land of Arabia; fifty days had passed on me and my friends in those torrid surroundings. We emerged from one sand-dune to get lost in another hot and waterless region. Our tongues were swollen and had become blistered owing to thirst, and death seemed imminent. All our hopes and aspirations were conveyed on the one overpowering desire to see Medina.

Brother, we had got lost on the way to Medina. We endured the pangs of hunger and thirst,—death stared us in the face, and fear and fatigue laid hold of us,—till a whole day had passed. With us was a bedouin guide who always wore a sullen look. He was tongue-tied and glum. Suddenly, his face lit up and lips moved. He uttered a sentence which was more precious to me than a bag of gold mohurs. There was magic in it. He said, "Here is Ohud!" Now, imagine: there is a frenzied lover who has spent a long period of time in separation and the malady of love has driven him into the laps of death, and, then, all of a sudden, he is told that the beloved's home is nearby. This is with love relating to the body which is bound to perish one day. What to speak, then, of the love springing from the soul that is immortal.

Though one-third of a century has rolled by, I distinctly

remember what the few words had done to us. We felt electrified, and told the drivers of our cars to speed up. The motor-cars we were travelling in were the first to cross the desert between Syria and Arabia. The drivers responded magnificently to our call, as if the tidings that we were approaching Medina and the meeting with the beloved was not far had animated them as well.

As we went round Mount Ohud and our eyes fell on the Green Dome (of the Prophet's Mausoleum), we were struck dumb. Our tongues failed to give expression to the emotions that were surging in our hearts as our pens are unable to put them down on paper today. We talked in the language of the lovers,—with heart-beats and tears. And why not? We had arrived in the town of the beloved,—the town in the thought of which we lived and whose remembrance was our sustenance. While we read about those places in the biographies of the holy Prophet we felt that they were the real abodes of our hearts and souls. The country we had been born in was our homeland in the physical sense. Only our bodies belonged to it. And has the dwelling-place of the body ever been dearer to anyone than the dwelling-place of the heart? Does there live the Muslim, anywhere in the world, who is not willing to sacrifice his native land for the sake of the land of the sacred Prophet, should, God-forbidding, the circumstances call for it? Or who may not readily suffer the loss of his home for the security of the House of Allah, if it is in peril?

A writer or historian, naturally, wishes to visit the place where a distinguished poet, writer or historian was born. He travels to it, spends large sums of money, and bears all sorts of hardships. How, then, can the heart of a Muslim not yearn for the town whose soil had been honoured by the blessed feet of the loved one, the Prophet Mohammad (Peace and Blessings of the Lord be upon whom)? The ardent lover walks in the streets in which he had walked, bends his head low in genuflexion where he had offered *Namaz*, and enters Medina by the same route by which he had entered on

Migration from Mecca, and goes out by the same route by which the Muslim army had set out, under his leadership, for the Battle of Uhud. He sees the ground on which the glorious battle was fought, stands reverentially at the graves of the martyrs, and, then, returns to the Mausoleum which is a part of Paradise on the earth, betakes himself to the sacred apartment where the Prophet lies buried, and which has, now, been sealed forever, and says : "*As-Salaam alaik, yaa Saiyyidi ; Yaa Rasulillah*;" (Peace be with you, O Master ; O Apostle of God) !

I shall never forget the excitement, the thrill, the fervour of the first visit. But why do I not feel the same way today ? Where is that joy, that warmth of feeling, that eagerness of the heart ? I recite devotional and eulogistic verses composed by the Arab poets in the sacred memory of the Prophet, but these do not move me while, formerly, I felt stirred by them to the depths of my being. Today, I read them, but only such branches of the heart move which have been deprived of leaves in the autumn of my life, and are, now, dead wood.

Is it because of the passage of time ? Or is it the apathy and inertness of the heart ? Or have I been influenced by the values and ideals of the modern, materialistic times ? The thing, perhaps, is that, in the past, I used to come by the land-route which took weeks to reach Medina. Ardour and enthusiasm acted as a spur, and a thousand desires assailed the heart. Now, we complete the journey in mere two or three hours. We board the plane in Syria and have hardly finished the nap after the meal that it is time to land at Jeddah.

Brother Abul Hasan, I had begun to lose faith in myself that your book re-kindled the spark of love within me and assured that my heart had not become dead to spiritual feeling. Only the worries and vexations of the world had corroded it. The *Pathway to Medina* removed the rust.

Literature, too, had ceased to inspire me. I had grown disenchanted because, for long, the celestial melody that had

characterised the works of poets from the time of Sharif Razi¹ to Abul Rahim Bar'ee² had been missing from it. When I began to read your book, I rediscovered the euphony. I found it in your prose which is pure poetry, although without *Qafiya*³ and *Radeef*.⁴

A thousand thanks for restoring my faith in myself and in literature.

You have asked me for the Foreword, but I will beg to be excused. Neither you stand in need of an introduction nor does the book. The Foreword is to a book what the agent or broker is to a trader. A new trader needs an agent to introduce his products to the public, but when the buyers know the trader more than the agent and are eager to buy his goods, where does the agent come in ?⁵

Ali El-Tantaawi

Mecca

Muharram 14, 1385 A.H

-
1. A celebrated poet of the Abbasid era. The collection of his poems is called *Al-Hejaziyyat*.
 2. A popular Sufi-poet whose poems in praise of the holy Prophet are held in high esteem throughout the Arab World.
 3. Rhyme ; metre.
 4. Hypermetre.
(In poems which terminate in a double rhyme, the penult syllable is called *Qafiya*, the last being called *Radeef*).
 5. Rendered into Urdu by Dr. Syed Rizwan Alvi Nadwi.

I

THE BOOK I SHALL NEVER FORGET

Today, I am going to talk about a book to which I owe much and for whose author I pray from the bottom of my heart. He, indeed, was a man with an awakened heart, and a true lover of the holy Prophet. Through his monumental work, he introduced me to something which, I believe, is the most precious thing in the world after Faith, or, rather, a part of Faith itself. It is called *Rahmatul-lil-Aalameen* (Mercy To The Worlds), and its author is Maulana Qazi Mohammad Sulaiman Mansurpuri.

How I came to possess the book will, perhaps, make interesting reading. My elder brother, Dr. Hakim Syed Abdul Ali,¹ who took over as my guardian, on the death of my father, when I was only nine, paid a special attention to the books I was to read, and his choice was always blessed with Divine grace. He, thus, gave me *Khair-ul-Bashar* (The Best of Men) to read. He wanted me to concentrate on the biographies of the Prophet as he thought that nothing was more useful for character-building, and steadfastness of belief, and sustenance and promotion of faith than it. I, consequently, developed from my childhood fondness for books dealing with the life of the sacred Prophet.

I enthusiastically examined catalogues of publications issued by book-sellers, and it was in one of them² that I first saw the name of *Rahmatul-lil-Aalameen*. I lost no time in sending the order for the book. Till then, its two volumes had come out, and the pocket of a child who was not more than

1. Ex-Manager, Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow. (Died 1961).

2. Published by Shibli Book Depot, Lucknow.

10 or 11 could, obviously, not bear the cost. But children are not guided by the rules of economics. They, generally, act on their innocent impulses.

Within a few days, the postman brought the Value Paid Parcel of the book to our tiny village, Daira-i-Shah Alamullah, Rae Bareli. It, then, dawned upon me that I did not have the money to take delivery of it, and my mother,¹ too, could not be of much help in spite of the earnest desire to please her orphan son. In my desperation, I took recourse to the weapon that never fails a child. It was the weapon Syedna Omair bin Abi Waqqas had used to obtain the permission of the holy Prophet to take part in the Battle of Badr. I mean the tears of innocence that are still precious in the sight of God and His virtuous bondmen, and seldom go in vain. The heart of my mother melted, and she, somehow, arranged for the money.

The book made a tremendous impression on me. It shook me to the depths of my being. But it was not in the nature of a hurricane. There was nothing tempestuous about the way it moved me. On the other hand, it was a most soothing and inspiring experience. My heart swayed with joy like a flower-laden branch of a tree, caressed by the morning breeze.

That is the difference between the biographies of conquerors and other men of worldly renown and the books relating to the personality of the holy Prophet. The former, too, arouse the heart, but the effect they produce comes from outside and seizes it like an invader while the awakening that takes place as a result of reading the life-accounts of the Prophet springs from within, from the inner-most recesses of the Believer's heart, and sustains it.

1. Died Jamad-i-ul-Aakhir 6, 1388 A.H.. She was a lady of exceptional attainments. Had the whole of the Quran by heart, and was, also, a poetess. She left behind several useful books including a collection of prayers.

An immediate rapport was established between me and the book, and I began to relish it as if it was what I had been waiting for all my life. It gave me a unique pleasure, the like of which I had not known before. It was altogether different from eating a palatable dish when hungry, or wearing a new dress in 'Id, or enjoying a holiday after a term of study and hard work. It could be felt, but not expressed, and, even today, it is hard for me to describe it. All that I can say is that it was the pleasure of the soul. Children, of course, have a soul. They do feel spiritual joy. The souls of the children, in fact, are purer, and they are more sensitive.

As I read the accounts of the people of the Quraish who had embraced Islam, and were persecuted mercilessly on account of it, and the magnificent way they bore all the pain and punishment, I realised that there was another joy that was unknown to the rich and other so-called fortunate persons. It lay in the willing endurance of loss and suffering in the path of Faith. No enjoyment of power, wealth or victory could compare with it. I felt overcome with the desire to experience it, at least, once in life.

I read about the incident of Mas'ab bin Omair who was known for the refinement of his taste and luxurious living. It became the talk of the town as that nobleman of the Quraish went out wearing a dress costing hundreds of dirhams. But, as he took the solemn pledge at the hand of the Prophet, he renounced, at once, all the manifestations of wealth and luxury, and began to lead a life of rugged simplicity and wear rough clothes. Sometimes, he had even to fasten his mantle with a thorn.

At times, it brought tears in the eyes of the Prophet to see Mas'ab in that state. When he was killed in the Battle of Badr, there was only a sheet on his body which was so short that if the head was covered with it, the feet became bare, and if the feet were covered, the head became bare. On seeing it, the holy Prophet told the people to cover the head with the sheet and place grass on the feet. It was, thus, that he was

buried. I marvelled at the episode and it appeared to me that besides palatial houses, expensive clothes, sumptuous meals and other forms of worldly enjoyment, there was another human need which was beyond the reach of kings and millionaires, and another joy of which the men of pleasure had no idea. As I looked into my heart, I felt, within it, the stirrings of a peculiar craving for that aspect of life, that sublime reality which was more precious than the empty show of wealth and superiority.

I read about the Migration of the sacred Prophet to Medina, a more inspiring event than which I have yet to know.

The Prophet arrives in Medina. The whole town comes out to greet him. Each tribe comes up, holds the stirrups of his camel and begs him to be its guest. "Sir ! Stay with us," say the tribal leaders. "May everything we possess be a sacrifice to you." The Prophet replies, "This camel of mine is appointed by God. Give it the way." The camel, then, sits down where the gate of the Prophet's Mosque is today, and refuses to move. The Will of God becomes manifest. The honour goes to Abu Ayub Ansari who takes the distinguished guest home with unbounded joy and reverence.

I could visualise the pleasure of Abu Ayub Ansari at the unique honour Destiny had brought to his door-step and the ardour and enthusiasm with which he was entertaining the guest.

It seemed that my heart was closely following the Prophet's camel. It was keeping company with it, and had reached Medina along with it. It was as if I was seeing the whole thing with my own eyes. The triumphant entry of conquerors, the tumultuous reception of political leaders, and other displays of pomp and magnificence faded into insignificance before it. The breath-taking spectacle of love and loyalty of man for a man left a permanent mark on my mind.

I read about the incident of Ohud. It is a saga of faith, devotion, self-abnegation and high-mindedness which is

without a parallel in the annals of mankind. I read the historic words uttered by Anas bin Nazr on seeing how people had lost heart at the news that the Prophet had been killed (which, later, proved to be false). He had said, "Lay down your lives for what the Apostle of God has laid down his life." And another Companion whose greatest desire was to be near the Prophet during the last moments of his life had remarked, "I can feel the fragrance of Paradise coming from the other side of Ohud." He was carried to the Prophet and it was at his feet that he died. I was thrilled to read how Abu Dujana had made himself into a shield to protect the holy Prophet and taken the arrows on his back.

Events of unexampled heroism like these passed before my eyes. Sometimes, I cried aloud, and, sometimes, went into raptures.

I shall never forget that it was this book that stirred up the dormant love in my heart without which life was meaningless.

Miserable is the time that passes on the live-hearted without love,

Lost is the day for the intoxicated¹ that is spent in sobriety.

— — —

Into the world's harvest I looked,

One grain was love, the rest straw.

It is this love that raises a man head and shoulders above the others. It is this sovereign remedy that has enabled men of an apparently ordinary stature to perform miraculous deeds. It has made it possible for individuals to subdue nations, and when any community has drawn upon it, the world has bent the knee to it.

Today, the Muslim Ummat² is sadly wanting in this sublime attribute. It has wealth and manpower, and is, also,

1. Meaning drunk with the love of God.

2. Meaning the Muslim community as a whole.

at the helm of affairs in many countries, but the absence or weakening of the driving force of love has reduced it to a living corpse.

Our modern-educated and so-called Westernised sections are, particularly, bankrupt in this regard. Their soul is unhappy. They are bewildered, confused and frustrated. They are more ineffective against the mounting challenge of Materialism than the other classes of the Ummat. Their life has become dull, drab and mechanical.

I am extremely indebted to this book and its author for activating the strings of my heart and turning the rising tide of love towards a personality that is absolutely unique,—the greatest embodiment of love, goodness and perfection. God Almighty has just not created the like of him.

The greatest tragedy of the Ummat is that it has severed its bond with the heart and deprived itself of the joy of love. In the words of Iqbal :

One night, before God I wailed,
Down in the world why Muslims are ?
Came the reply : "Don't you know
This community possesses the heart,
but not the beloved ?"

God bless you, O Sulaiman ! Your book has conferred two gifts on me which, after Islam, are the most precious boons in the world. One is love, and the other is the awareness of its true aim and purpose.¹

1. Translated into Urdu by Molvi Syed Mohammad el-Hasni.

II

THE NEW WORLD

This world of ours, they say, is very old. Yet, time and again, it has woken up from death-like slumber and staged a wonderful recovery. The last time it was restored to life and rendered active and flourishing again was when a grandson was born in the family of Abdul Muttalib in Mecca. Though born an orphan, the child was to take care of all mankind and give it a new lease of life. A life spent in sleep is no life. Time used up in killing oneself cannot be called existence. The real age of the world, hence, is not more than fourteen hundred years.

The cart of humanity was moving along the downward track in the 6th Century of the Christian era. It was growing darker and darker, and the slope was becoming deeper. The cart was gathering momentum. It was rolling down with greater force. The whole family of Adam was seated in the cart. There were, in it, the fruits of thousands of years of human endeavour, of ancient civilisations and intellectual development. The occupants were either fast asleep or quarrelling among themselves for a better place. No one gave a thought to the danger that lay ahead.

Physically, the human race was strong and vigorous, but its heart was weary, mind fatigued and conscience dead. The pulse was sinking, and the eyes were about to petrify. It had lost the wealth of faith long ago. Not one man of belief and conviction was to be found in whole communities. Superstition was rampant in the world. Man had disgraced himself. He had bowed low before his own slaves and servants, and was

ready to kneel to everyone save One God. He had developed a fondness for the forbidden and the unlawful

The ruling classes, drunk with power, indulged in reckless oppression. Their dogs lolled in luxury while the human beings starved. The mounting standard of living had turned life into a nightmare. Whoever did not conform to it was looked down upon as uncivilised. The common people lived in grinding poverty. Taxes and other duties had multiplied manifold. Wars had become a regular feature. People, everywhere, were entangled in their internal problems. They had neither the time nor inclination for the higher values and ideals of life. The world had become hollow from within.

The correction and reform of the world had gone beyond the power of man. It was not the question of a country's freedom or a nation's progress. The whole of mankind was hovering between life and death. There was not one sore to be healed; the entire body of mankind was a big, festering boil.

No one seemed fitted for the task. Neither the philosophers, nor the writers, nor the statesmen. They, all, were the victims of the same malady. How could the sick heal the sick? How could those who were bereft of faith impart it to others? A huge lock had been placed on the destiny of man, and the key was missing.

The excessively gloomy state of affairs, certainly, was not pleasing to the Lord. Ultimately, He raised up an Apostle among the simple, unaffected, freedom-loving Arabs. No one, indeed, besides a Divine Apostle could rescue mankind from the clutches of death and restore it back to life. His name is Mohammad bin Abdullah. Boundless salutations to him, and endless benedictions !

Whose name did I utter, Oh God !

That my speech came up and kissed my tongue ?

All the ingredients of life were intact. They had only become disorganized. The wheel of life had not stopped. It was moving, but in the wrong direction. The real fault was

that the tenon of life had become loose. But what was that tenon ? Correct knowledge and awareness of the Creator, the resolve to obey Him, to believe in His Apostles and to follow their teachings, and faith in the Hereafter.

The Prophet Mohammad set right the axle of life, but at the gravest peril to himself and his family. He sacrificed everything for the sake of it; he spurned the crown, rejected the offers of worldly power and wealth, abandoned the beloved home-town for good, and spent his whole life in suffering and privation. He tied stones to his stomach (to suppress hunger), never ate to satisfaction throughout his life, and made his family a sharer and partner in adversity and tribulation. He was always in the forefront on occasions of trial and danger, and kept strictly away from every manner of gain and gratification. Yet he did not depart from the world until he had put it on the right path and turned the tide of history.

Within a space of 23 years, the world was transformed. The conscience of man was aroused, the inclination towards well-doing was created and the power of discernment between right and wrong was developed. The path of the worship of God and obeisance to Him was opened, and man began to feel ashamed of prostrating himself before fellowmen and his own slaves. Inequality came to an end, and racial pride disappeared ; rights were restored to women, and comfort was brought to the weak and the indigent.

In sum, the face of the world was changed in no time. Where a God-fearing man was not to be found in a whole country, hundreds and thousands of persons were produced who lived in the constant presence of the Almighty. They did justice even to the enemy and cared nothing for their own children when it came to fairness and impartiality. They were ready to depose against themselves and willingly bore hardships for the sake of others and espoused the cause of the weak against the strong. They were ascetics by night and horsemen by day, and wielded the upper hand over everything, power, wealth and desire. They knew only one Lord and

Master, the Almighty, the Supreme Being, the King of Kings. They animated and inspired the world and instilled it with faith, civilisation, morality and God-remembrance.

A new dawn was heralded. A new era was ushered in. As man changed, the world, too, changed with him. The earth and the sky changed. The marvellous revolution was brought about by the teachings and endeavour of one man, the Prophet Mohammad. The family of Adam is not indebted to anyone more than him. He is the greatest benefactor of humanity. The clock of civilisation would be put back by thousands of years if what the holy Prophet gave to the world was taken away.

Why should the day of the birth of the sacred Prophet not be blessed when the most blessed man the world has seen was born on it ?

The springtide that has come over the world,
He it is who set the plants.¹

1. Broadcast by All India Radio, Lucknow, in celebration of the birthday of the holy Prophet.

III

THE TRUMPET OF LIFE

Look at the world as it was 1400 years ago. Leave alone the magnificent buildings, the enormous piles of gold and silver, and the resplendent garments. You can see them even in the museums and collections of old pictures. Think if mankind, really, was ever alive and awake? Look at it closely, from end to end, and see if the pulse is beating anywhere and the heart throbbing.

In the ocean of life, the bigger fish were eating the smaller ones. Vice had triumphed over virtue, evil over good, and desire over discretion. The urges of the stomach ruled over the urges of the soul. But not the faintest voice of protest was heard in all creation.

The whole world had been reduced to an auctioneer's shop. Everyone was open to bidding, the rich and the poor; the kings, the noblemen and the commoners. No one was above a price. There was not a soul that could declare that the entire firmament could not suffice for a single flight of his ambition, and, hence, another existence, eternal and everlasting, was created for him. How could he, then, sell his conscience for a small fraction of this limited, perishable world?

Humanity had got divided into small compartments of race, blood and geography, and even highminded men who boasted of the loftiness of purpose had resigned themselves to living in those toy-houses like pigmies. The vision of a larger humanity had altogether disappeared from the minds. Buying and selling, fraud and falsehood had become the high aim and purpose of life.

There was little to distinguish between mankind and a frozen corpse. A jungle had grown on the surface of life. No man was to be seen in the vast human wilderness. The few enlightened souls that still remained had taken refuge in caves and monasteries or were seeking diversion in poetry and speculative philosophy.

Suddenly, the stirrings of life were felt in the dead body of humanity. The pulse revived and the birds that had built their nests in it felt their snug retreats shaking. The ancient biographers of the sacred Prophet have described it in the words that the towers and turrets of the palace of the Chosroe of Iran fell down and the fire of its fire-temple was extinguished. A modern writer would say that an agitation was caused on the surface of humanity as a result of the inner movement and the rotten fortresses standing on it tottered and tumbled down as if an earthquake had hit the earth. Every cobweb and nest of straw appeared to be dispersing in the wind. If a tremor of the earth can raze mighty castles to the ground, why will the self-made systems of Caesars and Chosroes not shake and rock at the advent of the Apostle? The event that revived and resuscitated humanity was the birth of the Prophet Mohammad which took place in Mecca, the heart of the then civilised world.

The brief message the Prophet gave to the world was marvellous in its comprehensiveness. It was all-embracing. History tells that the foundations of mankind were not shaken so powerfully by any other pronouncement that that *there is no deity save One God, and Mohammad is His Apostle*. Humanity had never experienced such an awakening before. The Pagans of Mecca were mad with rage. *Maketh he the gods we worship One God? Lo! that is an astounding thing,*¹ they exclaimed. It was believed by them to be a sinister conspiracy against their ancestral belief and way of life which had to be crushed at all costs. The chiefs went about exhor-

1. XXXVIII : 6

ting : *Go and be staunch to your gods ! Lo ! this is a thing designed.* (XXXVIII : 7).

The new Call dealt a mighty blow to the traditional concept of creation. Its impact was felt on the whole structure of life. It insisted that the world was not a forest growing of itself, but a well-laid garden, and man was its choicest flower. This flower was the product of a thousand springs, and it was not meant to wither away like any other bloom. It had a purpose to fulfil.

No one but the Almighty Creator could determine the worth and value of the fundamental reality of humanity that dwelt in man. He had been endowed with such boundless ambition, high-soaring spirit and restless heart that the universe could not contain him. For him a never-ending life, an illimitable world was needed before which the earthly life was a mere drop in the ocean. The pain and pleasure of this world had no relation to the pain and pleasure of that existence.

The natural urge and inclination of man, thus, was towards the worship of One God. The fulfilment of his destiny lay in the seeking of Divine good pleasure. There was, absolutely, no need for him to kneel before any spirit and hidden or imaginary power, any tree or stone, any wealth or splendour, and any form of spirituality or eminence. He was the lowliest of the low before one Height alone, and higher than all the rest. He was the master of the universe, and the slave of only One Being. By making the Angels bow to him and forbidding him to bend the knee to anyone save the Almighty, it was made manifest that the forces of nature of which the Angels were the custodians were subservient to him, and, in return, his head was bowed low before the Creator.

The human mind had become so listless that it could not operate easily outside the confines of the material world, and beyond the limitations of the body and the stomach. It had been rendered so shallow as to be incapable of entertaining a lofty and sublime notion about anyone. People had got

used to some set standards, and it was by them that they judged all men. Hence, the utmost they could imagine about the sacred Prophet was that he was after wealth and power.

A deputation, thereupon, waited on the holy Prophet which was truly representative of the mentality of the Age, and the reply the Prophet gave, too, was typical of Apostleship. He assured the representatives of the Quraish that the things to which they attached so much importance did not matter the least to him. He was concerned with the salvation of mankind, and not his own betterment. He did not want to carve out a paradise for himself in the world, but sought the permanent entry of man into the real Paradise from which he had been ejected. He was not aspiring for power and rule, but was prompted by the sole desire to rescue man from the bondage of fellow-men and place him wholly under the servitude of One God. It was from this basic position that the Ummat rose to spread all over the globe. It was the message it carried to the four corners of the world. Its emissaries proclaimed boldly and fearlessly in the courts of mighty kings and emperors that they had been sent by the Lord to deliver His bondmen from the overlordship of bondmen to His own overlordship, from the narrow confines of this world to the boundlessness of the next, and from the oppression of other faiths to the fairness and justice of Islam. When they came into power, they demonstrated how true they were to what they preached. During the golden period of their ascendancy, obeisance was yielded to no one save One God. It was the Divine edict that ran, not the edict of any individual or group. Their ruler, who was called the Caliph, would exclaim at the slightest disregard of human dignity : "People were born free. When did you make them slaves?" The highest officers of the Islamic Caliphate lived with such simplicity in the capitals of the most powerful kingdoms of the day that people mistook them for ordinary labourers and put their loads on their heads, and they quietly carried it to their homes. The well-to-do passed their days in stern

austerity which spoke of the utter disregard of worldly comforts. Everyone who saw them would know that their eye was on some other world and it was some other joy upon which they had set their hearts.

The existence of this Ummat marks the announcement of the existence of an entirely different reality, aside from the material realities and physical pleasures, in all parts of the world. Each individual belonging to it declares, at the time of his birth as well as death, that there is another Power which is mightier than all the other powers on the earth, and another life that is more real than the life of the world. The *Azan*¹ which is a resounding proclamation of this truth is said in his ears when he is born, and when he dies, he is bidden farewell from the world with the same affirmation.

When the world sinks into moral and spiritual stupor and gets engrossed in worldly aims and interests, the *Azan* breaks the spell of sensuality and materialism and proclaims that there is another reality that transcends the body and the stomach, and holds the key to felicity. The bustle and hubbub of the market-place subsides when *Hayya 'alas-Salah, Hayya alal-Falah* (Come to Prayer; Come to Success) is said, and the bondmen of the Lord rush forward like men possessed.

When the darkness of the night spreads and the stillness of the graveyard descends on the world, the fountain of life, suddenly, bursts forth like the first ray of the morning sun. The sleeping humanity receives a new message of vigour and strength from the pronouncement : *Es-Salat Khairum-min-annaum*. (Prayer is better than sleep).

When a power-drunk despot declares, *I am your Lord, the Highest, and I know not that there is a god other than me*,² the *Muezzin*³ makes a mockery of the claim by proclaiming *Allah-o-Akbar* from the heights of his own kingdom and

1. Public call to prayer

2. XXVIII : 38

3. Public crier to prayer

asserts that the real kingdom is the Kingdom of Allah, the Lord of Lords, the Supreme Being.

The heart of the world, thus, remains protected from intemperance and immoderation, and its mind from vacillation and incertitude.

The springhead of this awareness, faith and proclamation is the raising up of the holy Prophet, his teachings and his call, and, now, this very awareness, faith and proclamation is the well-spring of a new life, and source and origin of every healthy and healthful revolution.

The morning which, sometimes, is today, and, sometimes,
tomorrow,

God, alone, knows from where it comes.

The morning by which life's bedchamber shakes,
From the Azan of the faithful Believer is born !¹

1. First published in *Tanvir* (Lucknow) under the title of *The World Needs Us!* Subsequently, it was brought out in the form of a pamphlet by *Maktab-i-Islam*, Lucknow, entitled, *The Minaret of Light*.

IN THE LIGHT OF THE CAVE OF HIRA

I climbed Jabal-i-Noor, and stood by the cave which is known as the Cave of Hira. I said to myself : This is the place where God had favoured the holy Prophet with Apostleship, and sent down the first Revelation. It will, thus, not be incorrect to say that it was from here that the sun rose which illumined the world and granted a new life to mankind. The world greets a new morning everyday, but, generally, there is no newness or originality about it. Nor is every morning the morning of bliss. People do get up with the rising of the sun, but it makes no difference to the slumber of the hearts and stupor of the souls. What is the significance of these false mornings ? The true dawn, in fact, took its rise from this Cave to fill the world with light and rouse it from deep sleep.

Before the appearance of this morning, the natural flow of life had been arrested. Heavy locks had been put, as one would say, on every door of human personality and existence. The intellect had been locked against which the philosophers were helpless; the conscience of man had been shut in, and the reformers were powerless against it ; the hearts had been sealed, and neither the portents of nature nor disasters of history could break it. The capabilities of man had become stunted, and the social and spiritual environment held no hope of revival and rehabilitation. The seminaries had nothing to offer. The courts of justice functioned only in name. The petitions and entreaties of the weak and the oppressed were of no avail. The family life had been eroded by social and economic tensions. The royal palaces were closed to the poor, and

the down-trodden. The coffers of the rich were locked, and the wails and groans of the hungry and the distressed made no impression.

Numerous reformers and law-givers had taken up the challenge, but failed to open any of the locks for the simple reason that they did not possess the right key. The key had been lost. They used the key they had, themselves, manufactured, but it was no good. In their desperation, they had tried to break the locks, but succeeded only in breaking their own tools and hurting their hands.

At such a critical juncture of history, the knot of humanity was unravelled on a barren mountain, and at an, apparently, insignificant place,—the Cave of Hira. It was, here, that the Lord of the Worlds opened the door of unbounded mercy upon the world, in the form of the Apostleship of the holy Prophet, and the key that had been lost for centuries was restored to it. It was the Key of Faith, Faith in God, in His Messenger, and in the Hereafter. With this key, the Prophet opened all the locks, one by one, and threw open the doors. When he applied the key of Apostleship to the lock of the intellect, it yielded. All its curves and contortions were removed, and it began to function, properly, again. It acquired the ability to study and profit from the Signs of God, both animate and inanimate, and learnt to attain the goal of God-realisation by pondering over the heavens and the earth and all that was contained therein. It began to behold the lustre of Unity by lifting the veil of diversity. The absurdness of Polytheism, idolatry and superstition became apparent.

With this key the holy Prophet opened the lock of human conscience. Freed from the control of the inward monitor, the still, small voice within, the *Nafs*¹ had become unruly and grown into *Nafs-i-Ammarah*.² Now, it was transformed into

1. Self; soul; spirit.

2. The soul that commands to the indulgence of pleasures and sensual appetites; carnal or inordinate desires.

Nafs-i-Lawwamah,¹ and, in the twinkling of an eye, *Nafs-i-Lawwamah* developed into *Nafs-i-Mutma'inah*², after which falsehood could not enter into it, and sin became so intolerable that the transgressor himself went to the Prophet, confessed his guilt and asked for the severest penalty. A sinful woman, an adulteress goes to him and begs to be stoned to death; the Prophet defers the sentence on legal grounds; the woman goes back to her village; there is nothing, no bail, bond or surety to compel her to return, but she reports back at Medina, at the appointed time, and insists on the punishment,—death by stoning—, which, evidently, is more agonising than any other form of execution.

At the time of the defeat of Iran at the hands of the Muslims, the Crown of Cyrus falls into the hands of a poor soldier. He conceals it in his dress and takes it secretly to his Commander so that the trust may be fulfilled, but his honesty does not receive publicity.

The key was applied to the hearts of men, and how wonderfully did they re-act ! A miracle, indeed, had been wrought ! Now people lived in the perpetual fear of God, took due warning from natural calamities, and the Signs of the Lord became of benefit to them. They shuddered at the sight of the oppressed, and treated the indigent with kindness and affection.

When the key of Apostleship unlocked the potentialities of man that had been lying dormant for a long time and doing him more harm than good, they burst forth like a flame and swept over the world like a tidal wave with the result that lives that were being wasted in herding the cattle blossomed into choicest specimens of humanity, and people who, till yesterday, derived the greatest satisfaction from being the foremost horsemen of their town or tribe rose to be the con-

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1. Accusing soul; consciousness of right and wrong of one's own act, or motives.
 2. The satisfied soul.

querors of powerful kingdoms.

The holy Prophet opened the locks of educational institutions with the same key, and they, again, began to pulsate with life. He drew attention to the value of education, and explained the relationship between Faith and knowledge. An unprecedented enthusiasm was created for learning and each mosque and the home of every Muslim became a seminary. A Muslim was, now, a student with regard to himself, and a teacher with regard to others, for Faith, to them, was the greatest incentive to the seeking of knowledge.

The Prophet broke the stagnation of the judicial system with that key. Now every jurist could be relied upon as an honest judge, and every Muslim officer was a just officer of the highest class. The Muslims had become truthful deponents solely for the sake of God. When belief in God, the Quran and the Hereafter was firmly entrenched in the hearts, the supremacy of justice was recognised on all hands, and unfairness, breach of trust, false swearing and perjury became things of the past. The family affairs that had degenerated to the extent that ill-will, mistrust and taking by force or fraud had become common even between father and son, brother and brother, and husband and wife, and from the family circle, these evils had spread into the whole society were set right again, the seed of Faith was sown in the individual as well as collective existence, and the Divine commandment was revealed :

O mankind ! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward Allah in Whom ye claim (your rights) of one another and towards the wombs (that bare you). Lo ! Allah hath been a Watcher over you. (IV : 1)

By defining the duties of each member of a family and community, the holy Prophet reconstructed the social edifice on the foundations of love, truth and justice, and inspired the

society with such a living fear of God and trustworthiness that even the highest officers and noblemen conducted themselves as models of plain-living and piety. The rulers behaved as servants of the people, and did not regard their position higher than that of the guardians of orphans. They refrained from taking a penny out of the public money if they had a private income of their own, and in case they had no personal income, they would accept from the Public Exchequer only what could suffice for the bare needs. It was by means of this belief and conviction that the Prophet engendered indifference to the world and eagerness for Futurity among the people. He taught that wealth belonged to God, and He had made men His trustees in making use of it.

Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and spend of that whereof He hath made you trustees.

(LVII : 7)

And bestow upon them (the needy) of the wealth of Allah which He hath bestowed upon you.

(XXIV : 33)

The Prophet warned against hoarding of wealth with the Divine pronouncement :

They who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, unto them give tidings (O Mohammad) of a painful doom.

On the day when it will (all) be heated in the Fire of Hell and their foreheads and their flanks and their backs will be branded therewith (and it will be said to them): Here is that which ye hoarded for yourselves. Now taste of what ye used to hoard.

(IX : 34-35)

The individual the Prophet had produced was a staunch believer in God. His faith was real and earnest. He lived in the constant fear of the Almighty, and was truthful and trustworthy even when there was no one to watch. As against the world, he preferred the Hereafter, cared little for worldly possessions, and could subdue materialism with

his spirituality. He believed that the world had been created for him, and he for the world to come. Thus, if he engaged in trade, he was scrupulously honest and upright, and if he worked as a labourer, he was as conscientious a worker as anyone could be. If he became rich, he was generous and kind-hearted, and if poverty was his lot, he bore the resulting hardship with equanimity. If he was appointed a judge, he decided the cases with utmost fairness, and if he ascended to the throne, he proved to be a just and selfless ruler. He was an humble-minded and affectionate master, and a loyal and hard-working servant. If the public funds were placed under his charge, he managed them with exemplary care and integrity.

These were the bricks with which the Islamic society had been built, and upon which the Islamic state was raised. This society and this state were the lengthened shadows of the morality, disposition and way of life of the individuals that went to form them. Their moral and spiritual qualities had permeated the entire fabric of the society,—the honesty of the trader, the liberality and compassion of the well-to-do, the fair-mindedness of the judge, the sincerity and selflessness of the ruler, the modesty and warm-heartedness of the master, and the dutifulness of the servant. Just as the Islamic society was representative of the moral virtues of its members, the Islamic Government, too, had become the moving force behind the goodness and rectitude of the citizens. It operated on the highest plane of justice and equity, and functioned as an instrument of progress, welfare and correction in every sphere of life.

I was ruminating over all these things as I stood at the edge of the Cave Hira. My imagination took me away from the world I lived in. The portrait of the Islamic society of former days floated before my eyes, and I could see its every contour and lineament. I, indeed, felt that I was living in that luminous environment. Suddenly, I thought of my own world, and it appeared that, even today, some locks were

dangling from the doors of happiness. There was no limit to the complexity of the problems, and chaos and confusion prevailed everywhere. I wondered if these modern locks could, also, be opened with the same key. But I must, first, examine the locks. As I looked at them carefully, it was clear as daylight that the locks were not, at all, new. Only their shape had changed. There was nothing strange about the problems and difficulties of the contemporary world. At the root, they were just the same as in the olden days. Today, also, the real problem was the problem of the individual. It was the starting point of all the other questions, as it always had been. The individual was the brick of the state and the society, and his present state of mind was that he was not ready to recognise anything apart from power and matter. He was engrossed in himself and in his desires. The worth and importance of the material world had grown enormously in his eyes. The appeasement of the senses was the chief object of his life. His bond with God, with the Apostle and with the Hereafter had been broken. It was this decline of the individual that lay at the root of all the ills and evils that plagued the society.

If a man, today, takes to trade, he is greedy and acquisitive. He cheats the customers as well as the government. The poor want to live on the income of others, and the rich are selfish. The rulers, on the whole, are corrupt and power-hungry. The masters are mean and hard-hearted, and the servants, disloyal and untrustworthy. If anyone is entrusted with money, he cheats, and if he comes into power, he acts as a tyrant. The scientist invents weapons of death and destruction.

As a society composed of good and virtuous men reflects the noble qualities of its members, so does the society made up of rotten individuals embody their faults. It is bound to portray the insatiable greed of its merchants, the seething discontent of the have-nots, and the excessive self-indulgence of the elite. Craftiness and treachery, oppression and exploita-

tion, disloyalty and faithlessness, fraud and forgery, exaggerated nationalism and militant patriotism, inertia and slothfulness, extravagance and wastefulness, sensuality and intemperance; in fact, all the habits and practices that are rampant among the people will be duly represented in the different aspects of their collective existence.

This is the real malady which has made the soul of man so unhappy today. All the tensions and anxieties, discontent and inquietude, can be traced to it. The name of this virus is the craze for materialism, *i.e.*, the tendency to attach too much importance to matter and regard its manifestations the be-all and end-all of everything. Blackmarketing is a natural outcome of it, bribery is its fruit, hoarding its gift, and inflation its aftergrowth. Social scientists, statesmen and law-givers are baffled. If they solve a problem, a more intricate problem takes its place. Their efforts at untying the knots are proving counter-productive. They are creating new knots like the quacks who produce more diseases than they cure, and add to the sufferings of the sick. The experts make new experiments every day. They diagnosed that autocracy was the root cause of the evil and replaced it with democracy, but it, too, did not help. Some of them advocated dictatorship and totalitarianism, but when it, also, failed to deliver the goods, they reverted to democracy. In the same way, capitalism was, once, preferred as the panacea of all social and economic ills, and, then, the choice fell on socialism, but the things did not improve, and even grew worse. Why? Because all these changes were relating to the surface only while the real source of trouble, the decadence of the individual was left untouched. No serious effort was made to reform him.

But, I daresay, even if the thinkers and reformers had grasped the truth and probed into the real seat of trouble, they would have failed to effect a cure. It was beyond them. Granted that they have at their disposal most powerful means for the dissemination of knowledge and the modern age is the age of intellectual advancement, but they do not possess the

vision and ability to turn the face of the individual from evil to good. Their minds and hearts are devoid of spirituality, or, rather, they are ignorant of the worth and significance of the soul. They are bankrupt from within. They do not possess the wherewithal to nourish the heart and set the plant of faith in it. They have lost sight of the thing that can forge a living contact between the bondsman and the Creator, and strike a harmonious balance between the outer existence of man and his inner needs: between matter and spirit, and knowledge and morality. Their spiritual insolvency, blind materialism and intellectual arrogance has taken them to the stage where they are eager to include the ultimate weapon of destruction in their armoury that can wipe out the human race and turn the world into a fearful mass of ruin and desolation.¹

1. Being a speech broadcast from the Saudi Radio Station, Jeddah, in Rabi-ul-Awwal, 1350 A.H. It was latter translated into Urdu by Molvi Atiqur Rahman and published in *Al Furqan* (Lucknow) of Rabi-us-Saani, 1371 A. H.

V

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF APOSTLESHIP

Through Revelation and Apostleship the Lord entrusted His Messengers with the reform and elevation of humanity, and they made man the object of their call and endeavour. It was revealed to the Prophets that the destiny of the world depended upon man. If the real man was there, the world was in a good and flourishing state in spite of poverty and dilapidation, and if he was not, it was no better than a wasteland, all its lustre and affluence notwithstanding. Its misfortune did not lie in the dearth of means and resources, but in their misuse. Whenever the world was destroyed, it was due to human waywardness and imprudence; the tools and assets only hastened the process.

Again, by virtue of his dignity, solidity and depth, and the pivotal place he occupied in the design of creation, man deserved more than all other creatures to be the subject of earnest attention and solicitude.

The world is a mysterious place. It is very big, extensive and beautiful. But as compared to the secrets of human nature and its hidden treasures, the vastness of the heart of man and the high flight of his mind, the ardour and restlessness of his soul, and his endless desires and aspirations, and boundless capabilities, it is nothing. Many worlds like it can get lost in the extensiveness of his heart. The mountains can not vie with the strength of his faith; the fire cannot compete with the passionate burning of his love, nor can the oceans with a single tear of his eyes. The beauty of his character puts into shade all that is lovely and charming in the world, and the forces of nature are bending low before his will. To

produce genuine faith, right ideals, and true morality in man, and to take from him the work of the vicegerency of God on earth is the real task and achievement of Apostleship

This lofty mission was fulfilled by all the Apostles during their time and they gave to the world men who imparted a new and purposeful life to it. Among the achievements of Apostleship, the most glorious and imperishable is that of the Prophet Mohammad which is preserved to the minutest detail in the annals of our race. The success he attained in producing good and virtuous men has not yet come the way of anyone else. The level from which he began the reconstruction of mankind had not confronted anyother Apostle or reformer. It was the level that marked the line of demarcation between barbarism and humanity. The stage to which he carried the task, also, had not been reached by anyother person striving for the reform and redemption of mankind. Beginning from the lowest depths of humanity, he took his mission to the highest point of elevation. Each one of the men produced by him was a masterpiece of Apostleship and a source of pride for the entire human race. No better, finer and more lovable portrait is to be found in the whole collection of mankind, leaving aside the Prophets. The steadfastness of their faith, the profundity of their knowledge, the purity of their hearts, the plainness of their living, their selflessness and God-fearingness, piety and devoutness, kindliness and benevolence, courage and resoluteness, fondness for worship and eagerness for martyrdom, their horsemanship and nightly vigil, indifference to worldly riches and comforts, and administrative skill and impartiality and fairness are without a parallel at any period of time and in any part of the world. Such, indeed, was their nobility and greatness that had they not dwelt under the full blaze of history and authentic records of their lives and attainments were not available, people would have dismissed them as mythical figures. But they were not the creatures of imagination or exaggerated veneration, but real men, in flesh and blood, like ourselves. Only the miracle of Apostleship

had produced divergent, and, often, mutually opposed qualities and aptitudes in them.

Fashioned of dust and light, slave with attributes of the master,

His heart is indifferent to the riches of the worlds;

His earthly hopes are few, his aims high,

Courtesy is his mien, gaining all hearts with a glance;

Soft in speech, fierce in the hour of pursuit,

In war and in peace, pure in thought and deed ;

His times are wondrous, his legends strange,

To the ages outworn he gave the command to depart ;

Saqi of men of taste, horseman of the realm of desire,

Pure and unmixed his wine, tempered his steel.

When such an individual had been produced, he proved his worth in all the spheres of life and discharged whatever responsibility that was entrusted to him with exemplary devotion and success. As a judge and arbitrator, he decided cases with utmost care and honesty, and as Commander of the army, he acted with matchless skill and gallantry ;—if he was relieved of the command, he showed not a trace of grudge or grievance, and continued to fight under the new commander with the same courage and determination. As a master or officer, he was kind-hearted and accommodating, and behaved like the head of a family, and as a labourer he was conscientious and hard-working. If he happened to be a beggar, he bore the hardships of poverty with patience and resignation, and if he was rich, he was generous-hearted and thankful; if a scholar, he was ready to share his knowledge with others and guide people along the right path, and if a pupil, he took his studies as an act of worship and devoted himself to them with single-minded attention. As the administrator of a town, he was a watchman by night and a dispenser of justice by day. In fine, wherever he was and in whatever capacity, he proved himself an asset to the society.

When the most delicate and onerous responsibility—that

of government—was assigned to him, he presented a marvellous example of asceticism, self-effacement, industry and earnestness.

We shall, now, take up a few instances appertaining to the days of *Khilafat-Rashida*¹ by way of an illustration. The chronicler of the reign of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq writes :

“Once the wife of Hazrat Abu Bakr wanted to eat a sweet dish. When she expressed the desire to her husband, he replied that he had no money for it. She, thereupon, asked if she could save a little from the daily allowance for the purpose to which he agreed. When enough money had been saved, she gave it to Hazrat Abu Bakr for buying the sweets. Taking the money, Hazrat Abu Bakr remarked that it appeared that it was in excess of the needs of his household, and, therefore, the Public Treasury had a claim on it. He returned the money to the Treasury and ordered a proportionate cut in his allowance.”

You will be aware of the pomp and ceremony that attends the official visits of foreign Heads of States and Governments. Now, read what Allama Shibli has to say in his monumental work, *Al-Farooq*,² about the visit of the most powerful ruler of the Seventh Century, Hazrat Omar Farooq, to Jerusalem. He writes :

“People will be anxious to know what a grand spectacle the journey of Hazrat Omar had presented, particularly when the object was to impress the people with the might and glory of Islam. But, in fact, he had not taken even an ordinary tent with him, what to speak of drums and trumpets, retinue and attendants, and army with its baggage and camp-followers. There was only a horse for riding and a few Ansars and Mahajirs. Nevertheless,

1. Meaning the period of the Rightly-guided Caliphs who immediately followed the holy Apostle as the religious and temporal heads of the Islamic State.

the earth shook as the news was received that Farooq the Great had set out for Syria from Medina.

"He made a long halt at Jabia, and it was here that the Jerusalem Agreement was written. After the Treaty had been concluded, Hazrat Omar decided to proceed to Jerusalem. The hooves of the horse he was riding had worn out, and it had difficulty in moving. On seeing it, Hazrat Omar dismounted, and a fine Turkish horse was provided by the people in its place. It was a spirited animal, and as Hazrat Omar got up on it, it began to strut. 'Wretched animal', remarked Hazrat Omar, 'Where did you learn the proud and haughty gait?' He alighted from the horse and began to walk. As he approached Jerusalem, Hazrat Abu Obaida and other Army officers came up to greet him. The Muslims felt ashamed to see the clothes of Hazrat Omar and the other articles he was carrying with him. They thought what the Christians would say, and presented to him another Turkish horse and a fine dress. But he replied, 'The honour God has bestowed upon me is the honour of Islam, and that is enough for me?'¹

Here is the description of another journey of Hazrat Omar to Syria which took place in 18 A.H.,

"Hazrat Omar resolved to go to Syria. He entrusted the government of Medina to Hazrat Ali, and set out for Ila. His slave, Yarfa, and a number of Companions were with him. As he approached Ila, he gave his horse to the slave, for some reason, and seated himself on the latter's camel. On the way, people would enquire, 'where is Amir-ul-Momineen?'² 'In front of you', he said. It was thus that Hazrat Omar arrived in Ila where he stayed for a few days. His shirt, made of a coarse cloth, had got torn at the back owing to friction against the camel's

1. *Al-Farooq*, pp. 105-106

2. Commander of the Faithful; a title of the Caliphs of Islam.

saddle, which he gave to the Bishop of Ila for repair. The Bishop put a patch on it with his own hands, and, also, had a new shirt made. But Hazrat Omar preferred to use his own shirt saying that it absorbed the sweat better."¹

Fragments from the lives of the Rightly-guided Caliphs and descriptions of their moral virtues are contained in various books and we can draw a complete portrait of an ideal character by piecing them together, but, fortunately, a full account of the life and moral disposition of one of them, Hazrat Ali, is available to us. Read it and see if a more fascinating picture of human elevation is possible, and what glorious specimens of his training and instruction had the holy Prophet left behind. Writes Zarar bin Zamrah, who was a constant companion of Hazrat Ali, about him.

"He was a very high-minded person, most magnanimous and brave. His speech was measured. He decided cases with fairness and justice. A fountain of knowledge flowed from his mouth, and wisdom was evident from whatever he said or did. He was averse to worldly joys and comforts, and felt happy in the night and its darkness. His eyes were moist and he remained absorbed in thought and anxiety. The march of time amazed him, and he never ceased looking inward. He liked to wear clothes of rough and coarse material and eat simple food that was, generally, eaten by the poor. He did not like a mark of distinction for himself and looked like any other member of the community. He used to reply when we asked a question, and when we went to him, he was the first to greet and enquire about our welfare. When we invited him as a guest, he would accept the invitation. But in spite of all the closeness and equality, so awe-inspiring was his presence that one dared not speak to him, and it was not easy to start a conversation. When he smiled, the teeth looked like a string of pearls. He

entertained respect for the devout and the virtuous and loved the poor, but with all the humility and self-abasement, no one however rich or powerful could prevail upon him to give a wrong decision or obtain a favour from him unjustly. The weak and the indigent had the fullest faith in his sense of justice and fairmindedness.

"I swear that once I saw him in the state that night had dropped its curtains of darkness and the stars had begun to fade and he was standing in the *Mehrab*¹ of his mosque, holding the beard in his fist and wreathing with agony as if a snake had bitten him. He was crying as if his heart was wounded. His words are still ringing in my ears: 'Oh world! Hast thou ventured to test me? Doth thou dare tempt me and lead me into evil? Despair of it, give up the hope, and go and deceive someone else. I have divorced thee thrice after which there is no question of restitution. Now, I can not take thee back. Thy life is short, and thy joy is unreal, and the danger from thee is great. Alas! How little is the provision, how long the journey, and how perilous the path!'"²

This achievement of Apostleship is not peculiar to the time of the raising up of the Prophet or the First Century A.H.,. The patterns of life left by the teachings of the holy Prophet and his Companions continued to throw up men of outstanding worth and merit among the succeeding generations of Muslims and in different parts of the Islamic World. The products of the ageless seminary of Apostleship who had learnt, in it, the lesson of humanity, self-denial, morality and God-awareness, and sympathy and fellow-feeling were the ornaments of their time and the pride of mankind. It is impossible even to prepare a mere list of the names of the millions of men of faith and God-realisation that have been coming up

1. The principal place of the mosque where the Imam,—one who leads the congregation—, stands.

2. Ibn-i-Jawzi : *Safwatul Safwa*, Vol. I

in different lands and at different stages of history as a result of this training and instruction. To trace the outline of their moral excellence, spiritual attainments and high humanity is emphatically out of the question. Whatever of their life-accounts have been preserved in history make one wonder if this creature of clay, *i.e.*, man could, really, attain to such heights of spiritual advancement, purity of the self, large-heartedness, and constancy of faith, magnanimity and self-abnegation, belief in transcendental truths and unseen realities, and indifference to the riches of the world and fearlessness to kings and other rulers of the day. Their faith and love inspired the hearts of countless men and revolutionised their lives. People with beastly urges and inclinations became truly civilised, and a popular inclination towards God-seeking, God-fearingness and love for mankind was produced in their company. Our own country has been most fortunate in this regard as it has given rise to numerous deep-hearted men who, in their time, have made a magnificent contribution to the upliftment of humanity.

Even among the kings and potentates who know nothing but power and rule and luxury and self-indulgence, ascetic rulers and self-denying monarchs were produced the like of whom were hard to find among world-renouncing anchorites, faquirs and yogis. As Iqbal has said :

By their rule, the strange secret was revealed to all,
Men of pure hearts hold sway to serve, not to enslave

From among the class of kings and conquerors who were lucky enough to be benefited by the 'Seminary of Apostleship' let us take the case of Sultan Salahuddin Ayubi. About this greatest ruler of Middle East, in the Sixth Century A.H., whose kingdom extended from Kurdistan in Asia to the Nubian desert of Sudan in Africa, his friend and secretary, Ibn-i-Shaddad, deposes that :

"Zakat could not be binding upon him throughout his life for he never saved enough on which it had to be paid. All his wealth was given away in charity. The entire assets of the Sultan, at the time of his death, were 47

dirhams and a gold coin. He left behind no other property; no house, no grove, no village, no agricultural land. Not a pice was spent on his burial from what he had left behind. Everything had to be borrowed, even the bundles of straw for the grave. The shroud was provided by his minister and chronicler, Qazi Fazil, from a legitimate source."¹

Sultan Salahuddin deserves to be ranked among the greatest men of history, also, from the viewpoint of moral excellence and nobleness of character. The large-heartedness he displayed at the time of the conquest of Jerusalem, as against the unspeakable cruelties perpetrated upon the helpless Muslims by Christians on their entry into that city, has been extolled by Stanley Lane-Poole in these words :

"If the taking of Jerusalem was the only fact known about Saladin, it were enough to prove him the most chivalrous and great-hearted conqueror of his own, and, perhaps, of any age."¹

This was about a ruler of the Middle East. Now, let us take up an incident from the life of a ruler of our own country, Sultan Muzaffar Shah of Gujerat, (died 932 A.H.), who had attacked and taken possession of Mandu in support of Mahmud Shah Khilji when the latter had been deposed by his minister, Mandli Rai. It is stated that "when Muzaffar Shah entered the fort and the noblemen who were with him beheld the fabulous wealth of the rulers of Malwa and heard accounts of the richness of the soil, they ventured to suggest in his presence that since 2,000 of their horsemen had been killed in the fighting, it would not be wise to restore the Kingdom to a ruler who, owing to his incompetence, had lost it to his minister. As soon as Muzaffar Shah had heard it, he cut short the round of inspection and came out of the fort, telling Mahmud Shah not to allow any member of his

1. *Al-Nawadir-ul-Sultaniya*

2. *Saladin*, p. 234

entourage into it. The latter begged him to stay there for a few more days and have some rest, but he firmly declined.

"Explaining his action, Muzaffar Shah, latter on, remarked that 'I had waged the war simply for the good pleasure of the Lord. When I heard the talk of the noblemen, I feared that an evil desire might arise in my heart to ruin the sincerity of my act. I have not done any favour to Mahmud Shah. On the contrary, I am indebted to him for it was because of him that I got the opportunity to perform a virtuous deed.'"¹

Far be it from my mind to suggest that all the rulers of the Islamic Age belonged to the class of Nuruddin, Salahuddin, Nasiruddin Mahmud and Sultan Muzaffar Halim. What I mean, simply, is that the kings in whom you find a reflection of the sublime qualities of piety, austerity, selflessness and compassion, and who seem to you to be above the level of their times and different from the conventional image of sovereigns, were, invariably, the beneficiaries of Apostleship and animated by the religious ideal. If you study their lives and achievements, you will agree that they all owed their greatness to the same springhead of guidance that always has produced men of the highest stature however removed they may have been from it in terms of time. In fact, they all had been moulded into shape in the 'Seminary of Apostleship' which has carried on the evolution of mankind at the largest scale and to the highest level and whose beneficence is still keeping the lamp of humanity alive and burning and whatever light is found in the world is due to it.

Modern Civilization and contemporary intellectual leadership have miserably failed in the sphere of character-building and giving to the world conscientious individuals, guided by a living sense of social responsibility. It can "enchain the sunbeams", "seek the orbits of the stars", send men to the planets, and put the atomic energy to great purpose, It can remove poverty, and make everyone literate. No one

1. Syed Abdul Hai : *Yaad-i- Ayyam*

can deny its achievements. But its helplessness is self-evident where the raising up of good and virtuous individuals, of men of faith and moral rectitude is concerned. Herein lies the greatest tragedy. That is why, the work of centuries is being wasted, and an overpowering feeling of frustration and non-fulfilment is creeping over the world. What is more, man is losing faith even in science and learning which can set off a powerful reaction against knowledge and civilisation and mark the beginning of a revolt against the traditional values and accepted norms of society. Misguided men have perverted even the sound and harmless means and implements and turned them into tools of corruption and destruction. A strong boat cannot be made with rotten boards. It is a fallacy to believe that the boards may be weak and decayed, piece by piece, but when they are put together they become good and strong. Thieves may be thieves individually, but if they form a group, they get transformed into watchmen and begin to act as responsible citizens. The individuals modern intellectual leadership is giving to the world are devoid of faith and earnestness. They are ignorant of the true station and dignity of mankind. It is only the logic of strength and the doctrine of pleasure that they understand. Or they swear by nationalism. Whether such men are the leaders of a democratic or socialist system, they can not set up a healthy and God-fearing society, nor create an environment of peace and well-doing. They can never be trusted with the destiny of mankind.

It is Apostleship that has given the best of individuals and the cleanest of society to the world. It has the power to change and warm up the hearts, to bend the self and lend constancy to it, and to produce the inclination for what is good and aversion to what is evil. It is such men, alone, who can save the world and preserve all that is precious in the stock of human civilisation.

The Apostleship did not give science and technology. It lays no claim to it, nor offers an apology. Its achievement is that it produced individuals who could follow the correct path,

and, also, lead the world along it; who could profit from all the good things themselves, and be of benefit to others as well, and who could realise the purpose of their existence and possessed a living awareness of the Creator.

It is the existence of these men that is the chief wealth of mankind, and it is their training and guidance which is the real achievement of Apostleship.¹

1. The paper was read in the Union Hall of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, on December 15, 1959, at the invitation of the Department of Theology, and published, (subsequently), in the monthly *Al-Furqan* (Lucknow), of February 1960. The introductory remarks have been omitted here.

VI

THE GIFT OF APOSTLESHIP

Various persons have served mankind, in various ways, during the long course of history. Today, they all emerge on the surface of memory, and present themselves as servants of humanity or architects of the world, and seek to be judged by that standard.

The first to appear is a group of grave and dignified men. They are the philosophers, including the wisemen of ancient India and Greece. Sages and savants have, always, inspired feelings of deep respect and admiration in our midst. We have been inclined to revere them from the earliest times. It is a part of our culture. As we see them, we exclaim : "They, indeed, have raised the stature of man, and enriched his mind with pearls of wisdom". But is it correct? Can it stand the test of objective examination? Have they, really, been a blessing to mankind? What did humanity get from them, after all? Which of its need, yearning or aspiration have they fulfilled? Which of its wounds have they healed? The deeper we go in it, the greater is the disappointment.

Look at philosophy and the philosophers. Philosophy makes a small island in the ocean of life. The philosophers have been spending their God-given talents and energies within its narrow confines. They did not touch upon the problems that called for an immediate solution. They sought peace and security in their intellectual sanctuary. But humanity is not made up of tiny islands.

Even in Greece, everyone was not a philosopher. The philosophers studied the planets, and made many advances in astronomy, but what guidance did they furnish to mankind or

to classes other than the intellectuals? What did they do for the sick and straggling humanity? They, on the whole, were removed from life, and had built a wall of wisdom around themselves, and concentrated, mainly, on a few academic questions.

It may be easier to understand the true position of the philosophers with the help of an example. A number of foreign embassies are, now, functioning in India. There is the American Embassy, the Soviet Embassy, the French Embassy, the Iranian Embassy, and, so on. These are humming with life, and hundreds of men can be seen working in them, including seasoned diplomats and senior executives. But they have nothing to do with the internal affairs of our country. They are not concerned with our domestic quarrels and disputes. They have a limited purpose to serve, and a fixed duty to perform which they do. Thus, as one would say, they live in India, and, yet, they don't. They, at once, are with us, and away from us. Philosophy, too, was like a foreign diplomatic office, and the philosophers operated as representatives of knowledge and wisdom within the four walls of it. They remained unconcerned with the actual problems of life.

The second group to come into view is that of poets and literateurs. Poetry and literature have always held a fascination for us, and I do not aim to be scornful to them. But I must say that poets and writers, too, did nothing to restore the ailing humanity to health. They did provide the fare for our entertainment, enriched our language, but strove little towards the correction of man. Indeed, it was beyond their power. Life went on as usual, along its traditional, erratic course; now reforming, now degenerating. Humanity stumbled, fell down, and recovered again, while they continued to weave magic-patterns of ideas and words. Let us illustrate. Suppose some people are in trouble. They are sick, worried and sad, and a flautist passes by playing nonchalantly on his instrument. They can enjoy the music for a time, but it cannot solve their difficulties or impart a message of lasting value. However

necessary poetry and literature may be, they do not offer a cure for our ills and ailments. They do not hold an answer to the hard realities of life. Poets and writers, further, did not insist on anything. They had no set purpose before them, no ideal for which they might have been willing to make sacrifices, while no fundamental change or reform could be brought about without it.

The third group is of the conquerors who subdued nations, annexed territories, and built empires. We are rather impressed by them. The clang of their swords is still ringing in our ears. From the noise they are making, it appears that they have done a yeoman service to mankind, but what sort of memories do their names evoke : of justice and fairness or of callousness and brutality ? At the very mention of the name of Alexander, our mind goes back to the death and destruction he brought in his wake. Was he a benefactor of humanity ? He rode roughshod over all the lands falling between Greece and India, conquering one country after another, destroying their peace, and laying them to waste. The same is the case with Caesar, Chengiz Khan and other outstanding men of their tribe. A conqueror may be a blessing for his own people, but for others, he is a veritable curse.

The fourth group consists of the liberators of their lands, of the national leaders who fought for the freedom of their countrymen, and won. We bend our heads in veneration as we think of them. They, truly, served their people with single-minded devotion, and bore great hardships. But what did they do for millions and millions of men who lived across their frontiers ? You would, surely, have heard of Abraham Lincoln. He was the architect of the United States of America, but, tell me, what service did he render to the people of India, Iraq or Egypt ? Judged from the consequences, the whole thing would boil down to the simple truth that he laid the foundations of another imperialistic power, and added one more fetter to the bondage of the world. Who was Saad Zaghlul ? The liberator of Egypt, yes; but what was his

achievement outside his country ? Do we, really, owe a debt of gratitude to him ? The nationalism he espoused is proving to be a calamity for the world for its roots lie in collective self-conceit and aggressiveness which leads to the exploitation of the weaker nations by the stronger ones.

The fourth group is of the scientists who made inventions and gave many new things to the world. This group, doubtlessly, has been of much benefit to mankind. All the marvels from which we profit, such as, electricity, wireless and aeroplane, owe their origin to them. But as a little thought will show, mere inventions are not enough. Are these a blessing or curse for man if the moral qualities of earnestness, humility and forbearance are not there to control their use. The scientists gave the inventions to the world, but did not teach it how to use them. They could not create the mind or produce the conscience that could ensure against the misuse of the tremendous power man had come to acquire through them. The experience of the last two World Wars is enough to show that without moral and spiritual discipline, the gifts of science, in truth, are not a source of happiness and welfare, but a scourge and a punishment. With due regard to the scientists, I must say that their achievements are incomplete without moral force and mental restraint. Mere material means and machines and favourable circumstances cannot make a man good unless he is, also, animated by a higher ideal. Suppose I have money to give away, and there are, also, needy men around me, and no one is holding my hand, but I am devoid of the spirit of charity : who, then, can persuade me to spend it on giving aid to the others ?

Another group, then, emerges on the scene. It is of the Prophets. It has no claim to intellectual eminence or scientific skill. It has made no startling discoveries or amazing inventions, nor written immortal verses. The Prophets neither boast of their achievements nor show undue modesty. They tell, plainly, that they have given three things to the world: (i) Right knowledge; (ii) Firmness of belief in that knowledge; and

(iii) Will and inclination to lead one's life in accordance with it. This is the sum and substance of the teachings of all the Divine Apostles, from the Prophet Adam to the Prophet Mohammad (Peace and Blessings of the Lord be on them).

Now, let me tell you what this right knowledge is which the holy Prophets impart to mankind. It is about the Creator of the world and the purpose of its creation. The Prophets tell that the first thing worth knowing is who created us, and why ? Without it, every step we take is in the wrong direction, and we have no right to make use of any of the things that exist. For all that is taking place in the world, every movement and activity, is a part of the Grand Design of Creation. Unless we are conscious of the central point of the universe and are wholly in agreement with the over-all purpose of its creation, what right have we to avail ourselves of any part of it ? Without it, it is not correct for us even to partake of a piece of bread. We form an insignificant part of creation, and the grain we eat, too, is a tiny fraction of it. So, also, is the planet we inhabit. What place do this world of ours occupy in the solar system ? If you come to know of the relation of the earth to the sun or the other planets, you will feel ashamed of yourselves and your wonderful habitation. Who produced the coherence, the dependence between you and the other parts of the universe ? Who but the Lord Creator ? What claim have you on any particle of the universe if you do not know or believe in its Creator and are not in accord with the Absolute Purpose of Creation ?

What answer would you give if the piece of bread in your hand were to ask that while it had recognised its Maker and sacrificed its existence for the sake of its master (the man), you had neither recognised your Creator nor obeyed Him. What right had you, then, to make use of it ? The right to use anything in the world, thus, is wrong and unjustified unless it is realised who made it, and with what aim. But what a tragedy is it that while everything is going on around us, the

markets are busy, the vehicles are plying on the roads, contacts are being established, and great deeds are being done, no one has the time nor inclination to enquire who created the world in which all this is taking place and why. ?

When the Prophets were raised up, the caravan of humanity was moving along without any aim or sense of direction. Everyone was preoccupied with his own affairs and interests,—the scholar, the philosopher, the poet, the ruler, the peasant, the trader. There were the rulers and the ruled, the oppressors and the oppressed, but no one had an idea of the true purpose of his creation or possessed an awareness of his Maker. An exalted personality, a man of high stature appears among the pygmies and asks those who hold the reins of humanity in their hands what injustice it was that they had estranged men from their Creator, and made them their own slaves. What right had they to lead mankind along the wrong path ? He addresses himself directly to the conscience of humanity. His call cannot be ignored. At it, the world gets divided into two distinct groups : one group accepts him, the other does not. The world has to choose between the two courses.

The Prophets never claim that they have come to reveal the secrets of nature or subjugate its forces. They do not say that they will make inventions or promote the knowledge of science or geography. What they do is to impart a true understanding of the Creator of the world, of His Being and Attributes, which has been vouchsafed to them by the Lord, and, now, it is only through them that it can be gained.

They tell that the Maker of the world is one, and whatever is taking place in it is at His Will and Command. He is controlling, managing and administering it alone, and without a partner. The world has not been created in vain. There is a definite purpose behind it. At the end of this mortal existence, there is to come another life in which everyone will have to render a full account of his deeds and will be requited for the good and evil he might have done during the earthly sojourn.

The Prophets are the revealers and interpreters of the Divine Will and have been sent down to all peoples and communities. They have brought the Guidance, and the path of God cannot be traversed without them. These are the truths upon which there is a complete agreement among the Apostles. Unlike the philosophers, they do not differ from one another.

But faith is not an essential corollary of knowledge. Today, the range of our information is very wide, but we are wanting in faith. Knowledge does not, necessarily, beget faith. Many of the ancient philosophers were devoid of it. They were skeptics. Even, today, instead of promoting faith, knowledge is giving rise to doubt and disbelief. The Prophets imparted not only true knowledge, but faith in it is well. Knowledge is a great thing, but faith in it is even greater. Without faith, knowledge is, merely, an exercise of the tongue, a luxury of the mind, and a fallacy and prevarication of the heart. The Prophets gave correct knowledge to their followers, and a strong faith. The followers, in their turn, believed in what they learnt, and sacrificed their lives for its sake. Their minds were illumined by knowledge, and their hearts were strengthened by faith. Read the accounts of the strength of their faith in history-books and look for the effects of it in the world around you.

Had faith been with us, today, why would have the moral standards been so low, callousness so widespread, and corruption so rampant ? Is it because knowledge is lacking ? Do people not know that theft is a crime, that bribery is forbidden and pick-pocketing is unlawful ? On the other hand, what we see is that where knowledge is abundant, the evils, too, are more frequent. They, generally, are more guilty of bribery who can write a book on it. They are bigger thieves who know all about its consequences. Take the pick-pockets. You will find many among them who have been to jail already because of it. Who can be more aware of its consequences ? Had knowledge, alone, been enough, no one would be committing a crime after he had once paid the penalty.

Again, let us take knowledge for granted, but where is the assurance that an earnest desire to act upon it will, also, follow ? Many people know that drinking is an evil, yet they do not abstain from it. There will be many physicians in your town who know for, certain, that lack of moderation in food and drink is bad, and yet they are guilty of it. The fact is that the inner urge for action is wanting in them and the desire to observe the rules of health is not strong enough.

In addition to knowledge and belief, the Prophets imparted the will to act upon it and the strength to resist the evil desires and temptations. People, consequently, derive a full benefit from what they know and believe in, and lead their lives in accordance with it. Their conscience stands guard over them.

Each Prophet conferred the three things on his followers, and the people of his Age. Lives of millions of men were reformed due to it and humanity regained its poise and rediscovered its moorings.

Gradually, however, these gifts disappeared from the world. True knowledge became extinct, the lamp of belief was blown out, and the inclination towards good-doing died away. By the beginning of the Sixth Century, things had come to such a pass that not a single person was to be found in whole countries, or rather, continents who possessed the wealth of true knowledge and faith. The religion brought by the Divine Apostles and the belief propagated by them had shrunk into a mere dot on the broad canvas of humanity, and the light of faith and knowledge that still endured in the thick, encircling gloom could, at best, be likened to the tiny glow of a firefly in a dark, rainy night. Such, indeed, was the dearth of men of faith that Salman of Persia who had left his home in quest of Truth could, during the entire journey from Iran to Syria, and, then, to Arabia, find only four persons living in conformity with the way of the Prophets.

In this overpowering, world-wide darkness, there appears the Last Messenger of God, the Prophet Mohammad, to attain

an unexampled success in the preaching and dissemination of faith, true knowledge, and right action. Nothing like it had ever happened in the annals of mankind.

The wealth that lay buried in the hearts begins to be shared by whole nations and communities, from the east to the west.

Neither those of water remained deprived of it, nor those of clay,

Green became the sowing-field of the Lord, from end to end.

He does not, merely, preach the three realities, but blows the trumpet of them, and no one, on the face of the earth, can say that he did not hear it. Whoever could not, the fault lay with him, and not with the proclamation. In which part of the world is the melody of *Ashhadu en laa ilaaha il-lallaah* (I attest that there is no deity save God), and *Ashhadu an-na Mohammadan rasoolillaah* (I attest that Mahammad is the Apostle of God) not being heard today? Even when the world goes to sleep and the stillness of the night descends upon the earth, the pronouncement that *There is no deity save God, and Mohammad is the Apostle of God* comes to the ears.

In modern days, the voice can reach the four corners of the world through the wireless, and a message can be sent out in all directions in no time. But can the radio-transmitting stations of any country, however advanced, spread a truth or knowledge so widely and universally as what was proclaimed by the Unlettered Prophet from the top of Mount Safa.

Sometimes, in a moment of ecstasy, man begins to speak to God with the simplicity of a child. It was in one of those moods that Iqbal had addressed the following line to his Maker, on behalf of mankind.

Thy desolate world, even Angels could not inhabit.

Would it be wrong if a lowly slave of the holy Prophet were to say: "Oh Lord! Thy Divinity is beyond question. Thou art the Creator of the Prophet Mohammad, and of the

entire universe. Everything lies in Thy control. But did any of Thy bondmen carry Thy Name to all parts of the world as Thy slave and Apostle, Mohammad has done?" There, certainly, is no defiance or insolence in it, but only the praise of the Lord who raised up a Messenger like Mohammad and granted to him the great good fortune and strength to spread His Name all over the world and propagate His Faith.

When the holy Prophet had staked the entire fruit of 14 or 15 years of incessant endeavour in the Battle of Badr, in the defence of Faith, and pitched a paltry force of 313 against an army, one thousand strong, he had beseeched his Lord and Master in these immortal words: "Oh Lord! If these handful of men are killed today, Thou shalt not be worshipped on the earth till the end of time."

No mind, no religion, no philosophy remained unaffected by the Call of Monotheism the sacred Prophet had given. Since the world came to know that it was unworthy of man to kneel before anyone save God, and the Lord had made the Angels bow down to Adam in order that it was forbidden to his children, for all time, to prostrate themselves before anyone, and it was realised that when these operatives of the universe had been commanded to kneel to them, how could they yield obeisance to anyone in the world: since this reality of Divine Unity dawned upon man and he became aware of his true place and position in the scheme of creation, Polytheism was disgraced in its own eyes. You will notice a distinct change in its tone and temper since the raising up of the sacred Prophet. Now, it does not feel sure of itself and the arguments it advances in its defence are inclined to be apologetic.

Together with knowledge and belief, the holy Prophet, also, engendered a strength which is far more effective than the government, the police and the courts of justice,—the strength of conscience, and the power of self-introspection.

It was a miracle of this very attribute that when a Companion falls into error and commits a major sin, there is no

peace for him until he has presented himself before the Prophet and begged him to *sanctify* him. The Prophet turns his face aside, but he comes round and stands, again, before him. Once more, the Prophet turns away his face, and the man comes up and takes his position in front of him. The Prophet, then, enquires if he had not lost the balance of his mind, and it is only when it is reported to him that he was mentally sound that he awards the punishment. What it was that persuaded the Companion to ask for the punishment? What took him to the sacred Prophet?

Then, there is the case of Ghamidyah. She was an illiterate woman who had **been** guilty of a grievous misdeed. It had been committed in privacy and no one had a knowledge of it. Yet, it pricked her heart like a thorn, and no joy was left for her in whatever she did. When she ate or drank, the small voice within her said that she was unclean. What could an unclean person have to do with food and drink? She should, first, have herself cleansed, and cleansing from the sin she had been guilty of could not be possible without punishment. Voluntarily does she appear before the Apostle of God, confesses her sin, and insists that she is *sanctified*. The holy Prophet, on discovering that she was pregnant, tells her to go away and come back after the child had been born. What was the fault of the poor child? Why should it die with her? The birth of the child must have taken some time. Would the urge to live not have arisen in her heart during that period and tried to induce her not to go again to the holy Prophet? But she remained adamant and went back to him when she was delivered of the child. "I am, now, free," she said. "Why should my *sanctification* be delayed any longer? "No, No," the Prophet replied. "Go back and nurse the child until it is weaned." As you know, it must have taken, at least, two years. These two years would, surely, have been most testing for her. There was neither the police nor the surveillance nor the bail nor personal bond. How many temptations would have beset her path? The

innocent face of the child would have pleaded with her to change her mind. Its smile must have made it difficult for her to choose the path of death. The child would be saying to her in its own speechless manner : "Mother ! I will grow up in your lap, and walk holding your finger." But her conscience would have answered : "No. Your mother is impure. She has to be cleansed first." The faith that was embedded in her heart would say : "You have to appear before the Almighty. The punishment of Futurity is severe."

Ghamidiyah goes back to the Prophet with her child. The child is holding a piece of bread in its tiny hand to show that it, no longer, needed to be nursed from the breast. "Here I am, O Messenger of God!" the amazing woman declared. "Now, I am free. My child is weaned. What is there, now, to delay my *sanctification*?" At last, the truthful bondswoman of the Lord is punished, and the Apostle of God expresses his high appreciation of the deed. He remarks: "She has offered such penitence that if it is spread over Medina, it will suffice for the whole of its population."

Now, I ask what it was that compelled the lady to go to the sacred Prophet, again and again, and insist on punishment though there were no handcuffs, bail or security? Are there not millions of educated and enlightened men, today, whose learning and awareness of the consequences does not induce them to do good deeds or holds them back from evil-doing?

The holy Prophet gave three priceless gifts to humanity: right knowledge; true faith; and the inner urge and inclination for well-doing and moral rectitude. The world has not received more valuable assets than these, nor is it indebted to anyone more than to the sacred Prophet. The Prophet, indeed, is the greatest benefactor of humanity.

Everyone in the world should be proud that, in his race, a man was born who brought honour and dignity to mankind and raised its head high. What would have been the shape of the world had he not been raised up? Whom could we produce as the sign and symbol of the greatness and nobility of

the human race? The Prophet Mohammad belongs to everyone. The glory of the world and eminence of mankind is from him. He is not the property of any nation, nor the exclusive monopoly of any country. He is the proud possession of all the world. Why, then, do not the people of all nations and communities say, with joy and pride, that they belong to the race in which a perfect man like the Prophet Mohammad was born?

Is there any class or segment of humanity which is not, directly or indirectly, indebted to the holy Prophet? Do men not owe a debt of gratitude to him that he taught them manliness, politeness and benevolence? Are women not indebted to him that he taught them their rights? Who proclaimed that Paradise lay under the feet of the mother? Are the weak and the downtrodden not indebted to him for it was he who declared, "Fear the cry of the oppressed: there is no curtain between him and God. The Lord says: 'I am with the heart-broken?'" Are the men in power, the rulers and sovereigns, not indebted to him that he taught them their rights and duties and gave the tidings that "the just ruler will be under the shadow of the mercy of the Lord, (on the Day of Resurrection)?" Are the traders not indebted to him that he laid stress on the superiority of trade and added to the nobility of the profession by engaging in it himself? Did he not say that "I and the honest trader will be close to one another in Heaven?" Are the labourers not indebted to him about whom he enjoined that wages ought to be paid to them before the sweat dried on their bodies? Is his favour not even on the animals for declaring that to give food and drink to every living creature who could feel the pangs of hunger and thirst, too, was charity? Is the entire human family not indebted to him that he used to wake up in the night and say: "Oh Lord! I attest that all men are brothers?" Is the whole world not indebted to him for it was from him that it heard, for the first time, that God was not the God of any particular country or community, but of all the worlds and whole mankind? The reality of *Praise be to God*,

Lord of the Worlds was proclaimed and made a part of *Namaz* where the god of the Aryans, the god of the Jews, the god of the Iranians, and the god of the Egyptians were glorified.

Thinkers and philosophers, poets and writers, warriors and conquerors, national leaders and reformers, scientists and inventors all came into the world, but did any of them usher in the spring-tide that stemmed from the advent of the Divine Apostles, particularly, of the Last and the Greatest of them, the Prophet Mohammad? Who brought with him the gifts and blessings, the bloom and luxuriance for mankind that he did?

Green be the grass on which you tread,
Flourishing the tree under which you rest.¹

1. Being a speech delivered at Aminuddaula Park, Lucknow, in Rabi-ul-Awwal, 1374 A.H., (November, 1954).

VII

DEPUTATIONS OF THE UMMAT IN THE COURT OF THE HOLY PROPHET

God bless the historians! Their peculiar way of thought never leaves them alone. They do not cease to be historians, whatever the time or place. Wherever they are, they live in the environment of study and research, and try to relate the present with the past. When they see an extraordinary event, they form a mental image of the historical circumstances in which it had taken place.

The other day, I was sitting in *Roza-i-Jannat*¹ of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. A large number of devotees were present on all sides, some of whom were bending low in genuflexion, and some were in *Ruku*². The air was filled with the sounds of the recitation of the Quran. The whole atmosphere was so deeply devotional that I should have forgotten all about history and its heroes, but memories of the past swept across my mind like a hurricane, and I could do nothing about it.

It appeared as if some distinguished men of the Ummat of the bygone days had been brought back to life, and they were presenting themselves, one after the other, in the form of deputations, before the sacred Prophet, and after offering up prayers in the Mosque, paying homage of love and devotion and sending respectful salutations to him. They were expressing their

1. Denoting the place about which it is stated in a Tradition that the Apostle of God had said that "between my apartment and pulpit there is a 'bed' from among the 'beds of Paradise'."

2. Bowing low in prayer.

profoundest gratitude to the Prophet, and in spite of belonging to different lands and speaking different languages, affirming, with one voice, that it was the Divine Apostle who had delivered them from darkness to light, from wretchedness to felicity, from the worship of the creatures to the worship of the Creator, from the oppressiveness of the other faiths to the fairness and justice of Islam, and from the narrowness of the world to its extensiveness. It was Islam that had made them what they were, and they owed their existence to Apostleship. If, God forbidding, what the Lord had bestowed upon them through the holy Prophet was withdrawn and the Gifts of Apostleship were taken back, they would be reduced to soulless frameworks of flesh and bones, and go back to the darkest ages of history in which the law of the jungle prevailed and brutal exploitation was the order of the day.

Suddenly, I saw a group of men entering into the Mosque by *Bab-i-Jibrael*¹ which was nearest to me. They presented a picture of dignity and poise, and the light of learning shone from their foreheads. They occupied the space between *Bab-ur-Rahmat* and *Bab-i-Jibrael*, and were so numerous that it was out of the question to make a count of them. I enquired about them from the door-keeper and he said that they were the legist-doctors and theologians of the Ummat. Each of them was the leader of a whole community, the founder of a complete school of thought, the author of an actual library of books, the inspirer of an entire generation, and the originator of a permanent branch of knowledge. Marvels of their scholarship and imperishable proofs of their greatness could still be seen. Many a generation had completed the journey of its life with the support and guidance of their earnest religious and intellectual endeavour. The door-keeper, also, hurriedly mentioned the names of a few of them. They were:

1. Literally, the Gate of Gabriel. It is one of the oldest and most important gates of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, and is nearest to the grave of the holy Prophet.

Imam Maalik, Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Shaf'ee, Imam Ahmad bin Hambal, Lais bin Sa'ad Misri, Imam Auza'ee, Imam Bukhari, Imam Muslim, Taqiuddin bin Taimiyah, Kamal Ibne Humam, Ibn-i-Qadamah, Abu Ishaq es-Shatbi, and Shah Waliullah Dehlavi. Though there was a great difference of race, country, time and literary and religious position among them, they all joined in the tribute of loyalty and submission and shed tears of repentance.

They, first, offered two Rak'ats of *Tahyatul Masjid*¹, and, then, proceeded reverently towards the grave of the holy Prophet, and made the salutation in a few, sublime words. Their voice still seems to be ringing in my ears. Their eyes were filled with tears and throats choking with emotion. They were saying:

"O Apostle of God! But for the just, eternal and comprehensive Shariat of yours and its wise and unfading principles from which the human intellect grew new plants and filled the skirts of mankind with choicest blossoms, and without its wonderful system which encouraged critical thought and gave rise to the methods of inference, deduction and interpretation, neither this remarkable jurisprudence would have come into existence nor the great Islamic law which is still unexampelled in history, and nor would the vast Islamic library have been created before which the entire religious literature of the world fades into insignificance. Had you not given the powerful call for the propagation of knowledge and for pondering over the Signs of God and His immaculate creation, and stressed upon mankind to make the fullest use of the faculties of study and observation, the tree of knowledge would have ceased to send forth new leaves and fruits long ago, and its shade would not have been encompassing the world; the human mind would have been enchained as it was in the past, and the world, devoid of light."

1. Meaning Salutation to the Mosque

I had not seen this group fully that some other persons started moving in through *Bab-ur-Rahmat*. Signs of deep piety and asceticism could be seen on their faces. I was told that they included men like Hasan Basri, Omar bin Abdul Aziz, Sufyan Suri, Fazeel bin Ayaz, Dawood el-Ta'ee, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, Nizamuddin Aulia and Abdul Wahab el-Muttaqi who had revived the memory of the illustrious precursors. After *Namaz*, they, too, stood before the grave of the Divine Apostle and offered *Durood*¹ and *Salaam*² to their Prophet and greatest guide and mentor. They said:

"O Apostle of God! But for the practical example set by you, and the minaret of light you raised for posterity, and had you not said that 'real life is the life of Futurity', and told us 'to live in the world like a wayfarer', and were the way of life not been before us which has been described by Hazrat Ayesha in these words that 'one moon would appear after the other, and, then, the third after the second, i. e., we saw three successive moons, and fire was not lit in the Prophet's home nor was the pot placed on the oven,' we could neither have preferred, in this way, the Hereafter to worldly existence, nor lived at mere subsistence level, nor made contentment and self-denial the rule of life, nor overcome the inducements of the carnal self, nor resisted the temptations of the world and the charm and allurements of power and rule."

I had yet to absorb fully the significance of these words that another party entered through *Bab-un-Nissa*³ with utmost modesty. It was altogether free from embellishments and forwardness inimical to the spirit of Islam. It comprised of good and virtuous ladies from far-flung lands, both Arab and non-Arab. With highest respect they were expressing

1. Benediction.

2. Salutation.

3. An ancient gate of the Prophet's Mosque which in the early days of Islam was reserved for women.

the sentiments of devotion and gratitude in the following words:

"O Apostle of God! We send *Durood* and *Salaam* to you, the *Durood* and *Salaam* of a class that is extremely indebted to you. With the help of God, you released us from the fetters of the Age of Ignorance, and its perverted customs and practices, and the coercion and arbitrariness of society, and the cruelty and high-handedness of men. You abolished the practice of burying the girls alive, gave the warning of a dreadful penalty on being rude and disobedient to mothers, and declared that Paradise was under their feet. You made us partners in inheritance, and gave us our shares as mothers, sisters, wives and daughters. You did not forget us even in the historic sermon of the Day of Arafa, and said: 'Fear God in respect of the rights of your women whom you have taken as the trust of God, and in His Name!' Besides, on several other occasions, you exhorted men to show kindness to women, fulfil their rights and observe better manners towards them. May God bestow upon you, on our behalf, the best of reward that can be bestowed upon the Apostles, the Messengers and the pious and virtuous bondmen."

I, then, saw another party coming in by *Bab-us-Salaam*. It was of the originators and exponents of the arts and sciences,—the linguists, grammarians, lexicographers, stylists and rhetoricians, like Abdul Aswad el-Daili, Khalil bin Ahmad, Saiboyah, Kissai, Abu Ali el-Farsi, Abdul Qabir el-Jarjani, el-Sakaki, Majduddin Firozabadi and Syed Murtuza Bilgrami. They were offering the salutation of their sciences, and paying the tribute of their literary eminence. They were saying:

"O Apostle of God! But for you, and the holy Book that was revealed to you, and for the Traditions and the Shariat before which everyone bowed his head and on account of which the world was compelled to learn Arabic, the sciences in which we have the honour to have specialised would never have flourished. No one would have

heard of syntax, rhetoric and explanatory science, nor would the great lexicons ever have been compiled. Enquiry and research in the simples of the Arabic language would not have been attempted, and no one of us would have striven so long and hard in this path when there was no dearth of languages and dialects in our own lands. There would have been no keenness to learn Arabic or acquire a mastery over it, nor would have writers been born among us who have even earned the respect of the Arab scholars.

"O Apostle of God! You were the bond between us and the sciences that were developed from the time you had been raised up as the Messenger. In fact, you, alone, are the connecting link between the Arab and the non-Arab worlds. It were you who brought them together. We owe our high rank and position to you. How tremendous, indeed, is your contribution to the growth of human knowledge and intellect! But for you, Arabic would have disappeared from the world like so many other classical languages. Had the immortal Quran not been its custodian, it would have changed beyond recognition. Your grace and favour, and the support and protection of the Shariat and the holy Quran have kept it alive and safe and produced the love for it in every Muslim's heart and made it imperative for the Islamic World to feel attached to it. It is owing to you that the Almighty has blessed the Arabic language with permanence and held forth the assurance of its preservation and development. Thus, everyone who speaks or writes in Arabic or attains eminence on account of it, owes you a debt of gratitude which can never be denied or paid back."

Then, suddenly, I began to look at *Bab-i Abdul Aziz*.¹ Through this gate, a party was coming in which consisted of

1. The new gate of the Prophet's Mosque which has been built by the side of *Bab-i-Majeed* and is named after Sultan Abdul Aziz bin Saud.

men of different nations and countries. It included some of the mightiest rulers the world had known, such as, Haroon Rashid, Valeed bin Abdul Malik, Malik Shah Saljuqi, Salahuddin Ayubi, Mahmud Ghaznavi, Zahir Baibras, Sulaiman the Magnificent, and Aurangzeb Alamgir. They had left their attendants and mace-bearers outside the Mosque, and were proceeding slowly, with eyes downcast and talking among themselves in subdued tones. They were the embodiments of humility. Their heroic exploits and splendid achievements began to emerge before my mind's eye, and I was lost in reverie. I thought of the large parts of the world over which they ruled. There was among them the ruler who, on seeing the cloud, had uttered the historic phrase: "Thou canst go and rain wherever thou liketh, but thy tribute will, ultimately, come to my treasury." And, also, he whose empire was so extensive that if a man riding on the fastest dromedary in the world wanted to go from one end of it to the other, it would, at least, have taken 15 months. Before me were sovereigns who held sway over half of the then-known world and even renowned kings paid tribute to them as an acknowledgement of submission,³ as well as those whose names struck fear in the heart of Europe, so much so that when, during their reign, the Muslims visited a European country, the church bells there would not ring as a mark of respect to them.⁴ In brief, a number of powerful kings and emperors were included in the group. They were

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1. Haroon Rashid
 2. The allusion is to Valeed bin Malik
 3. An idea of the vastness of the empire of Malik Shah Saljuqi can be obtained from the fact that when the boats of the River Amu Darya (ancient Oxus) in Central Asia were commissioned, it was the Governor of Antioch (Syria) who was ordered to pay the boatmen from the Public Treasury. Further, as, in 482 A.H. the Roman Ambassador came to Isfahan to pay the tribute, Malik Shah went to Kashgar to receive it, and sent back the Ambassador from there. (*Nizamul-Mulk-Tosi*), p. 622
 4. The reference is to Sulaiman the Magnificent

coming up to offer *Namaz* in the Prophet's Mosque, and send *Durood* and *Salaam* to him. Their legs were shaking and hearts were filled with awe till they reached Suffa which had been the dwelling of the ascetic Companions. They stopped there for a while and looked reverently at the place which once was the abode of the destitute, the dust of whose feet they were ready to apply, as collyrium, to their eyes. They offered two *Rak'ats* of *Tahyatul Masjid* near it, and then, moved towards the Prophet's grave and said what sentiments of love and fervour made them say, but with full regard to the proprieties of the Shariat and the doctrine of Divine Unity.

"O Apostle of God!" they said, "But for you, and the *Jehad*, and the ideal Call of yours which spread throughout the world, and made a conquest of innumerable countries, and but for your Faith on professing which our ancestors rose from the dark corners of obscurity and depths of degradation to the heights of renown and established mighty kingdoms, subjugated distant lands and realised tributes from nations that were tyrannising over our people and driving them like cattle, and without your blessings which enabled us to travel all the way from Ignorance to Islam, and from the narrow tribal life to world-conquest, our flag would not have been triumphant anywhere, nor would our name been heard. We would have been floundering, as in the past, in the barren wastelands and wretched valleys with the strong ruling over the weak with a rod of iron. Our food was of the poorest and the standard of living unimaginably low. We were incapable of thinking beyond our villages and tribes. We were like the fish of a pond or frogs of a well. We were caught in the mesh of our limited experiences, and sang the praises of our illiterate ancestors.

"O Apostle of God ! You bestowed upon us the light of your Faith, and our eyes opened, and we began to look across the frontiers of the existence which had been our lot since the beginning of time. We spread on

God's earth with the all-embracing Faith and indissoluble spiritual bond. Our dormant capabilities were awakened, and by putting them to proper use, we waged an unrelenting struggle against Polytheism and Idolatry, and oppression and injustice, and established magnificent empires under whose shadow we and our brothers prospered for centuries. Today, we have come to your august presence to pay homage, with all our hearts, and consider it the height of good fortune and a means to salvation. We are conscious of our shortcomings in the enforcement of the laws and commandments of the Faith the Lord had blessed us with, and pray to the Almighty for forgiveness. He, in very truth, is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful."

I was looking attentively at them and my eyes were fixed on their grave and dignified faces and ears turned to the meek and earnest words the like of which I had never heard them utter before that another group entered, and caring little for the men of power and majesty, made its way through their rows and stood in front of them. These persons seemed to be supremely unaffected by the commanding presence of the kings and monarchs. I thought they must be poets or revolutionaries, and was not wrong. In it, were the celebrated Turkish poet, Mohammad 'Aakif, and Mohammad Iqbal of India, side by side with Jamaluddin Afghani, Amir Saeed Halim, Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar and Sheikh Hasan el-Banna. They chose Iqbal to be their spokesman who expressed his inmost feelings in these words:

"O Leader of both the worlds and Commander of Badr and Hunain! I have come to complain against the community which is still the picker of crumbs from your table-spread and for which there is no refuge save under your benign shadow,—it is even now eating the fruit of the orchard laid by you and ruling over lands you had freed from oppression—, and this very community, today, is destroying the foundation upon which the existence of

the Ummat is based. Its leaders are bent upon ruining its organic unity. They want to revive exactly what you had done away with, and to pull down what you had built. They are pushing back the Ummat into the Age of Perversion from which you had rescued it, and are blindly following the West which, itself, is presenting a lamentable spectacle of inner insolvency, confusion and frustration. They seek to convert the blessing of the Lord into ingratitude and lead the Ummat into the abyss of destruction. The battle between the "Lamp of Mustafa"¹ and the "Spark of Bu Lahab"² is being waged over again, and, unfortunately, people are seen in the camp of Abu Lahab who claim to be Muslims and speak the Arabic language. They have, again, begun to take pride in their deeds and achievements of the Age of Perversion, and adore the idols you had broken. These persons are like the traders who weigh less when they sell and take more when they buy. They owe their eminence to you, and yet are eager to throw their people at the feet of the West and hand them over to the Paganish ideologies of Nationalism and Socialism.

"The idols you had thrown out of the House of Ka'aba are now being thrust back upon the Muslims under new names and in new garbs. I am seeing signs of revolt in the Arab World which should have been the Citadel of Faith, but there is no Farooq.³ The fire of Intellectual Apostasy is spreading, but there is no Abu Bakr⁴ to put it out.

"I beg you to accept, on my behalf and on behalf of

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1. Meaning the chosen one; the elect; the favourite of God. It is the name or title of the holy Prophet.
 2. Name of one of the bitterest enemies of the Prophet. Literally it denotes "Father of the Flame of Fire".
 3. The title of Hazrat Omar, the second Caliph of Islam.
 4. The name of first Caliph of Islam.

the friends I have the honour to represent today, the offering of salutation soaked in the deepest feelings of respect and allegiance.

"I assure you, making God my witness, that we are wholly disgusted with the leaders who have turned their face away from the *Qibla*¹ of Islam and are looking at the West for inspiration. These are the men who have alienated themselves from you and your Faith.

"We reaffirm our allegiance to you and assure that we shall hold fast to the rope of Islam till the end of our lives."

The soul-stirring speech had not yet ended that *Azan*² was heard from the minarets of the Mosque. *Allah-o-Akbar, Allah-o-Akbar. Allah-o-Akbar. Allah-o-Akbar.* I, at once, became alive to my surroundings, and the beautiful train of thought was broken.

I had returned to the earth from which I had started on the voyage of fancy. Some people were offering *Namaz*, while others were reading the Quran. Different parties and deputations from the World of Islam were offering *Salam* in the Court of the sacred Prophet and the unity of thought and feeling in the midst of the diversity of languages and accents had cast a spell which no words could describe.³

1. The place to which the Muslims turn in prayer

2. Muslim call to prayer.

3. Being a translation of the talk in Arabic broadcast by the Jeddah Radio Station in Zil Hij, 1381 A. H. It was translated into Urdu by Mohammad el-Hasani and published in *Al-Furqan* (Lucknow) of July, 1962. Later, the Urdu translation, too, was broadcast over the Saudi Radio, and also, presented as a feature. The Lucknow Radio Station, also, broadcast the feature on which its producer, Shafa'at Ali Siddiqui, was awarded by the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the prize for the best production of the year in Urdu. The original Arabic speech was written at the residence of the Author's late lamented friend, Haji Arshad, who was, then, Chief Engineer, Telephones, Saudi Arabia.

VIII

MESSAGE OF THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET

As we hear of Ignorance and Perversion, our mind, automatically, goes back to the dark days of the 6th Century of the Christian era when the holy Prophet was raised up as the Divine Messenger, and, in which, the first and most wonderful miracle of Divine instruction and guidance had taken place. The Arab nation, at once, emerges before the mind's eye with all the depraved customs, morals and practices that have been described, in detail, by the biographers of the Prophet.

But Ignorance is not peculiar to that period. In the special usage of Islam, every Age is an Age of Ignorance which is devoid of the guidance of Divine Revelation and to which the light of the holy Apostles has not reached, and if it has, it has shut its eyes to it, no matter whether it is the 6th Century A.D. or the medieval period of European history, known commonly as the Dark Ages, or the lustrous era of technological progress through which we are passing today.

The Quran tells that there is only one light in the world, and its source, also, is one. *Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.* (XXIV:3). Darkness, of course, has many faces. Had there not been the refulgence of the Light of God which comes only through the Apostles, there would have been no end to darkness, and we would be confronting it at each turn of life.

Says the Quran :

Or (the Unbeliever's state) is like darkness on a vast

abysmal sea. There covereth him a wave, above which is a wave, above which is a cloud. Layer upon layer of darkness. When he holdeth out his hand, he scarce can see it. And he for whom Allah hath not appointed light, for him there is no light.

—XXIV, 40

In the Quran wherever *Noor* (light) and *Zulmat* (darkness) occur together, *Noor* (light) is mentioned in the singular number and *Zulmat* (darkness) in the plural which shows that darkness can be of several kinds, while light is only one.

Without radiance from the Real, Natural Light, no artificial light can work in the abounding darkness, and this alive and flourishing world is no more than a big, dark grave where "no ray of light is produced even if you burn the candles."

It, again, is set forth in the Quran:

Is he who was dead and We have raised him unto life, and set for him a light wherein he walketh among men, as him whose similitude is in utter darkness whence he cannot emerge?

—VI : 123

Very little of the Light of Apostleship seems to have reached the West (in which the sun does not rise, but sets). Here, the endeavour has always been to make the man-made light serve for the heavenly one. The golden era of Greece and Rome, doubtlessly, was a glittering era of history from the viewpoint of the advancement of human knowledge, but it was dark as dark could be where the Apostolic teachings were concerned. In the absence of guidance and enlightenment, reliance has been placed in the West solely upon conjecture and surmise in respect of the Being and Attributes of God. *They have no knowledge whatever of that. They only guess.* (—XLIII : 20)

The magic-patterns of philosophy and metaphysics the scholars of the West have evolved are not much different, in the flight of fancy and structure of imagination, from the fairy tales of the East. Glimpses of Apostolic wisdom are

found, indeed, in the teachings of Socrates and Plato, but these are like the glow of a firefly in a dark, rainy night. It, however, shows that they, sometimes, had heard of the guidance brought by the Divine Messengers, but it had not sunk deep enough in them to make a lasting impression. *Every time the flash of lightning helps them, they walk therein, and when the darkness grows on them, they stand still.* (II : 20).

Strangely enough, the lamp of the guidance of Jesus withstood the blasts of unfriendly wind in the East for two hundred years, but it was blown out under the protective skirt of the Western enthusiasts. Or, in other words, the teachings of Jesus lost their reality as they travelled to the West where Christianity had, for the first time, attained power and ascendancy. The stream of Polytheism and Idolatry began to flow right in the middle of its river-bed. Perhaps, no conversion to any Faith has proved so inauspicious for it than that of Emperor Constantine and St. Paul to Christianity. After the extinction of the heavenly lamp of Christianity, the dignitaries of the Church sought to convince the Christian World through Ecclesiastical Councils that they still possessed the light brought by Jesus while, in fact, it had been extinguished centuries ago.

Their likeness is as the likeness of one who kindleth fire, and when it sheddeth its light around him Allah taketh away their light and leaveth them in darkness, where they cannot see.

—II : 17

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that belief in God and the Hereafter was still present in the West, thanks to Christianity. However much a Divine Faith may change, the concept of God and the doctrine of Futurity are so deeply ingrained in it that it can never reject them altogether. The movement of Rationalism which began in Europe during the 15th and the 16th Centuries, ultimately, threw the West into the lap of Materialism and sensuality, and it surrendered so completely to the belief that nothing existed

but matter and reason was the ultimate authority in religion that there was left no place in the structure of its life and thought for faith in God and After-life. The West did not openly reject the idea of God and the Hereafter, but the way of life and the intellectual and moral position it had adopted, definitely, showed that there was no need of or reality in those concepts and the world could do without them. It can be said, without hesitation, that the creed of the West, today, is not Christianity, but Materialism. Europe has been Idolatrous for a long time, and since long has it, also, been laying claim to Christianity. But never has it displayed such an ardent attachment for these creeds and followed them so strictly as it is doing, at present, with regard to the 'religion' of Materialism. The temples of this 'religion',—the gigantic factories, cinemas, chemical laboratories, clubs and casinos—, are humming with life during all the hours of the day and night, and its high priests—the bankers, finance magnates, technocrats and industrialists,—are held in highest esteem. As against it, Christianity has been reduced to a shadow.

All the unavoidable results of this state of self-forgetting and moral and mental approach to life are evident in the West and becoming more and more pronounced with the passage of time. One of these is that on turning away from One God the Western man has bent his head in submission to hundreds of gods. He is kissing every threshold after abandoning the one that could have made him independent of all others. This is how the Lord has always been punishing those who decline to accept One God. "The lords and patrons other than God" are reigning supreme all over the West and the whole of the Western World is caught in their grip. At some places, they are the political leaders, and, at others, the financial tycoons or the self-imposed standards of living and social practices which have made a hell of the lives of their devotees and are demanding such an abject surrender from them that, before it, loyalty to God would appear a thousand times more preferable.

An unceasing conflict is going on between the aims and aspirations of these "lords and patrons" which has cast the whole world into utter confusion and turned it upside down. Among the modern idols, one of the most powerful is that of the country which always demands the offering of human blood and can be propitiated only when it is shed, another is the belly in whose service the twentieth century-man is keeping himself engaged all the time, and, yet, it is not satisfied. In the words of Sir Oliver Lodge :

"The simplicity of life has become a dream. There is no high aim or ideal today. Everyone is toiling, day and night, like an ox in his office or factory. An outcome of the invention of fast-moving vehicles is that man is always in a hurry."

Another effect of God-forgetting is that man has forgotten himself. As the Quran tells, it is the inevitable penalty for those who forget God.

And be not of those who forgot Allah, therefore He caused them to forget their souls. —LIX : 19

The modern man is presenting a perfect picture of self-forgetting. He has forgotten his reality, his distinction as a man, the aim of his life and the purpose of his creation, and settled for a purely animal existence. He has made himself into a money-making machine which, itself, derives no benefit from the money it makes. The limit is that there is not only no peace of mind for him, but he, also, has grown insensitive to its want or absence.

Writes C. E. M Joad :

"Disraeli remarked of his contemporaries that they talked of progress because 'by the aid of a few scientific discoveries they have succeeded in establishing a society which mistakes comfort for civilisation.' To adopt Disraeli's remark to ourselves, we might merely substitute 'speed' for 'comfort'. Speed, indeed, is his (contemporary man's) peculiar god, and, upon its altar

quiet, comfort, security and consideration for other persons are ruthlessly jettisoned."¹

The very end and object of man's thought and endeavour has changed in this environment. Leaving aside his own field of progress, he has made a tremendous progress in other fields. But he has not, at all, moved forward towards the ideal of a perfect man. On the contrary, a steady deterioration is taking place in human attributes. If you analyse modern progress, you will find, in it, a peculiar combination of the essential qualities of wild beasts, fishes and birds. To quote C. E. M. Joad again.

"This contrast between the marvels of our scientific achievements and ignominy of our social childishness meets us at every turn. We can talk across continents and oceans, telegraph pictures, instal wireless sets in the homes, listen in Ceylon the Big Ben striking in London, ride above and beneath the earth and the sea. Children can talk along wireless, typewriters are silent, teeth filling painless, liners have swimming-baths, crops are ripened by electricity, roads are made of rubber. X-rays are the windows through which we behold our insides, photographs can speak and sing, murderers can be traced down by wireless, hair is waved by electric current, submarines go to the North Pole, aeroplanes to the South ... Yet, we cannot, in the midst of our enormous cities, provide a little space where poor children might play in comfort and safety, with the result that we kill them at the rate of nearly 2,000 (children only) and injure them at the rate of 90,000 a year. As an Indian philosopher said to me once, in acid comment upon my conventional praise of the wonders of our civilisation—some motorist had just succeeded in driving his car at the rate of 300, or was it 400?—miles per hour along the Pendine sands; or as aeroplane had just flown in 20—or was it 50?—hours from Moscow to New York: "Yes, you can

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 262-63

fly in the air like birds and swim in the sea like fishes; but how to walk upon the earth you do not yet know".¹

Such being the case, it would be futile to complain that the West had forgotten God. As Iqbal says:

You are removed from yourself; why look for friend?

When you reach not man, why try to reach God?

As for the pathetic indifference of the West to After-life, the first and most natural outcome of it is that attachment to the life of this world and its joys and comforts has, virtually, assumed the proportions of madness. Today, the cry of 'eat, drink and be merry' is being raised from every nook and corner of the Western World. All the energies of the West are being spent on excelling one another in the pursuit of pleasure and acquirement of the means of luxuriousness and sensuality. Relentless competition has turned life into a race-course. Everyone is seized with an unquenchable thirst, an insatiable appetite for life. "*Are there any more to come?*"¹ is on everybody's lips.

Day by day, the necessities of life are increasing, and, with them, the carnal appetites, and ways and means of their gratification, too, are multiplying. In the upshot, endless difficulties and problems are being created. The standard of living is constantly rising. When, after a lifetime of struggle, a man looks up he finds that the goal has moved higher, and it adds to his frustration and discontent. Little of abiding happiness or serenity has been left in the world. Contentment has become a meaningless word. Man's soul is unhappy.

The craze for luxuriousness and self-indulgence which appears to us, the Muslims, to be nothing short of lunacy is the height of wisdom from the viewpoint of the deniers of Futurity. Why, after all, should anyone who has no idea of life after death restrain himself from deriving the utmost satisfaction from the brief stay on the earth?

1. The allusion is to the Quranic verse which reads : *One day, when We say unto Hell : Are thou filled ? and it sayeth : Are there any more to come ?* (L : 30).

Those who disbelieve take their comfort in this life and eat even as the cattle eat, and the Fire is their habitation.

—XLVII : 12

Again:

Let them eat and enjoy life, and let (false) hope beguile them. They will come to know!

—XV : 3

Another natural consequence of the denial of the Hereafter is that the material world and its goods and the deeds that are gainful and remunerative from its point of view appear more attractive, logical and worthwhile. The vision becomes shallow, and the mentality, superficial and materialistic.

Lo! as for those who believe not in the Hereafter, We have made their works fair-seeming unto them so that they are all astray.

—XXVII : 4

Say : Shall We inform you who will be the greatest losers by their works? Those whose effort goeth astray in life of the world, and yet they reckon that they do good work. Those are they who disbelieve in the Revelations of their Lord and in the meeting with Him. Therefore their works are vain, and on the Day of Resurrection We assign no weight to them.

—XIX : 104 –106

Sobriety and realism are giving place to dissipation and slothfulness. A major part of life is taken up by diversional and sportive activities. The same is the case even at the time of a crisis or danger.

And forsake those who take their religion for a pastime and a jest, and whom the life of the world beguileth.

—VI : 70

Yet another effect is that the modern man is losing the ability to comprehend the real causes of the events and incidents that take place around him and getting more and

more involved with the apparent and the manifest. The superficiality of his outlook does not permit him to get into the heart of things. He explains such happenings in a way that suits him and satisfies himself by attributing them to this real or imaginary factor or that. Such experiences for him are like a ripple on the surface of a stagnant lake and they produce no fundamental change in his mental or spiritual outlook.

The psychology of those who lay stress on the material aspect of objects and take things simply for what they seem has aptly been described in the Quran in these words :

We have sent (Apostles) already unto peoples who were before thee, and We visited them with tribulation and adversity, in order that they might grow humble.

If only, when Our disaster came upon them, they had been humble ! But their hearts were hardened and the Devil made all that they used to do seem fair unto them !

—VI : 42-43

A characteristic attribute of the rejection of the Hereafter is vanity. There is nothing to prevent a person who rejects the idea of future existence from being haughty and vainglorious. Whoever does not believe in a Power above himself, in life to come, and in the Final Requital, what can stop him from behaving like an unruly animal ? Hence, in the Quran, pride has, often, been mentioned along with the denial of Futurity as if the two were complementary to each other.

But as for those who believe not in the Hereafter their hearts refuse to know, for they are proud.

—XVI : 22

About Pharaoh and his hosts, it says :

And he and his hosts were haughty in the land without right, and deemed that they would never be brought back to Us.

—XXVIII : 39

By their nature, the materialistic nations which do not believe in the Resurrection and the Day of the Last Judgement

are cruel and their victory is like a fearful earthquake which razes whole towns to the ground and brings ruin and destruction to vast segments of humanity.

And if ye seize by force, seize ye as tyrants?

—XXVI : 130

When kings enter a township, they ruin it and make the honour of its people shame.

XXVIII : 34

Similarly, the West remained devoid of faith in Apostleship. Though it accepted Jesus as the son of God, it did not, practically, acknowledge him as the guide and preceptor of life, and the Divine Messenger who was to be obeyed. The first thing was merely of a doctrinal nature which produced little effect on morality and action. The entire course of life would, on the other hand, have changed if the West had accepted Jesus as the ideal teacher and guide, and his life and character as a model and example to be followed in all the spheres of individual and collective existence. But it was not to be. It was, also, not easy because only the record of three years of the life of Jesus was available to it, and that, too, did not offer much to serve as a pattern for emulation. There would have, further, been practical difficulties in the way if the West had wanted to make the life of Jesus and his teachings the measuring yard of their conduct on the earth. The representatives of the Church did not possess an authentic religious system of principles which could assist them in discharging the duty of guiding the life of a whole community, nor did they have the wisdom to keep the rising Western nations within the bounds of faith along with material progress. The Christians, consequently, freed themselves, for all practical purposes, from the guidance of Jesus and supervision of the Church, and began to lead their lives as if they were not the followers of any Prophet. The pious teachings of Jesus could not make a lasting impression on their minds and hearts and they remained deprived of the moral instruction and cleansing which the followers of the Prophets,

generally, receive. They acquired enormous material resources, but the inclination towards what is good can be produced only under the influence of the advice and instruction of the Divine Apostles, and not through material knowledge and inventions. In consequence, the tremendous strength the Christian peoples have built up and the resources they have acquired are being used for the exploitation of man by man and spreading corruption on earth instead of proving a blessing for mankind, the main reason being that those who possess the tools and are using them are unacquainted with the Divine pronouncement that :

As for that Abode of the Hereafter, We assign it unto those who seek not oppression in the earth, nor yet corruption. The sequel is for those who ward off (evil).

—XXVIII : 83

The net result of it all is that though, today, the West is so bright that its night is like the day, it is, at the same time, so dark that its day is like the night. Everything which was considered a peculiarity of the Age of Ignorance is taking place there in the modern days of progress and enlightenment. In the words of Akbar Allahabadi :

The pen of sorrow will write in the history of the world,

Gloom was abounding under electric light.

At the end of World War I, Lloyd George had remarked :

"Were Jesus to return to the world, he would not live for long. He would see that even after two thousand years, man was pre-occupied, as usual, with corruption, bloodshed and destruction. What is more, as a result of the greatest war in history, blood, today, is dripping from the body of mankind, the world has been laid to waste, and the spectre of starvation is stalking over the earth. And what will the Lord see? People shaking hands with one another in a spirit of equality and brotherhood or preparing for a more fearful war, inventing dead-

lier weapons, and devising newer ways of torture?"

And, at the beginning of World War II, Anthony Eden said :

"Unless something can be done, the people of this world, in the latter part of this century, are going to live as troglodytes and go back to the days of cave-dwelling. It is fantastic that all countries are now spending millions on protecting themselves against a weapon of which they are all afraid, but on the control of which they cannot agree. I, sometimes, wonder how the world today would strike a visitor from another planet who would find us preparing the means of our own destruction and even exchanging information on how we are to do it."¹

The state of the civilised world of 1300 years ago whose leadership was in the hands of the Eastern empires of Persia and Rome was not far different. Starting from God-forgetting, man had forgotten himself and the concept of Divinity had got reduced to a mythical idea or tradition. It was believed only historically that, at sometime, the world had been created by God : *And if thou wert to ask them : Who created the heavens and the earth and constrained the sun and the moon (to their appointed work)? they would certainly say : Allah.* (XXIX : 61). But so far as the real, practical life was concerned, it bore no relation to Him, and people, actually, led their lives as if there was no God, and if there was one, He had abdicated in favour of others and gone into seclusion. "Patrons other than God" were being worshipped everywhere. Somewhere, these were the idols, and somewhere, the race, the country, the material desires and urges, the kings, the saints, and the hermits. Man had forgotten the purpose of his creation, and disregarding the true function of life, had embarked upon a course of gradual suicide. Moral and spiritual torpor seemed to have overtaken everyone. The governing classes indulged in reckless extra-

1. Reproduced from Alexis Carrel : *Man, The Unknown*. Pp. 234-235

vagance, high-handedness and oppression, and the rich had little time or inclination for anything save self-indulgence and lavishness. The standard of living had become so inflated that no income could suffice. Yet anyone whose manner of living was not marked by liberal indulgence in luxury was considered an out-caste. The anxiety to outshine others in society had robbed the life of peace and contentment. The middle classes, as is their wont, took the greatest pride in imitating the modes and manners of men of higher birth and rank. The common people lived in grinding poverty and toiled like cattle so that their masters lived in voluptuous luxury. They were crushed under a heavy load of taxes and confiscations. Whenever the curse of their lives afforded them a respite, they would fall blindfolded upon carnal pleasures. Often, in a whole country not a single soul was to be found with an earnest solicitude for faith and Futurity. Innocent citizens were caught between the two stones of the avarice and lust for territorial conquest of the rulers. Persia invaded the Christian kingdom of Syria without an excuse, and 90,000 men perished by the sword. The Roman Empire retaliated by over-running Iran. It went on like that for a long time without a moral cause or a noble objective and the peoples of the two most civilised Empires of the then-known world rushed at each-other's throat like wild beasts. A thick gloom had descended on the earth and chaos and corruption were rampant owing to the misdeeds of man.

In the words of Quran :

Corruption had appeared on land and sea because of (the meed) that the hands of men have earned, that Allah may give them a taste of some of their deeds, in order that they may turn back (from Evil).

—XXX : 41

It was at this time, and in such circumstances, that, away from the then civilized world which had become hollow from within, and between the two rival Empires of the East and the West—those of the Persians and the Romans—the Lord raised

up an Unlettered Apostle among unlettered men to break the fetters of Ignorance and fetishism, and rescue mankind from the clutches of death.

The Prophet who can neither read nor write . . . will enjoin on them that which is right and forbid them that which is wrong. He will make lawful for them all good things and prohibit for them only the foul: and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear.

—VII: 157

The Unlettered Apostle wrote to the Roman Emperor, Heraclius, in 630 A. D., inviting him to Faith. The message he communicated was:

O People of the Scripture! Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords besides Allah,

—III: 64

Heraclius accepted the truth and correctness of the Call, but he was lacking in the will to forsake the divinity and god-head he enjoyed. The Romans, thus, could not obtain release from the curse of life until the Muslim crusaders had taken Syria and Rome under the shadow of their mercy.

The poor, downtrodden Arabs, on the other hand, responded to the Message of the Prophet and acquired all the resultant blessings. The chains fell from their feet as if by magic. Once they had kneeled at the threshold of One God, they became independent of all the other thresholds: neither the slavery to the carnal self remained nor the servitude to kings and sovereigns. The perverted customs and unjust laws and practices of the earlier days ceased to exist for them. God-consciousness and the awareness of His Power and Glory broke the spell of man-made deities and they fell into disgrace. The ill-clad and ill-fed Arabs who had never come out of their desert homeland or experienced pomp and splendour began to look straight in the eyes of foreign monarchs and noblemen, and

talk to them as equals. The grandeur of their courts made no impression on them. The reality had dawned upon them so clearly and forcefully that manifestations of worldly magnificence seemed meaningless to them and they were unwilling to deviate from their moral ideals and principles.

Once, Hazrat Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas sent Rab'i bin 'Amir as his envoy to Rustam, the Commander-in-Chief of Iran, at his request. The Iranians laid out carpets adorned with precious stones and the Commander-in-Chief sat on a golden throne, wearing a crown and robes that sparkled with jewels. On the other hand, Rab'i came wearing coarse clothes and carrying a sword and a shield in his hands. His horse, too, was of a small breed, on which he rode straight towards Rustam. Near the throne, he dismounted, tied the reins of the horse to a bolster, and started walking up to Rustam, still wearing his helmet and arms. The officers of the Court remonstrated against it and told him to lay aside the arms "I have come at your request", retorted Rab'i. "If you do not like my conduct, I can go back." Rustam, upon it, intervened and told his officers to let him come. Rab'i proceeded, leaning upon his lance, and piercing the carpet with its point. He went up and sat next to Rustam. Rustam enquired for what purpose had the Muslims come to Iran. "We have been appointed by God," Rab'i replied, "to deliver His bondmen from the overlordship of His slaves to His own overlordship, and from the narrow confines of this world to the vastness of the next, and from the oppression and inhumanity of other religions to the justice and fairness of Islam. He has sent us, with His Faith, to His creatures in order that we invited them to it. If they accept it, we will go back, and if they don't, we will wage an unrelenting war against them until we attain the Divine reward." "What is that reward?" Rustam enquired. "He who perishes in this path, for him is Paradise, and he who remains alive, for him is the Help of God", replied Rab'i. Rustam, then, said, "I have heard what you said. Will you give me time to consult the

officers of the State?" "How much time will you take?" Rab'i asked. "One day? Or two days?" "What can be done in such a short time? I will have to write to the officers and ascertain their views," replied Rustam. Rab'i, thereupon, remarked, "The Apostle of God did not leave a precedent of allowing more than three days to the enemy to decide while in a state of war. So, make up your mind quickly and choose one of the three things (Islam, *Jizya*¹ or war)". "Are you the leader of the Muslims?" Rustam enquired. "No", replied Rab'i. "All Muslims are like a single body. Among them, even the lowest has the right to give protection against the highest."

Again, when Mughaira went on a mission, the Iranians made an utmost display of their wealth and splendour, but he walked casually up to Rustam, and sat by his side. The Iranians had not seen the like of it before. They were shocked beyond measure, and, in their anger, caught him by the arm and pulled him down from the throne, "Was it the right way to treat a guest?" Mughaira remarked. "We are not accustomed to it that a man sat like God and the others stood before him like slaves." A hush fell over the durbar when Mughaira's speech was translated into Persian and the Iranians acknowledged that they had been at fault.

In the same way, Hazrat Mu'ad bin Jabal, once, went as an envoy to the Roman Court. The entire floor of the court was covered with a thick carpet of embroidered velvet. Mu'ad sat down on the ground and said that he did not want to sit on a carpet prepared by usurping the rights of the poor. The Romans remarked that they wanted to show respect to him, but what could they do when he did not care for his honour himself. Mughaira, then, stood on his knees and said, "I think nothing of what is honourable and dignified in your eyes. It is the practice of the slaves to sit on the ground, and who is a

1. Capitation-tax levied on non-Muslim subjects in a Muslim government in lieu of military service.

greater slave of the Lord than me?" Upon it, someone asked, "Is there anyone bigger than you among the Muslims?" "God forbid", exclaimed Mu'ad. "It is enough that I am not the worst". The Romans said that they were proud of their Emperor. "Are you proud of being the subjects of an Emperor who has a full control over your lives and property?" replied Mu'ad. "But he whom we have made our ruler cannot claim a privilege for himself in any matter. He will be punished by lashing if he commits adultery and his hands will be amputated if he commits a theft. He does not keep aloof from ourselves or sit in seclusion, and enjoys no preference in wealth and other worldly possessions."

The life of the Arabs was radically transformed by the mental revolution that had taken place as a result of belief in One God as the real Lord and Creator. Those who behaved like beasts, became angels in the garb of men; those who were robbers and highwaymen became the defenders of the life, property and honour of others; those who, but yesterday, made rivers of blood flow over whose cattle were to drink first at a pond or spring began to prefer to die of thirst for the sake of others; those who buried their daughters alive, with their own hands, started bringing up the daughters of others in preference to their own children, and those who felt no hesitation in committing theft and robbery in broad daylight carried the crown of the Iranian Emperor, concealed in their blanket, to their leader in the darkness of the night.

The spirit of God-seeking overcame the urge for world-seeking and aggrandisement that had made life an unending tale of woe and strife, and turned the world into a market-place. The natural instinct of competition and the desire to excel others that was, till then, confined to the material field of existence and produced rivalry even between brothers awakened noble qualities and endued the whole life with piety and devoutness when it was directed towards the religious ideal. People still sought to surpass others, but in righteousness and good-doing. The poor complained to the sacred

Prophet that their wealthier brothers were throwing them into the shade; they observed Namāz and fasting like them, but in charity they were far ahead for the simple reason that they had more to give away in the path of God. The Prophet, thereupon, taught them a prayer, but when the rich heard of it, they, too, began to recite it. The poor, again, expressed their discontent to the Apostle of God and he consoled and comforted them.

Contentment and self-denial had made the world a paradise in which a reflection of the reality of *On whom fear (cometh) not, nor do they grieve*, (X: 63), could clearly be seen. The eradication of greed and acquisitiveness had engendered such feelings of love and affection in the hearts that one could witness on the earth a living proof of *We remove whatever rancour may be in their breasts*, (XV: 47), which is a distinguishing quality of the dwellers of Heaven. Such a sense of duty and disposition of altruism and self-abnegation had been created, in the place of an exaggerated emphasis on rights, avidity and covetousness that the ideal of *but give preference over themselves though poverty become their lot*, (LIX: 9), became a reality and there remained nothing unbelievable in incidents of the kind that the hosts put their children to sleep without food and extinguished the lamp to give the impression to the guests that they were joining in the meal and while the guests ate their fill, the host and his family passed the night in hunger.

All this reform and progress was the fruit of professing faith in One God and surrendering to His Will, and rendering habitual obedience to the holy Apostle.

The Christian World did not appreciate the worth and value of the message. Its Eastern wing quickly yielded to the custodians of the Call and successors of the sacred Prophet, but the Northern and Western parts, i. e., Europe stayed away and spent 900 (or 1000) long years in a state of gloom and ignorance which it, itself, calls the Dark Ages. Europe will always feel ashamed of this long and dreary period of history

that was spent in bigotry and superstition, and the tyranny and inhumanity of monasticism, terrible spitefulness of the Inquisition, and the dreadful misdeeds of the ecclesiastics. It all was the outcome of the worship of created beings. Says the Quran:

They have taken as lord beside Allah
their rabbis, and their monks, and
the Messiah, son of Mary.

—IX: 31

When the rude awakening came to the West in the 16th Century, it decided in a hurry that the sole panacea of its ills lay in obtaining release from the serfdom of the Church. But it did not complete the journey of *Laa Ilaha* (there is no deity . . .), and mistook *Laa Kalisa*, (there is no Church) to be synonymous with *Laa Ilaha*, and revolting against the representatives of Christianity, set new gods over itself. What was more, it did not even start on the voyage of *Il-lallaah* (. . . Save one God). During the last most important three hundred years of its history, the West has been carving new deities and confirming the truth of the pronouncement: *Worship ye that which ye yourselves do carve ?* (XXXVII: 95). Even, today, it seems to be displeased with many of its ancient deities, yet, at the sametime, it is busy inventing new gods, such as, nation, democracy, dictatorship and socialism. The West is continually making and remaking the design of its life, but the whole thing remains in a mess. The more it tries to unravel the knot of its destiny, the more tangled it becomes.

The West may draw a thousand plans and give them whatever name it likes, divide the responsibility of one man among a number of men or entrust the duties of several men to one man and choose him with all the care in the world and surround him with as perfect a system of checks and balances as it can think of, but until the most essential part of its body, the heart, undergoes a change and those who are at the helm of affairs, whether an individual or a political party or the whole community, do not consider themselves account-

able to a Higher Power, The All-knowing and The All-seeing, and the fear of God and anxiety for the Reckoning of the Hereafter becomes a fundamental reality of life, no amount of legislation or political arrangement can alter the mournful course of events.

The sum and substance of the message of the life of the holy Prophet to the Twentieth Century World is : Run towards God instead of running away from Him, and make not anyone aside of Him your Lord and Preserver.

Therefor flee unto Allah; lo! I am a plain warner unto you from Him. And set not anyother god along with Allah; lo! I am a plain warner unto you from Him.

—LI: 50-51

The life of the Prophet delivers this message to mankind every year, and sends it out to every nook and corner of the world. The air carries it to all peoples and communities, and so does the sea. If the din and clang of the world subsides a little, it will be found that the voice the People of the Scripture of the First Century A H., had heard is still coming to the ears :

Now hath come unto you light from Allah and a plain Scripture, whereby Allah guideth him who seeketh His good pleasure unto paths of peace, He bringeth them out of darkness unto light by His decree, and guideth them unto a straight path.

—V : 15-16

The Prophets, alone, are the masters of the ship of humanity. It has always reached the shore under their guidance and through their steermanship. It was not peculiar to Noah's son, but whoever, at any time, has claimed that *I shall betake myself to some mountain that will save me from the water*, (XI : 43), has received the same reply : *This day there is none that saveth*. (XI : 43). Since the raising up of the holy Prophet, it is the decision of the Lord for everyone, both individuals and communities, that now felicity and deliverance are dependent

on him. The sequel of separating oneself from Him is nothing but misery, ruin and perdition.

Mohammad of Arabia, pride of both the worlds,
Whoever is not the dust of his threshold, dust be on
his head¹!

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1. Written for the annual conference of Majlis-i-Seerat of Peshawar, in 1944, at the request of its Secretary, Haji Abdul Rasheed Arshad. Later, it was brought out in the form of a booklet by Idara-i-Talimat-Islam, Lucknow.

IX

MESSAGE OF THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET TO PRESENT-DAY MUSLIMS

Obviously, the world was not a deserted place at the time of the raising up of the holy Prophet. It was not a graveyard. The wheels of life were moving at that time, too, with a very little difference, as they are now. Business was carried on almost in the same manner, and the people, generally, were satisfied with the things around them, and did not feel the need for a change.

But the Almighty did not like the shape of the world. As it is told in a Tradition: "The Lord cast a glance at the dwellers of the earth, and felt highly displeased with them, whether Arabs or non-Arabs. He was angry with all except for a few who believed in the revealed religions. He, thereupon, sent down the Prophet Mohammad, and, along with him, made provision for giving rise to a whole community. This community had, evidently, been created for a definite purpose which was not being fulfilled by others. There could be no need to raise a new community for something that was, already, being done, or to produce the storm in the placid ocean of life that followed the emergence of the new Ummat.

When the Lord created Adam, the Angel asked were they not enough for His glorification? Why should the creature of clay be brought into being? The Lord replied: *I know what ye know not.* (II: 30). He, thereby, indicated that Adam had not been created to fulfil the function of the Angels, but He intended to take some other work from him.

If the Muslims were being raised merely for trade, the

merchants of Mecca who took their caravans to Syria and Yemen, and the Jews of Medina who had established large business houses had the right to ask whether they were not good enough that a new community was called for, and if it was agriculture, the farmers of Medina, Khyber, Najd, Syria, Yemen and Iraq could have complained that they were being overlooked. And, so on.

But the Muslims were being created for a new task which no one in the world was performing or could perform. A new community was required for it. Hence, it was said:

You are the best community that hath been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency; and ye believe in Allah.

—III : 110

It was for its sake that people left their homes for good, suffered the loss in trade and agriculture, and shut their eyes to the comforts of the world. They shed their blood like water, preferred widowhood for their women, and the state of an orphan for their children. Was all this strife, this struggle and sacrifice, aimed simply for the ends and activities with which the Muslims appear to be so contented today? The way to their attainment was safe and even. There was no opposition from the contemporary world over it. Progress along it was not the bone of contention between the Arabs and the other people. They, indeed, had repeatedly offered the things the Muslims are hankering after now, but, each time, the preacher of Islam had firmly rejected all the proposals of power, wealth and luxury.

Now, were the Muslims to come down to the level where all the pagan communities subsisted at the time of the raising up of the holy Apostle, and the entire non-Muslim population of the world is finding itself today, and plunge recklessly into worldly affairs and interests like the Arabs, Romans and Persians of those days, and make the high aim of their existence the ends and advantages the sacred Prophet had turned down with disdain, what could it denote save the repudiation and betrayal

of the early history of Islam? Would it not show that the blood that was shed at Badr, Hunain, Ahzab, Qadsia and Yarmouk had been in vain?

If the leaders of the Quraish were able to speak today, they could rightfully tell the Muslims that the things they were craving for were exactly what they had offered to their Prophet. All these could be obtained without shedding a drop of blood. Was the net result of the whole struggle and the worth of all the sacrifices the way of life they had chosen and the moral standards that were so pleasing to them? What answer would we have then?

The chief anxiety of the holy Prophet about the Muslims was that they fell a prey to the allurements of the world and forgot their mission. He had addressed this warning to them in the sermon he delivered during the last days of his life:

"It is not poverty that I fear for you, but what I really fear is that the earth should be spread for you, as it had been spread for those who came before you, so that you could covet it as they had coveted, and, then, it destroyed you as it had destroyed them."

As we learn from Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari, when it was felt by the Ansars of Medina that they withdrew, for some-time, from *Jihad* and paid attention to trade and agriculture which were suffering through neglect,—they could not even think of exempting themselves from the principal duties like *Namaz*, *Roza* and *Zakat*, but had only expressed the intention of taking leave, for a time, from participation in the active endeavour for the glory of Faith—, this temporary withdrawal, too, was held to be nothing short of suicide, and the following verse of *Surat-i-Baqara* was revealed:

Spend your wealth for the cause of Allah, and be not cast by your own hands to fitting destruction; and do good as it ought to be and carry it on. Lo! Allah loveth those who do good deeds.

—II: 195

The particular mould of a Muslim's life is such that he

should either be engaged in the preaching and propagation of Faith and other practical endeavours in its path or lending help and support to those who are so engaged, and, also, wishing, genuinely, to join in the task himself.

The life of a contented citizen or businessman is not the life of a Muslim. It can never be his aim and ideal. Legitimate concerns of life and lawful economic activity, of course, are not forbidden. On the contrary, these are a form of worship and a means to the gaining of the propinquity of the Lord provided that the intention is pure and the eye is on the reward of the Hereafter and such an occupation is carried on within the limits prescribed by the Shariat.

This is the chief message of the life of the sacred Prophet for Muslims. To remain indifferent to it is to allow its purpose to be wasted and turn a blind eye to the fundamental reality the life of the Prophet presents to us.

X

IQBAL AT THE DOOR-STEP OF THE PROPHET

Love for the Prophet and yearning for Medina permeated the entire existence of Iqbal. His verses are overflowing with these sentiments. During the last phase of his life, it had become so intense that he was moved to tears at the very mention of the name of Medina. As things, however, would have it, he could not make the pilgrimage to the blessed town with his frail frame, but on the wings of imagination, he flew many a time in the wonderful skies of Arabia.

Iqbal speaks of the holy Prophet in a thousand ways in his poems. Over and over again, he pays him the tribute of love and loyalty, and while beseeching him, draws a poignant picture of the storm that was raging in his heart. On such occasions, his poetic genius touches new heights and fountains of thought and emotion spring into life. The truths he had discreetly held back begin to unfold themselves freely and spontaneously.

In a word the world of desire could be told, but
To stay in his presence, I prolonged the story.

Some of Iqbal's most inspiring poems have been written on the theme of ardent affection and admiration for the Prophet.

In the verses we will reproduce, the poet undertakes an imaginary journey to Mecca and Medina. In eager expectation, he presses on towards the two cities. The burning sand under his feet appears to him softer than silk; each particle of it seems to have turned into a heart, beating, pulsating

throbbing. To the camel-driver he tells to go slow, bearing those tiny hearts in mind.

Blessed be the desert whose evenings cheerful as dawn,

Whose nights are short and days exalted;

Tread softly, O traveller, softly still,

Each particle here is afflicted like us.

The song of *Hadi Khwan*¹ intensifies his restlessness, the wounds of his heart re-open, and verses of breath-taking beauty burst forth from the depths of his existence.

In the same state of ecstasy, he betakes himself to the *Mowajaha*² of the holy Prophet and sends respectful *Durood* and *Salaam* to him. The tongue of the heart becomes the interpreter of the burning passion of the heart and the poet unburdens himself of his feelings and speaks of the woes and sorrows of the Muslims. He complains of the shameful capitulation of the Islamic World to the Western Civilisation, to its materialistic values and ideals, and tells sorrowfully how he was living like a stranger in his own country.

Iqbal has given the title of *Armughan-i-Hejaz* (The Gift of Arabia) to the collection of these verses. It, doubtlessly, makes a priceless offering to the whole of the Islamic World, an incense-bearing draft of the morning breeze from the sacred land of Arabia.

Musk-laden is the zephyr today,

Beloved's tresses, haply, are loosened in its direction.

Iqbal made the spiritual journey when he was past sixty and his health had deteriorated. At that age, people, generally, like to retire from active life, but if the poet still set about it, it was purely in response to the bidding of the heart and in fulfilment of his life's ambition.

1. The song-leader of a caravan.

2. The place in the Prophet's Mosque in Medina near the opening in the wall of the chamber containing his grave. One who stands there is supposed to be standing in the direct presence of the holy Prophet.

Despite old age, I took the way to Medina,
Singing with the ecstasy of love;
Like the bird which in the evening,
Spreads its wings for the nest.

He asks if he set out for Medina in the evening of his life,
what was strange in it? Just as the birds fly back eagerly to
their nests at sunset, his soul, too, was anxious to return to the
place it, actually, belonged to.

As Iqbal's camel gathers speed, he tells it to go slow as the
rider was ill and weak, but it does not listen and continues to
trot joyously as if it was not the burning sand of the desert,
but a carpet had been spread on the ground.

At morn I told the camel to take it easy,
For the rider was old and sick;
But it listened not as if
The sand under its hooves was silk.

As Iqbal recites the verses of Jami¹ and Iraqi,² people
begin to wonder in what language the verses were. Though
they do not understand the meaning, their hearts respond to
the poetry instinctively, and in the agony and ecstasy of love,
they forget the pangs of hunger and thirst.

O Caravan-leader tell who the non-Arab is,
His song is not of Arabia;
But so refreshing the melody is to the heart,
That one could live in the desert without water.

Iqbal exults in the hardships of the journey and does not
want it to end quickly. He begs the camel-driver to take a
longer route so that the period of waiting may extend.

Let the traveller's suffering be more blissful,
And his lamentation more intense;
Take a longer route, Oh camel-driver,
And make the fire of separation burn stronger.

In this state of enchantment and beauty, the poet

1. & 2. Names of the two celebrated Persian poets whose poems in the
praise of the holy Prophet are very popular among the Muslims.

reaches Medina. To his travelling companion, he says: "We both are the captives of the same ringlet, the same curling lock. At last, the opportunity has come to us of fulfilling our heart's desire and spreading the eyelashes under the beloved's feet. Let our eyes have their way and give a free vent to the storm that is raging within them."

Come, friend, together let us weep,
Both are victims of beauty's aureole;
Give a free rein to what is buried in the hearts,
And rub our eyes at master's feet.

Iqbal marvels at his fate that a worthless beggar like him was favoured with presence in the royal durbar to which even kings and savants failed to gain admission.

The worth of wise-men was rated low,
Upon a simpleton a rapturous glance was bestowed;
How blessed, indeed, and how fortunate,
Sovereign's door for the beggar was opened.

But, even in that hour of heavenly blessedness, Iqbal does not forget the Muslims, particularly the Indian Muslims. He relates their distress with the full force of his eloquence.

The Muslim, that beggar with the air of kings,
Smoke of sigh from his heart has departed;
He weeps, but why? He does not know,
Bestow a glance upon him, Oh Apostle of God.

The tragedy with the Muslims is that they have fallen from a great height, and the higher the place from which one falls, the greater is the injury.

Of the afflicted beggar what to tell?
The Muslim of noble descent;
God bless the diehard,
From a great height has he fallen.

The main difficulty with the Muslims is that they are leaderless.
The blue sky is still unkind,
And the caravan nowhere near destination;
Of their disunity what to speak,
They are people without a leader, you know.

The blood of the Muslims has run cold. They have stopped producing men of outstanding calibre which was, once, their speciality. For long their scabbard has been without the sword and their sowing-field is lying desolate.

His blood possess the warmth no more,
No more, in his garden, do tulips grow;
His scabbard as empty as his purse,
The Book laid untouched on the shelf.

Iqbal grieves at the spectacle of decay and degeneration the Muslims are presenting today. The joy of seeking has departed from their hearts and they have grown slothful and ease-loving. Their ears have got accustomed to soft music and the call of men of freedom makes no impression on them.

His heart he made a captive of hue and scent,
And emptied it of the joy of longing;
The shrill cry of the falcon they seldom hear,
Whose ears get used to gnat's humming sound.

There is neither the light of faith in their eyes nor the joy of love. Their hearts beat no more for the beloved.

In his eye, neither the light nor joy,
Nor the heart in his bosom restless;
God help the *Millet*¹ whose death,
Is from soul devoid of 'presence'.

The poet compares the present plight of the Muslims with their glorious past, and complains, reverently, to God that those whom He had brought up on fruit and honey are going from door to door and seeking sustenance in the arid desert.

Ask me not his condition,
The earth is mean to him as the sky;
The bird Thou had reared on fruit,
For it, quest of grain in the desert is distressing.

Iqbal, then, speaks of the storm of atheism that is advancing rapidly towards the World of Islam. As a scholar of

1. The Muslim community as a whole.

philosophy and economics, he knows that irreligiousness is making its way into the Muslim World through materialism, and as a result of the frigidity of the heart. The extravagant ways of living are adding fuel to the fire. Iqbal believes that the mounting challenge of godlessness can be met only with deep devotion and asceticism, with the pattern of life set by Abu Bakr Siddiq

Irreligiousness has turned the world upside down,
From attributes of the body they deduce about soul;
Out of the *Faqr*¹ Thou bestowed upon Siddiq,
Produce restlessness within this lover of ease.

The real cause of the decline of Muslims is not poverty, but the extinction of the flame of love that once used to burn within them. When these beggars did not kneel before anyone save God, the collar of the kings was in their hands, but as the spark died out in their hearts, they took shelter in shrines and monasteries

The beggars till they mustered in the mosque,
Tore the collar of the kings;
But when the fire within them died,
The Muslims sought shelter in the shrines.

Iqbal examines the history of Muslims and discovers things that are enough to fill him with shame. It reveals aspects of their life that have nothing to do with the tenets of Islam. Such glaring instances of Polytheistic behaviour, worship of non-God and flattery of men in power and authority meet the eye that no self-respecting man can remain without a sense of guilt. Sorrowfully, Iqbal admits that with those limits of degeneration, the Muslims were unworthy of being called the followers of the holy Prophet. It was the height of impertinence to associate them with him.

No one but ourselves we have to blame,
We proved not worthy of thy name.

The World of Islam has become bankrupt from within.

1. Asceticism; a life of poverty with contentment and resignation.

The ewers of the Sufi-lodges are empty, and the seminaries are pursuing the beaten track. Poetry and literature show no signs of life.

Ewers of the Sufi-lodges contain no wine,
The seminary follows the beaten path;
From the company of poets I rose dejected,
Melody from the reed comes out dead.

The poet says he travelled throughout the Muslim World, but nowhere did he find the Muslim who was not afraid of death, but death was afraid of him.

I flew with the wings you gave,
And burnt myself with the fire of my song;
The Muslim that made death tremble with fear,
I looked for him, but in vain.

Analysing the causes of the frustration of the Muslims, Iqbal remarks that be it an individual or a community, if it possesses the heart, but does not have the beloved, it is bound to remain unfulfilled.

One night, before God, I wailed,
Down in the world why Muslims are?
Came the reply: "Don't you know,
This community possesses the heart, but not the
beloved?"

All this notwithstanding, Iqbal is not despondent. He has not lost faith in Muslims, nor despaired of the Mercy of the Lord. On the contrary, he is severely intolerant of the Prophets of gloom and those who rely blindly on others and see everything with their eyes.

Custodian of Harem is idol-hall's architect,
His faith is dead, and eyes not his own;
From his look it is manifest,
He has lost hope in every possibility of good.

Though weak and poor, the Muslims are more high-minded than kings. Their world-illumining charm can still be a world-conquering force.

Though Muslim is without corps and battalions,
His soul is the soul of a king;
Given his rightful place again,
His charm is might overwhelming.

Grieving over the injustice of the times, Iqbal says :

Occasionally I go, and, occasionally, rise,
What blood do I shed without a sword!
Cast a loving glance from the terrace,
I am up in arms against my Age.

Iqbal's whole life was spent in struggle against the modern civilisation. By rejecting the vulgar materialism of the West, he has rendered an invaluable service to the future generations. He was a rebel as well as a reformer, a revolutionary as well as a redeemer.

Like Rumi, I gave *Azan* in the *Harem*,
From him I learnt mysteries of the self;
During the mischief of by-gone days he was born,
And I during the mischief of the present time.

The poet speaks with pride of his revolt against the modern educational system and describes how he managed to preserve his faith and individuality in the midst of trials and temptations. In the fire of Western thought he claims to have displayed the courage and strength of Hazrat Ibrahim.

The spell of modern education I broke,
I picked the grain, left the net alone;
God knows how in the manner of Ibrahim,
I sat in its fire, easy in mind.

Iqbal characterises his stay in Europe as barren and unproductive. Dry books, vain philosophical disputations, alluring beauty and captivating sights were all he could remember. If he learnt anything during it, it was self-forgetting which nearly deprived him of selfhood.

I gave my heart to Frankish idols,
In the heat of temple-dwellers I melted;
Such a stranger I became in my own eyes,
That when I saw myself, I did not recognise.

Even now when he recalls his stay in the West, he feels sad and frustrated. He complains that the tavern of Europe gave him nothing but headache. He never had a more depressing experience than in the company of Western intellectuals.

I imbibed wine in the ale-house of the West,
And with my life I purchased headache;
I sat in the company of wise-men of the West,
And never had a more frustrating experience.

With profound anguish and utmost humility Iqbal, then, addresses these words to the holy Prophet: "I have been brought up on thy loving glance. The fine arguments and weighty discourses of men of learning make me sick. I am a petitioner at thy door, a beggar of thy street. Why should I dash my head against the door-step of anyone else?"

A beggar I am, and it is from you I ask for what I ask,
I pierce the heart of the mountain with the blade of
grass;

Philosophical discourses give me pain in the head,
For I have been brought up on your loving glance.

The poet turns his attention to the Muslim theologians, the Ulema who are supposed to be the custodians of religious knowledge, and feels disgusted at their intellectual inertness, pedantic affectation and fondness for hackneyed expressions. Speaking metaphorically, he says that their Arabian desert possesses neither the well of Zam Zam¹ nor the House of Ka'aba while the real worth of the desert of Arabia is from them. Without the two glorious landmarks, who would care for its blistering sands and mute hills? How empty-handed the theologians really are who command a large fund of knowledge and have a fluent tongue, but whose eye is without a tear, and heart without a throb?

1. Name of a celebrated well in Mecca, also called Hangar's well.

The heart of *Mulla*¹ is innocent of grief,
 His eye is seeing, but not moist;
 I rose from his seminary because,
 In his Arabian desert no *Zam Zam* gushes.

Iqbal confesses that, once, he placed reliance upon the non-God and, in punishment, was flung down from his place hundreds of times. This is the state in which neither the strength of the arm avails nor the resourcefulness of the mind. Only the Divine Will prevails, and a slight aberration can plunge a man into depths degradation.

I gave my hand in nobody's hand,
 Myself the knots I unravelled;
 Upon other than God I once relied,
 And fell down from my station two hundred times.

In these heartless times which know of nothing but the logic of gain and loss and have reduced man into a mechanical contrivance—a cog in the wheel—what can Iqbal do but eat his heart out in sorrow and anger?

My eye is indifferent to what it sees,
 The heart melts in the inner fire;
 Me and these soulless, unfeeling times,
 What an enigma it is? Tell me.

Iqbal is oppressed by a feeling of loneliness. In the wide world, he is without a friend. He is his sole companion, comforter and confidant.

In the East and the West I am a stranger,
 Friendless and forlorn, no confidant have I;
 I relate my anguish to my own heart,
 How innocently loneliness do I cheat.

No one listens to him, nor cares to share the fruits of his knowledge. His verses fall on deaf ears.

They understand not the secrets I reveal,
 Nor eat the fruit of my tree;

1. The self-styled priest of Islam which, as a religion recognises no priesthood.

I seek justice from thee, O leader of nations,
They regard me a mere reciter of Ghazals.¹

The holy Prophet had bidden him to carry the message of life and eternity to the world, but unknowing friends want him to compose chronograms like a professional rhymester.

You command me to sing of eternity,
And impart to dead the message of life;
But unkind friends demand,
That I record in verses the dates of the death of this
one and that.

Iqbal complains of the indifference of the people to the real meaning and purpose of poetry. He displayed all his goods in the market, but there were no buyers. He wanted to make an offering of his heart, but there was no one to accept. Who could be more lonely than him in the world?

I offer my heart, but there is no taker,
I possess the merchandise, but where is the
plunderer?

Come and make my heart thy abode,
No Muslim is lonelier than me.

In the end, Iqbal speaks to King Ibn-i-Saud of Arabia, but, in fact, it is meant for all the leaders of the Islamic World. He warns him against putting his trust in the friendship and sincerity of the foreigners and exhorts him to rely solely upon God and himself. "If the rope is yours", says he, "you can pitch the tent wherever you like, but if it is a borrowed one, you cannot take even a step in freedom."

Your place in the arid desert is such,
That its evening is as bright as the morn;
Pitch your tent wherever you want,
But to borrow rope from others is forbidden.²

1. Love-lyrics

2. Broadcast from the Damascus Radio Station in 1956, under the title of *Iqbal Fi Madinatul Rasul*. It was rendered into Urdu by Molvi Mohammad el-Hasani, the Editor of *El-Ba'as-ul-Islami*, Lucknow.

XI

JOY OF PRESENCE

There are chains of mountains on both sides. The air is fragrant. Maybe, the Prophet's dromedary had passed this way, and the beauty and aroma of the surroundings was due to it.

As an Arab poet has said: "The dust of the valley of Jaza began to smell like camphor and its bushes were transformed into odorous plants. It was simply because Hind had passed through it in the evening, and her cloak had rubbed against the ground."

Look! Here is Maseejid.¹ After it, there will be Bir Ali (Zul-Halifa*).

As the beloved's town draws near,
The flame of desire burns stronger.

Benediction (Durood) is on the lips, and the heart is overflowing with eagerness. The Arab driver wonders what the non-Arab pilgrim is singing, and why is he weeping. The pilgrim, sometimes, recites verses in Arabic, and, sometimes, in other languages.

The air is laden with sweet smell, and the moonlight is soft. As we approach Medina, the freshness of the air, the sweetness of the water, and the fervent burning of the heart increase. Listen, someone is singing :

Musk-laden is the zephyr today,
Beloved's tresses, haply, are loosened in its direction.

Only once did he pass through this place, but,
The draft of Divine mercy is coming still.

1. Names of halting-places on the road to Medina.

What wonder if Plaedias and moon fall my prey,
I have bound my head to the Prophet's saddle-bow.

The Path-finder, Last of the Messengers, Master of all,
Who on the road-dust bestowed the splendour of Sinai.

Dust of Medina is more pleasant than both the worlds,
Cool is the town where the beloved lives.

Mohammad of Arabia, pride of both the worlds,
Whoever is not the dust of his doorstep, dust be on
his head.

This is Zul Halifa, We will spend the rest of the night here. We had a bath, applied perfume and rested for a while. In the morning, we offered the prayer. The car started. But shall we travel by car to where one should go on one's head. That I was seated next to the chauffeur proved to be of advantage. I will get down at Wadi-i-Aqiq near Bir Urwah. Only the luggage, the ladies and the old and the infirm will remain in the car. We reach Bir Urwah in no time and alight there. Mount Ohud comes into view, and so do the trees of Medina. Are these the trees about which Shaheedi had said:

How I wish when my soul's cage is broken,
It flies out and sits like a bird on trees of thy
Mausoleum!

The Green Dome¹ meets the eye. Hold you breath and proceed respectfully. I enter the town of Medina and walking under the wall of the Prophet's mosque, pass through Bab-i-Majeedi, and stop at Bab-i-Jibril. I give something in charity as an expression of gratitude to the Almighty for bestowing upon me the good fortune to be here, and go in. First all, I offer two *Rekats*¹ of *Namaz*² in the Prophet's Arch, perform

1. The dome of the holy Prophet's mausoleum in Medina.
2. The *Namaz* consists of a number of cyclic parts, each ending with two *sajdas*. These parts are known as *Rak'ats*.

the ablution of the eyes with tears, and, then, present myself in the court of the sacred Prophet.

Most sincere inclinations and salutations unto thee, O Messenger of Allah! Most sincere inclinations and salutations unto thee, O Apostle of God! Most sincere inclinations and salutations unto thee, O Beloved of Allah! Most sincere inclinations and salutations unto thee, O possessor of the best of morals. Most sincere inclinations and salutations unto thee, O raiser of the banner of the Praise of God on the Day of Resurrection! Most sincere inclinations and salutations unto thee, O occupier of the place of praise! Most sincere inclinations and salutations unto thee, O deliverer of men from darkness to light, by God's leave! Most sincere inclinations and salutations unto thee, O deliverer of men from the bondage of fellowmen to the bondage of the Lord! Most sincere inclinations and salutations unto thee, O deliverer of men from the oppression of other religions to the fairness and justice of Islam! Most sincere inclinations and salutations unto thee, O deliverer of men from the narrowness of this world to the boundlessness of the Hereafter! Most sincere inclinations and salutations unto thee, O greatest benefactor of humanity, and its most loving and sincere friend, and to whom the world is most indebted, next only to God! I attest that no one is worthy of worship save Allah, and thou art His slave and Apostle. Thou hast conveyed the Message of the Lord wholly and in all respects and fulfilled the trust and left no stone unturned in the service of mankind, and striven to the utmost in the path of God, and remained absorbed in His worship till the last moment of thy life. May the Almighty bestow upon thee, on behalf of the Ummat and His whole creation, the best reward that has ever been bestowed upon any Apostle and Messenger on behalf of his followers and all the created beings! O Allah! Grant propinquity to Mohammad, and endue him with loftiness

and sublimity, and raise him to the place of worthiness Thou hast promised. Verily, Thou never goest back on Thy word.

"O God! Bless Mohammad and his posterity (or followers) as Thou hast blest Ibrahim and his posterity (or followers). Verily, Thou art the Praiseworthy, the Majestic

"O God! Magnify Mohammad and his posterity (or followers) as Thou hast magnified Ibrahim and his posterity (or followers). Verily, Thou art the Praiseworthy, the Majestic¹."

I, then, paid my tribute to the two friends and successors of the holy Prophet in the form of salutation and prayer, and returned to my place.

Now, it is you and the Prophet's Mosque. Lay bare your heart. Let no desire, wish or yearning be left unfulfilled. There can, indeed, be no better time and place for the recitation of *Durood*. If the feeling of 'presence' and 'seeing' does not seize you now, when it will? Offer *Namaz* in the Bed of Paradise. But, beware, you are not to cause inconvenience to anyone. Pushing along, shoving, reservation of a place for oneself and running about in the mosque is bad everywhere. But it is extremely deplorable at the place from which these commandments originated and became known to the world. Voice should not be raised here, nor worldly talk indulged in. The mosque must never be turned into a public street. Avoid entering the mosque without *Wuzu*,² as far as possible. Business transactions, buying and selling, are forbidden in it.

Come into it as many times during the day and night as you like, and offer salutation. Now that fate has smiled on you, why not make the best of it? But it should, always, be with solemnity, reverence and eagerness. The state of the heart is

1. This benediction came spontaneously on the lips of the author at the time of his first visit. It has not been adapted from any book.

2. Ablution performed before prayer.

not the same at all times. Sometimes the heart is awake, sometimes asleep. When it wakes up, know that your destiny has woken up. Betake yourself to the hallowed place and say: *Remove the sleeve from my eyes, and see the pearl.*

Sometimes, one will wish to go in the company of the slaves and bondmen in the hope that when 'ears pour down from the eyes of lovers who have spent their days and nights in the agony of separation, a slight shower may fall upon him as well, and when the breeze of mercy blows, a draft of it may, also, fall to his lot. Sometimes, one will like to go alone. Fulfil all the desires of the heart in that regard. Let nothing remain unsatisfied. Sometimes, let the tears speak. Sometimes, give a free rein to the tongue of ardour and enthusiasm. There are both, long and short, formulas of benediction. Recite whichever of them you like. But take care not to exceed the limits of Monotheism. You are standing before him who, what to speak of prostration,¹ did not even like to hear: "If God wills and thou willeth", and "whoever disobeyed both. . . ."

There should not be a trace of partnership in the Powers, Functions and Attributes of God. It is strictly forbidden. Recite the verses of Jami or the prayer of Hali, but remember, you are standing before the Greatest and the Last of the Apostles of Divine Oneness who did not suffer even a

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1. It is related that, once, the Apostle of God asked Qais bin Sa'ad: "Would you like to prostrate yourself before my grave after my death?" "No", Qais replied. "Then you should, also, not prostrate yourself before me in my life-time", observed the Prophet.
 2. It is related that, once, someone said to the Apostle of God: "If God wills and thou willeth." The Prophet, at once, checked him "You have made me the equal of God. Say only if God wills", he remarked.

It is related that, once, during a speech, someone said: "Whoever obeys God and the Apostle is on the straight path while whoever disobeys both (of them) goes astray." The Prophet did not like the Lord and himself to be mentioned together in a way that gave the impression of equality or partnership, and admonished the person, saying: "You are a very bad speaker."

—Abu Dawood

suspicion of Polytheism.

We are, now, living in Medina to sweep the ground of which was considered an honour by godly men¹ and kings alike. Regard every day and every moment of the stay a God-sent. Offer up all the five daily *Namaz* in the Mosque, in congregation. If you have to go out, let it be at such a time that you do not miss a prayer-service. Offer *Tahajjud*,² too, in it. It is a quiet hour. People rush towards the 'bed of Paradise'. It is difficult to find a place without struggle. You go, first, to *Mowajjah Sharif*. Maybe, only the guard is there at this time. Offer *Salam* in a calm and collected manner, and, then, say the *Nafil*³ prayers, and return after you have offered the *Fajr*⁴ and *Ishraq*⁵ prayers.

Let us go, today, to *Jannat-ul-Baq'ee* which is the greatest burial-place of faith and earnestness after the graves of the Prophets.

The like of the treasure that is buried here is not to be found in any part of the world. A fadeless saga of Faith and Jihad is written on every inch of the ground. The treasure of Islam is buried in every mound. You have, now, entered *Jannat ul-Baq'ee*. The attendant will take you directly to the graves of the Prophet's family. Here, the Prophet's uncle, Syedna Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib, the leader of the ladies of Paradise, Syeda Fatima, daughter of the holy Prophet, Syedna Hasan bin Ali, Syedna Ali bin el-Husain Zainul Abedin, Syedna Mohammad el-Baqar and Syedna Jafar el-Sadiq are fast asleep. Then you will see the graves of Hazrat Ayesha and all the other wives of the Prophet except Hazrat Khudaija and Hazrat Maimoona, and his daughters. Next, you will come to Daar-i-Aqeel bin Abi Talib where Abu Sufyan bin Haris bin Abdul Muttalib bin Jafar etc, lie buried. And, then,

1. The word *Aulia* used in the original denotes the 'Friends of God'.

2. A prayer said during the last one-third of the night.

3. Supererogatory.

4. Early morning service.

5. Prayer offered after day-break.

there is the flat ground which contains the graves of Imam Maalik and his teacher, Nafey. As you proceed further, you will come upon a luminous place. This is the first grave of a *Mahajir* (emigrant to Medina). Osman bin Maz'oon whose forehead the Prophet had kissed, the Prophet's son, Syedna Ibrahim bin Mohammad, the legist of the Companions, Abdullah bin Masud, the Conqueror of Iraq, Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas, and Sa'ad bin Mu'ad at whose death the ninth heaven shook, and Syedna Abdul Rahman bin Auf and other celebrated Companions, also, are buried there. Towards the north-west, near the wall, lie buried the seventy Companions who were martyred, in 63 A. H., during the reign of Yezid, in what is known as the Incident of Harrah. At the north-east corner of Baq'ee is the eternal resting-place of Usman bin 'Affan. Halt here for a while and shed the tears left after the mournful tribute at the graves of Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Omar, at the dust of their third friend and associate. Further ahead, are situated graves of Hazrat Abu Saeed Khudri and Fatima bint el-Asad, the mother of Hazrat Ali. Make salutations to them and offer *Fateha*.¹ Cast a contemplative glance, in the end, at the whole of Baq'ee. *Allahu-o-Akbar!* How true, how sincere were these bondmen of the Lord who remained steadfast till the last breath! (*Among them are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah.* (XXXIII:23). They are lying at his feet in Medina in whose hand they had placed their hands in Mecca.

Look at the Green Dome and the peaceful town of Medina. Can any place, anywhere, offer a more inspiring example of truthfulness, sincerity and constancy? Let us take, in Baq'ee, the pledge of selfless service in the cause of Faith and beseech the Lord to grant us the good fortune to live and die in the path of Islam. This, alone, is the message of Jannat-ul-Baq'ee,

1. Prayers for the dead

and the lesson it imparts.

Betake yourself, also, to Qubba. This is the haloed place where the holy Prophet had, for the first time, stayed in Medina and the foundation of the mosque was laid about which it is stated in the Quran: *There is a mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety.* (IX:108). Go to it and place your head reverentially on the ground that had the honour of being trampled under the feet of the sacred Prophet and of *men who love to be purified* (IX:108).

The soil that bears the mark of thy foot,

For years the discerning prostrate themselves on it in prayer.

Today, you are to visit Ohud, and its graveyard, known popularly as Syedna Hamza. It is only 3 kilometres from Medina. This is the place that was saturated with the most precious blood of Islam and where unexampled feats of love and loyalty were performed. It was here that the limbs of Hazrat Hamza were chopped off and his liver eaten, and Amarah bin Ziyad had breathed his last, rubbing his eyes on the Prophet's feet. It was from the side of this very mountain that Anas bin el-Nazr had felt the sweet smell of Paradise coming, and died with eighty wounds on his body. Here it was that the blessed teeth of the holy Prophet were broken and he had received wounds, also, on the head. Devoted followers had used their arms and backs to protect his body, as a shield. It was here that the delicately brought-up Meccan, Mas'ab bin Omair, was martyred and buried in a blanket. The Lions of God are asleep here. The whole of its land is covered with the ashes of the moths of the candle of Apostleship. It is the home of the ardent lovers of the sacred Prophet and valiant sons of Islam.

Oh morning breeze, this is nightingale's place of martyrdom,

Move carefully here; it is not thy parkway.

The echo of "Lay down your lives, too, for what the Apostle

of God has laid down his life"¹ can still be heard here.

View every particle of the dust of Medina with love and tenderness of the heart. There is the whole world for you to censure and criticise. What is the harm if a few moments of life are spent in the midst of flowers, and away from thorns. If your eye is still held back by doubt and uncertainty, look into yourself. Is it not your own fault? Didn't we get the bounty of both the worlds from here? Wasn't it here that we learnt to be civilised? But for the guidance we received here, how many of us would be in the church, idol-house or fire-temple today? And how have we repaid its claim? What have we done for the education of its children and for producing among its people an awareness of the true spirit and high aim and ideal of Islam? The plea of distance is meaningless. Their ancestors travelled across deserts and oceans and traversed the mountains to carry the message of Faith to us. Have we ever realised the duty we owe to them? Do we imagine we can pay back the tremendous debt of gratitude with the few coins our Hajjis distribute as charity in the streets of Medina?

Medina is the home of the Call of Faith. Take back this Call with you as a present to your homes. The dates, the roses, the mint and the 'earth of healing' are, of course, valuable in the eye of love, but the real gift of the place is the Call of Faith and the resolve to join in the earnest endeavour for the preaching and propagation of Islam even to the extent of laying down one's life in its path. Every inch of Medina and the Prophet's Mosque, every particle of the soil of Baq'ee, and every pebble and stone of Ohud gives out the same message. How can anyone forget, on coming to Medina, that the very foundation of the town was laid on the Call of Faith and Jihad? Those who had left Mecca for good and made Medina their home had

1. The remark was made by Anas bin-el-Nazr. On seeing some Companions sitting during the battle of Ohud, he asked them what they were doing. "What is the use of fighting now? The Apostle of God has been martyred". "Then lay down you lives, too, for what the Apostle of God has laid down his life", observed Anas.

all the advantages at their native place except the opportunity of preaching and Jihad. The people of Medina were divided simply in two groups. One who fulfilled the Covenant and laid down their lives in the path of Islam. No fear or temptation could make them turn aside from the course they had adopted. The other comprised of those who strove to the utmost and left no stone unturned, but the Lord had to take some other work from them. Every moment of their lives was spent in eager expectation of martyrdom. It is set forth in the Quran :

Among the Believers are men who have been true to their Covenant with Allah : of them some have completed their vow to (the extreme), and some (still wait) : but they have never changed (their determination) in the least.

—XXXIII:23

This, indeed, should be the case with the whole World of Islam. In it, there should be only those who have either completed their vow or are living in expectation of it. To the third group belong men who are greedy of life and contented with existence in this world. There was no place for them in Medina, nor should it be now in the Islamic world.

Alas, the stay in Medina has come to an end, and, people say, we will be leaving tomorrow.

The consciousness of our negligence and shortcomings pricks the heart. But what other course is open to us now except of regret and repentance.

This night is the last night of our stay. In the midst of grief and uneasiness, there is, also, a feeling of peace and satisfaction. Where are we going, after all? From the town of the Apostle of God to the town of God, from the House of God built by the Prophet Mohammad and his Companions to the House of God built by the Prophet Ibrahim and his son, Hazrat Ismail. And why? In obedience to the command of the Lord and in compliance with the wishes of His Apostle. Such a separation is no separation, indeed.

I made my last salutation, cast a parting glance at the Mosque, and came out. I had already taken a bath and made the preparation for putting on the *Ihram* (Pilgrim's robe), thinking that it might not be possible at Zul Halifa. The car started and I bade farewell to the beloved town of Medina. With tearful eyes, I looked at Ohud. Now, we were out of the town. Every moment that passes takes me farther from Medina and nearer to Mecca. Praise be to Allah, we are between the two sacred territories.

A thousand thanks,

We are

Between two benefactors.¹

1. Adapted from the Author's article, *Apne Ghar Se Baitullah Tak*. It forms a part of Maulana Mohammad Manzoor Noman's book entitled, *Haj Kaise Karen?*

XII

TALKING OF MEDINA

Friends have invited me to give a talk on Medina, describing what I saw there, and I have readily agreed. As a Persian poet has said : " To talk of the beloved is no less pleasant than to meet him."

I do not know when I first heard of Mecca and Medina. Like all Muslim children, I was brought up in an environment in which *Hejaz* (Arabia) and Mecca and Medina were household words. I, distinctly, remember people saying Mecca, Medina together as if these were the same. When they took the name of one of them, they, generally, mentioned that of the other as well. I, thus, came to imagine that Mecca and Medina were not two different places, but one, and learnt to appreciate the difference only as I grew up. It, then, became clear that these were two different towns separated from each-other by over 300 kilometres.

In my childhood, I had heard people talking about Arabia and the two towns with the same fervour and enthusiasm as they did about Paradise and its joys and comforts, and it was from that time that I was seized with the desire to attain Paradise and visit Arabia.

Soon I realised that it was not possible for anyone to see Paradise during his lifetime, but he could, of course, go to Arabia. Parties of *Hajis* (pilgrims) were visiting it regularly. So, why could I, also, not make a visit to that 'Paradise of Faith?'

Days rolled by and I grew in age. My old eagerness was revived when I read books on the life of the holy Prophet and

studied the history of Islam, and the urge to perform the *Haj* and make the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina became so strong that I was never without it.

Then, it so happened that I reached the place where 'neither the grass grew nor rivers flowed.' Only naked mountains stood on all sides of it like sentinels. Yet, as Hafeez Jullundri has said:

Neither grass grows here nor flowers bloom,

Yet even heavens bend themselves low to meet it.

As I saw the apparently unattractive stretch of land, I felt how devoid of scenery that town was. At the sametime, however, I thought what a great favour it had bestowed upon mankind. Without it, the wide world would have been nothing more than a golden cage, and man, a prisoner. This was the town that took man out of the narrow confines the earth and made him acquainted with limitless possibilities of development, and restored to mankind its glory and freedom. It relieved humanity of the heavy load under which it was groaning and broke the fetters unjust rulers and ignorant lawgivers had put around its feet.

As I reflected over what the world would have been without this town, I thought of comparing it with the bigger towns of the world and seeing what would have been the loss of human race and civilisation had the latter not come into existence. One by one, all those towns came to my mind, and I felt that they were flourishing merely for the sake of a handful of men and had made no notable contribution to human progress and happiness. On the contrary, they had been guilty of various sins against man, at various stages of history. For selfish gain, one town had razed the other to the ground, and one country had ravaged the other countries.

Civilisation, would have been none the poorer without those cities. But without Mecca, humanity would have, certainly, remained unblest with truths, beliefs, ideals and sciences that were its pride today. It was owing to it that the world regained the imperishable wealth of Faith and rediscover-

ed the true knowledge that lay buried under a thick crust of conjecture and speculation. It got back the dignity and nobility that had been trampled underfoot by cruel oppressors. In fact, humanity was reborn at Meccā, and history turned a new leaf.

But what am I saying? What do I mean when I ask: What would the world have been like had there been no Mecca? It had remained asleep, until the 6th Century, with its dry mountains and huge sand-dunes, even with the House of Ka'aba and the Well of Zam-Zam, while humanity was caught in the clutches of death. Surrounded by its mountains and sand-dunes, it went on leading a secluded life as if it had nothing to do with the larger human family, and was not a part of, but apart from the world that lay around it.

I should, therefore, not be enquiring what would have been the state of the world without Mecca, but without its illustrious son who turned the scales of history and showed a new path to mankind.

As I reflected on it, a few scenes emerged on the landscape of my mind. It appeared as if the leader of the Quraish was circumambulating around the House of Ka'aba, alone and by himself, and people were jeering at him and passing sarcastic remarks, but he was carrying out the circumambulation with supreme indifference to all hostility and opposition.

On finishing the circumambulation, he wants to go into the House of Ka'aba, but the key-bearer, Osman bin Talha checks him with a firm hand. The leader of the Quraish bears it, too, with exemplary fortitude, and says: "Oh Osman! What will it be like on the day when the key will be in my hand and I will give it to whom I please?" "Will all the Quraish be dead on that day?" asks Osman in anger. "No", he replies. "On that day, they will attain real respect and honour."

I, then, see the same leader circumambulating around the House of Ka'aba, on the occasion of the Victory of Mecca, and his Companions who had sacrificed their all for his sake gathering around him like moths. He sends for the keeper of

the key, and says to him: "Osman! This is your key. Take it. Today is the day of showing kindness and keeping the promise."

As history tells, the celebrated son of Mecca did not only become the owner of the key with which he could open the door of the House of Ka'aba, but, with him, also, was the key with which he could open the locks of humanity no seer or philosopher had been able to do till then. It was the Quran that had been revealed to and the Apostleship that had been bestowed on him.

After performing the Haj, I flew towards Medina on the wings of eagerness. The hardships of the way seemed to be a blessing to me, and before my eyes was drawn the soul-stirring image of the earlier traveller whose camel had passed through the same route.

The first thing I did on reaching Medina was to offer two *Rak'ats* of *Namaz* and express my sincerest gratitude to the Almighty for granting me the good fortune to be there. After it, I betook myself into the 'presence' of the holy Prophet. How boundless was his favour upon me, really! I could never give thanks to him as was his due. I offered *Durood* and *Salaam*, and affirmed that he had conveyed the Message of the Lord to the world, proved true to the trust He had placed with him, showed the Straight Path to the Ummat, and strove till the last breath of his life in the way of God.

I, then, made the salutation to both the trusted friends of his whose selfless devotion was without a parallel in history. No one had discharged the duties of companionship or fulfilled the obligations of succession as they did.

From the Prophet's Mosque, I went to Jannat ul-Baq'ee. What a priceless treasure of truth and purity, of love and dedication is buried in this small plot of land! Asleep here are those who had sacrificed the life of this world for the life of Futurity. These are the men who willingly abandoned their hearths and homes in the way of Faith, and preferred to spend

their lives at the feet of the sacred Prophet than with friends and relatives. *Among the Believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah.*

(XXXIII:23).

Thereafter, I visited Ohud where the most spectacular drama of love and fealty was staged. It was here that the world saw living models of faith and steadfastness; it was here that it learnt the true significance of courage and constancy. On reaching there, it seemed that I heard Hazrat Anas bin Nazr say: "I feel the sweet smell of Paradise coming from the side of Ohud." Or that on hearing the news of the martyrdom of the holy Prophet, Sa'ad bin Mu'ad was saying: "What is the joy of fighting and *Jehad* when the Apostle of God is no more?" And Anas interjecting: "What is the joy of living after him?"

It was here, again, that Abu Dujana had made his back serve as a shield for the Prophet. Arrows pierced his flesh, but he flinched not. Hazrat Talha, in the same way, had taken the arrows aimed at the holy Prophet on his hands until the arms were paralysed. Hazrat Hamza was killed on this very battlefield and his body was cut to pieces, and Hazrat Mas'ab bin Omair was martyred in such a state that even a shroud could not be provided for him, and he was buried in a blanket which was so short that if the head was covered, the feet became bare, and if the feet were covered, the head became bare.

Would that Ohud gave something of its treasure to mankind! Would that the world got a small particle of the faith and steadfastness of those glorious times!

Friends say: "You took us to Cairo and acquainted us with its important personalities; you have told us about Damascus and its people, and introduced us with its scholars; you have taken us round the Middle East. Now, tell me something about Hejaz and its distinguished sons." But what am I

to do? To me Hejaz stands only for one man about whom I can go on talking forever. It is because of him that Hejaz is Hejaz, and the World of Islam is the World of Islam.

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Our honour, indeed, is by Mustafa's name!¹

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1. Being a talk in Arabic broadcast by the Author from the Lucknow Station of All India Radio on his return from the voyage of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria in 1951. It was entitled : *Fi Mahd-i-Rasul* (Concerning the Prophet's Cradle) These talks were rendered into Urdu by Mr. Mushirul Haq Murshidabadi, and published under the title of *Sharq-i-Ausat Mein Kiya Dekha?* (What I saw in the Middle East)? The Urdu talk the translation of which into English appears here was taken from the same volume with a few alterations.

TRIBUTE OF NON-ARAB POETS
TO THE LEADER OF THE
ARABS AND THE
NON-ARABS

XIII

PERSIAN POETS

May Allah reward a friend of mine bounteously that instead of entertaining guests at the table, he provides intellectual and spiritual nourishment for them. He, often, arranges for literary sittings in which poets recite their own verses or the verses of the earlier masters. Such gatherings help to revive the ardent burning of the hearts for sometime. The eyes become moist, the dark clouds of materialism disperse, and the listeners are transported from the world of woe and worry, and gain and loss, to a higher plane of existence where ardour and eagerness prevail and soul-enlivening winds of the heavenly kingdom blow. On attaining that stage, one has a peculiar perception of loftiness of the soul, of upliftment of the heart and purity of the self, and undergo a unique experience of the joy and sublimity of living. The furnace of the world is transformed into a blooming garden, if only for the time being.

Yesterday, our friend held a symposium on the homage of love, devotion and gratitude paid by non-Arab poets to the Leader of the Arabs and the non-Arabs, the Prophet Mohammad, Peace and Blessings of the Lord be upon whom.

Those who have some knowledge of Islamic literature will agree that the Persian language is the richest in the world where *Na'at Go'ie*, writing of verses—panegyrics, eulogiums and encomiums—in praise of the holy Prophet is concerned. Urdu comes next which, in a way, is a product of Persian. The forceful, exquisite and emotionally moving poetry that is found, on this subject, in these two languages is altogether unique. The intensity of feeling and richness of ideas one experiences in this branch of poetry are without a parallel in

the whole range of literature, and the non-Arab poets, doubtlessly, have displayed a marvellous originality and fineness of thought and expression as writers of *Na'at*.

This is an enigma of Islamic literature a satisfactory answer to which has not yet been possible. The authorities have tried to explain it in different ways. Some say that its roots lie deep in the Indian and Iranian temperament. Love is ingrained in the nature of these peoples, and their languages, therefore, are ideally suited to the expression and interpretation of the things of the heart. When this aptitude and natural inclination was directed towards a personality that can justly be described as the most fascinating embodiment of beauty and perfection, the Persian and Indian poets excelled themselves in paying the tribute of love and loyalty to him. As passionate eloquence and exquisite imagery combined with the burning of the heart and restlessness of the soul in the praise of the person whom God Himself had made the object of His love and adorned with the most precious raiment of outer and inner charm and elegance, the effect was simply astonishing.

Others have advanced the argument of farness and separation. They hold that being distant and removed from the beloved adds fuel to the fire of love and lends a greater depth and fervour to the mute utterances of the soul. Most of these poets were placed far off from Medina, and the voyage to Arabia was not easy in those days. They, as such, sought to make amends for the resulting frustration and non-fulfilment through lyrical poetry which has always been regarded the 'courier' of the heart.

Yet others have expressed the view that it is largely due to *Tasawwuf* or Islamic mysticism which abundantly flourished in Iran and India, and in spite of all the criticism that has been, rightly or wrongly, levelled against it, is a most potent factor in fostering and sustaining the tender feelings of the heart. It can, indeed, be said that *Tasawwuf*, too, was based upon love and those who were not endowed with that emotional attitude could not make much progress in it. Be that as it may,

Tasawwuf which has played an important role in the evolution of Persian literature was a powerful well-spring of this form of Ghazal¹-writing. When the cup is filled to the brim, it spills, and when it spills, it flows over. Ecstasy is inevitable after a bout with the cup and the ewer, and to burst into a song in a state of beatitude is not unforgivable. As an Arab poet has said: "He made me drunk, and, then, told not to sing though if the hills of Sulaimani were made to drink what he gave me, even they would, perhaps, have started singing."

Whatever the reasons, Persian poetry, whether of Iran or India, is resplendent with gems of *Na'at*-writing, and our friend has, definitely, given proof of good taste by choosing it as the topic for today's symposium.

Most of the participants were not only acquainted with the Persian language, but, also, possessed a fondness for it. They did not need an explanation of the verses that were being read. A few Arab friends, too, were present who did not know Persian, but it did not prevent them from enjoying the beauty and sweetness of that language.

The poetic-cum-dramatic symposium, now, began for which the host had made adequate arrangements. He had had a number of poets and other men of learning and culture learn by heart the compositions of celebrated poets in Persian, both of Iran and India, and they acquitted themselves in a praiseworthy manner.

The first to take the stage was Sheikh Sa'adi whose verses were a model of felicity of style, beauty of diction and profundity of thought.

He said that the orphan who could not even read and write properly annulled the whole stock of knowledge the world could boast of and set it aside.

The orphan who had not even learnt to read,
Wound up the libraries of seven climes.

1. A type of lyrical poetry in Urdu and Persian, distinguished by warmth and tenderness of feeling.

In these few words, Sa'adi has drawn an eloquent portrait of the mighty revolution that left far behind all the other revolutions in the realms of faith and belief, morality and ethics, knowledge and learning, and culture and civilisation. He says what an astounding miracle it was that an unlettered person who had not seen the inside of a school ushered in an era of enlightenment that no one had yet been able to set aside and to whose loftiness and sublimity the entire history of mankind had to submit and yield obeisance.

How could illiteracy give rise to knowledge is a question that can only be explained in terms of the Will and Pleasure of the Lord. It would, perhaps, have been hard to lend credence to it had the whole thing not been supported by authentic historical proof and unbroken continuity of narration.

After Sheikh Sa'adi it was the turn of Sheikh Fariduddin Attar¹. Sentiments of fear, repentance and humility were the characteristic features of his poetry. In a verse he says with utmost pain and poignancy that the blessed name by which he was called, that is, Mohammad, too, had a claim for was it not the practice of kindly and high-born men that if a member of their household was named after them, they protected his honour till the end?

Though my life has been spent in sin
I have repented. Beg of the Lord forgiveness for me.
Desiring to intercede as thou art; show kindness,
And light the lamp of intercession on the Dark Day.
Despite that I have blackened my face with sin.
Remember the claim of having the same name as you.

Then, came Amir Khusro². His command over the Persian language is accepted even by the Iranians, and he is, definitely, second to none among the great masters of Persian verse. He, at once, became the cynosure of all eyes and won the heart

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1. His father had given him the name of Mohammad, but he came to be known as Fariduddin Attar. Died 627 A.H.
 2. Died 725 A.H.

of everyone with his soft, well-modulated voice.

Alluding to the marvellous revolution wrought by the holy Prophet, Khusro said that in one whiff he put out the lamp of Abu Lahab that was threatening to burn down the entire harvest of truth and virtue. The Prophet covered the distance between the physical and the spiritual worlds in the twinkling of an eye.

The breath of his spirit animated the Arabs,
And extinguished the lamp of Bu Lahab.
In two steps he went from this world to the other,
And in two strides from the earth to ninth heaven.

The next to occupy the dais was Maulana Jami.¹ He, in fact, deserved to preside over any gathering of *Na'at*-writers. He recited his well-known eulogium of the Prophet in which he said that if the holy Prophet did not go to a school and remained unlettered, what did it matter? He showed light to the world and removed ignorance from it. Through the agency of his knowledge, volume after volume was compiled and the Scrolls of Deeds of innumerable men were washed clean. Both the Arabs and the non-Arabs became the captives of his charm and his eloquence won the hearts of everyone.

Oh Arab by descent, the Unlettered One,
Arab and non-Arab, everyone thy slave;
With the sword of thy eloquence the Arab was slain,
By the magic of thy charm the non-Arab was
bewitched.

Since it was from thee we learnt to read,
If thou remained unlettered, who cared?
By black, the white was inspired,
Good that thou did not put ink on paper.

The audience was visibly moved by these lines and it pressed Maulana Jami to recite some more. The Maulana obliged with a few more verses which said that the House of Ka'aba was overcrowded with idols and there was no room, in it, for the

1. Died 898 A.H.

seekers of truth. The Prophet destroyed the idols so wholly and completely that not a trace of them was to be found. By the blessedness of his feet, *Muqam-i-Ibrahim*¹ regained its glory.

Images of stone filled the House of Ka'aba,
In it, devotees of the Lord had no place;
By his endeavour the idols were demolished,
And cast into the wilderness of non-existence.
Thanks to him, Ibrahim's foothold got back its
honour,

By blessedness of his feet, high is its place.

The eagerness of the listeners grew with each verse, and their requests became more persistent. They knew with what ardour and earnestness Maulana Jami had undertaken the journey to Medina and written the famous panegyric, many of the verses of which had become proverbial. People begged him not to deny them the pleasure of listening it directly from him. The Maulana was overcome with emotion as soon as the poem was mentioned.

In it, he says that "it is the height of good fortune that the opportunity has come to me of sweeping the floor of the Prophet's mausoleum with my eyelashes. I have made my soul the moth of the Prophet's candle. My eyes which have been waiting, for long, for a glimpse of the beloved are pouring down tears on his blessed apartment, and I have washed with the blood of my eyes every inch of the ground on which the Prophet had set his feet and offered *Namaz*, and where the devout bondmen of the Lord had prayed in the hope that I, too, will be favoured with the place of truth and sincerity owing to its propitiousness."

How fortunate! The dust of thy path showed the
way,
And with my eyes I swept thy street.

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1. A spot very close to the Ka'aba where the stone upon which Hazrat Ibrahim used to stand while building the House of Ka'aba is fixed. It is still said to bear the imprint of his feet.

Genuflexion of thanksgiving in the mosque I
performed,
And made my life the moth of thy candle.
With sleepless eyes, I shed tears
To wash the floor of thy apartment.
Towards thy pulpit I went,
And placed my forehead at its foot.
I dashed to thy arch, doing *Sajda*¹ all the way,
And offered the blood of my heart where thou stood.
Prostrated myself at the foot of each pillar,
And beseeched God for the place of the Truthful.

After Maulana Jami, Urfi². I knew he was a court poet and used to write panegyrics of kings and noblemen, but offering his apology, he remarked how could eulogiums of royalty and the Leader of those of old and those of later time be reconciled, and was it not an act of extreme impudence that one sang the praises of the Master of both worlds in one breath and of Cyrus and Jamshed in another? He said:

Nobility of his being no relative attribute,
It was the fiat of courage by the brave.
What right has Time to adorn the seat
Of the panegyrist of the King of Arabs and non-Arabs?
Beware! Sing not in the same breath,
Praises of Ruler of both worlds, and Cyrus and
Jamshed.

It was, now, the turn of the celebrated *Na'at*—writer, Qudsi,³ the echo of whose poetry can still be heard in the halls of Islamic mysticism. He is distinguished for the rhythm, euphony and tonality of his verses, and the occasional use of Arabic words has further enhanced their attractiveness. It is for this reason that the lovers of *Ghazal* are, generally, fond of his

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1. Bowing low with the forehead placed on the ground.
 2. Died 999 A. H
 3. Died 1056 A. H

poems, and many poets and *Sufis*¹ have written the *Tazmim*² of his encomiums. He recited the famous *Na'at* of his, a few lines of which are given below:

God bless thee, O Lord of Mecca, Medina, and
Arabs,
May my life be a sacrifice to thee, how beautiful is
thy name!
Bewitched by thy charm, I am lost in amazement,
O God! What loveliness is it, and what wonder I
Open thy merciful eye, have a look at me,
O ye Quraishi! Hashmi! Muttalibi!
We are thirsty; thou the exlixir of life,
Have pity on us, our thirst has crossed the limits.
Sinners as we are, ask not of virtuous deeds,
Turn to us the face of intercession because of our
misery.
Thou art the master, friend and healer,
Qudsi has come to thee in quest of cure.

After the Iranian poets had recited their poems, recognised Indian poets in Persian were invited to the dais. Sitting close to the Iranian poets was Amir Khusro who was second to none in that field and even Shaikh Sa'adi, the nightingale of Shiraz, had acknowledged his high merit. But as he had already read his verses, Mirza Ghalib got up and begged for permission to join in the recitation of Persian poems. He was proud of his Persian poetry, but some of his contemporaries were doubtful. A section of the audience wondered what Ghalib had to do with *Na'at*. However, caring nothing for the criticism, the poet began to recite his poems. Contrary to his conventional style, Ghalib read most simple verses in which instead of flights of fancy and poetic exaggeration, the emphasis was on fact and actuality. Everyone was delighted to

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1. Muslim mystics.
 2. Inserting verses of another in one's own poem to complete or corroborate the meaning thereof.

listen to his poems and the masters of the Persian language, too, praised him heartily. He read :

Before his hand, openness of pen is nothing,
Before his pen, pens of the world are helpless.
By his stroll the desert a blooming garden,
By his speech the infidel a truthful Believer.
To the world he gives light from Faith,
And to the Hereafter, freedom from Fire.

Delivered mankind from the bondage of idols,
Made the world flourishing with one House.

Embellisher of idol-house with the arch of the
mosque,
Well-wisher of the enemy, sympathiser of the foe.

Winner of the hearts of inveterate opponents,
The stone of his door attracts like magnet.

Choice, then, fell on Khwaja Azizuddin Lucknowi. He was the successor of the great masters of old and the last trustee of Persian literature in India. People begged him to recite some of his verses of *Na'at*, and Ghalib, too, put in his word of recommendation. Khwaja Azizuddin obliged with the following verses.

From wilderness and habitation comes the sound
of the bell,

I press on instinctively for no horse is faster than
saddle.

Glory be! The road by which I travel is wholly safe,
No fear of highwaymen, nor of guards.

Deserts and mountains dance in ecstasy like the
camel,

The pen on the road to Arabia beats time with
caravan-bell.

Sweet-tasting joy, the pilgrim's provision,
Unflagging enthusiasm, the light-footed companion.

I betake myself to mausoleum of the King of Faith,
 And like zephyr, complete the journey in one breath.
 Horseman of the 'Journey by Night' that with him rode,
 Gabriel in front, Israfil¹ in the rear.

His mount with full equipment, his journey long,
 His mount an ambling horse, the road free from thorn
 and straw.

Higher than all the heights he rose, farther than every
 precursor he went,

Like foot-print, both worlds looked on in wonderment.
 Left the body behind; alone he went,

Mind free from every thought; heart of every desire.

Love of God led him by the sleeve,

And took to the place where no 'before' or 'behind'
 exists.

With this hospitality, and this entertainment,

As his hand reached for the celestial wine, he was
 fulfilled.

Munshi Vilayat Ali Khan Aziz Safipuri² was the next to be invited. Besides seniority in age and high standing as a Persian poet, he was, also, a spiritual mentor and the head of a Sufi-order. Yet, out of modesty, he was sitting unobserved in a corner. Khwaja Aziz and his preceptor, Mirza Ghalib, were among those who urged him to recite some of his verses of *Na'at*. The audience was held spell-bound by the rhythm and melody of his poetry, exquisiteness of feeling and daintiness of ideas. Even the Iranian poets were full of praise. It was felt by many that the eulogy he had recited was the pick of the symposium.

The delicate beloved killed me with coquetry,
 without a sword,

Sweet of speech; merciful; heart of hearts;
 captivating.

1. Name of an angel who will sound the trumpet on the Day of Resurrection.

2. Died 13th Moharram, 1347 A. H. (corresponding to 1928 A. D.).

Jasmine; envy of jasmine; life of the garden; or my life,
 Charming; precious; proud; wilful.
 Destroyer of Paganism; animator of hearts; lovely;
 polite; amiable,
 Pure of Faith; clean of heart; more beautiful than
 those who are beautiful.
 Delicate; elegant; beautiful as the moon; puller of
 the heart ; or its killer,
 Alluring; heart-melting; art thou a pearl or a star?
 Pure; natural; artless; intoxicating; entrancing,
 Drunken eyes; even temper; how marvellous the
 spectacle!
 Sad and distressed; in extreme agony am I, O Aziz.
 Each moment he takes away heart and imparts life in a
 new manner.

The request was, then, made to Hazrat Mahvi Fatehpuri who, too, had won a great reputation as a poet and scholar of Persian. He came to the dais after some hesitation and recited the following verses which were warmly appreciated:

Nature lifted the veil, and did what spring does,
 Turned the earth into a garden, from east to west,
 The nightingale awoke the sleepy verdure,
 As the morning *Azan* from the bough it gave.
 The dove said *Subhen Allah*,¹ and the branch shook,
*Allah-o-Akbar*² said the partridge, and the mountain
 wailed.

Out of the curtain of reverence the beloved came,
 For whom the world had, for long, been waiting.
 Like an indigent he was born, and like an indigent he
 lived,
 Like an indigent he departed from the perishable
 world.

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1. Born at Fatehpur in the district of Barabanki (U. P). He served in Darul Tarjuma of Hyderabad, and, also died there.
 2. Glory be to God I
 3. God is Great I

The perfect one who by the alchemy of his glance,
Transformed black dust into flawless gold.

The leader who without corps and battalions,
Made the nomads of the desert kings.

He unveiled his face, and the darkness dispersed,
He loosened his tresses, and the world was
fragrant.

Showed devotion to friends, and they were ready to
sacrifice their lives,

Upon the enemies he bestowed kindness, and they
felt mortified.

With whomsoever he made a covenant, stood by it
forever,

And fulfilled the pledge he bound himself with to the
last.

Why, plainly, should I not say: within the bounds of
water and clay,

Mercy of the Lord hath revealed itself to
mankind ?

Eagerness wanted I prolonged the eulogium,
But deference bade me to make it brief.

Mahvi, in this land, is forlorn and dejected,
Relieve him of his distress with a glance.

After Maulana Mahvi, the famous Persian poet and mentor
of the Nizam of Hyderabad, Sheikh Ghulam Qadir Grami, recited
his verses.

What impudence is it? And what audacity?

Me and the encomium of Mohammad of Arabia.

Matchless pearl of the receptacle of Muttalib,

My lord and master, Mohammad of Arabia.

Me and this intoxication; where is the head?

Me and this wine; where is the cup?

Pride of the workshop of heavens and earth,

From the sun to dust-particle, everyone his slave.

The flash of light, Moses, and Mount Sinai.

Mohammad, personification of light from head to foot.

Yunus¹ stepped into the belly of the fish,
Mohammad unfurled his banner among the stars.
Zakaria's² body was sawed into two,
Even from reference to saw our master's heart was
safe.

The throne of Sulaiman³ was in the air,
The Wing of Jibril⁴, Mohammad's seat.
Son of Mariam⁵ though could not live himself,
Revived the dead with his breath.
Our master, the Lord's beloved,
Showed the path of Shariat to the erring.
The Unlettered gave the Call to Ummat,
"Traverse the path of Monotheism on head",
Brought back the dead to life with a sign,
And gave life eternal to the living.
Noah became the master of his ark,
And put the balm on a few broken hearts.
The Prophet raised the banner higher than sky,
And seated himself on *Laulaak's*⁶ throne.

After the recognised Iranian and Indian poets had recited their poems, Iqbal became the centre of attraction whose eulogistic poems and intense devotion to the holy Prophet had imparted warmth of love not only to the people of Iran, Afghanistan and India, but the whole Islamic world. In *Naat-goi*, too, he has cut a new path and used it as a medium to carry the message of renaissance to the Muslims. To begin

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1. Jonah
 2. Zachariah
 3. Solomon
 4. Gabriel
 5. Mary

6. "Had it not been thee". The reference is to a Tradition which tells that the Lord said: "If I had not intended to create thee (the holy Prophet), I would not have created the world."

with, he read some verses from his well-known *Mathnawi*.¹ *Asrar-i-Khudi* (Mysteries of the Self) into which he has poured the essence of the life of the sacred Prophet. It sent the audience into raptures. These were:

In the Muslim's heart is the name of Mohammad,
All our glory is from the name of Mohammad.
He slept on the mat of rushes,
Yet the crown of Chosroes was under his followers' feet.

Chose the nightly solitude of Cave Hira,
And founded a nation, law and government.
He passed many a night in his eyes,
In order that Millet slept on Chosroes' throne.
In the hour of battle, iron melted at the flash of his sword,

In the hour of prayer, tears poured down from his eyes.

His sword uttered *Amen* as for Divine help he prayed,
And extirpated the tribe of kings.
He laid down a new law in the world,
And rolled up the carpet of empires of old.
With the key of religion he opened the world's lock,
The womb of creation never bore his like.

Iqbal was, then, requested to recite some verses of *Pas Che Bayid Kard?* (What to do now, O people of East)? In this poem he has made a fervent appeal to the holy Prophet and drawn a true picture of the contemporary Muslim World. It is in the nature of a tribute as well as a complaint. Iqbal recalls the tremendous debt of gratitude mankind owes to the Prophet; how countless men have gained the wealth of Faith and of Divine Oneness through him, and attained the path of salvation. As a result of his teachings and ceaseless endeavour, bondmen of the Lord stopped kneeling before

1. Denoting a long poem

mortals like themselves, and obtained release from every kind of bondage. Since Iqbal himself was born in an idolatrous land and his ancestors had embraced Islam only a few generations earlier, his thankfulness assumed a peculiar significance¹.

Oh thee! the refuge of us, the powerless,
Cure this community of fear of death.
Thou destroyed *Lat* and *Manat* of old,
And gave new life to timeworn world.
In the world of prayer of men and jinn,
Thou art the morning *Namaz*, the call of *Azan*
Burning and ecstasy is from *Laa-Ilaah*,
In the night of doubt, light from *Laa-Ilaah*.
We made not gods from quadrupeds,
Nor bowed low before the hermits;
Nor bent the knee before ancient deities,
Nor circumambulated round palaces of kings.
All this among thy countless favours,
Thy favour the nourisher of our intellects.
Thy remembrance source of joy and ardour,
Which keeps the Millet proud in poverty.
Goal and destination of the wayfarer,
Thy desire in the heart of each traveller.
Our harp, alas, has become so mute,
Plectrum is a burden upon the strings.
In Ajam and Arabia did I wander,
But Lahab in plenty, Mustafa scarce.

People could not restrain their tears as Iqbal proceeded to recite verses in which while developing the theme that his

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1. Addressing a 'Philosophy-stricken Son of Syed', Iqbal says :
I am pure *Somnathi*² by descent,
My ancestors worshippers of *Lat*³ and *Manat*;⁴
You, a descendant of Hashimite Syed,
My handful of clay of Brahmin origin.
 2. Meaning devotee of the temple.
 - 3 & 4. Names of the idols of ancient Arabia.

entire asset in life, his whole world was the love of the Prophet, said that he was the "rotten prey" no hunter cared to look at, and the "worthless commodity" no buyer was willing to consider. It was with utmost hope and expectation that he had taken shelter in the feet of the sacred Prophet.

O horseman, pull the reins for a moment,
Speech is not coming easy to me.
My feelings, may I express or not?
Love never is ruled by propriety.
Says love: 'Speak up, afflicted soul'!
Propriety commands: 'Open thine eyes and seal the
lips'.

Round thee the whole world rotates,
Of thee I beg a kindly glance.
Thou art my knowledge, thought, and meditation,
My boat, my ocean, and my storm,
The starved, wretched deer that I am,
No one cared to tie me to his saddle-strap.
Thy street is my sole refuge,
Hopefully have I run up to thee.

Iqbal, then, goes on to beseech the holy Prophet not to despair of him in spite of all his faults and failings. Though he is erring and ignorant, he is not of 'bad' origin; he is a defaulter, but not an ungrateful soul. He is a poor beggar, a destitute, yet possesses a thing called HEART that has the honour of being crushed under the Prophet's feet. He feels proud that it still bears the imprint of the hoof of the Prophet's steed.

A Believer, yes; no infidel am I,
Put me on whetstone, I am not of bad origin.
Though a barren tract my life has been,
I possess the thing called the heart.
From the world's eye, I have kept it hidden,
For it bears the imprint of thy horse's hoof.

Iqbal ended his immortal poem with these lines:

O thou that endued the Kurd with Arab's burning,
Summon thy own slave to thy presence.

Thy slave has a scarred heart like the tulip,
His grief even friends do not know.
Like the flute, in the world, he wails,
Melody stabs his heart in quick succession.
Like half-burnt wood in the arid desert,
The caravan has departed, and I am smouldering still.
The session of the Persian poets ended with Iqbal.

XIV

URDU POETS

Love of the Prophet and attachment to Medina have been the favourite themes with the Urdu poets, and *Na'at*—writing, a pleasing occupation. After Persian, the best and most soulful eulogiums in praise of the sacred Prophet are found in the Urdu literature. Earnest devotion to the Prophet and yearning for the land of Arabia have become a permanent feature of the Indian Muslim temperament, and, in fact, it is these attributes that have enabled the Muslims of India to preserve the essence of their Faith during the last eight hundred years and withstand the onslaughts of atheism and extravagant nationalism. The Muslims, really, have been so enthusiastic in the expression of these sentiments that they, often, have been the target of the derisive remark that while their body is in India, the heart is in Arabia, and they never tire of dreaming about Medina and its streets. With their heart and soul, they always seem to be singing :

Dust of *Yathrib*¹ pleasanter than both the worlds,
Cool is the town, where the beloved lives.

In the heart of many an Indian Muslim dwells the desire to die and be buried in Arabia. Karamat Ali Shaheedi² has gone to the extent of saying that if his dead body was not found worthy of burial on the sacred soil of Arabia, he would want it to be devoured by its wild animals.

Should my body not be worthy of the soil of Medina,
Let it be devoured by the beasts of its forest.

1. Medina

2. Died 1256 A. H.

How much do I wish when its cage breaks,
The bird of my soul flies out and sits on trees of thy
mausoleum¹.

The first to recite his verses among Urdu poets was
Amir Minai. He read:

King of mankind, Intercessor of the Last Day,
Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him!
Messenger of God, Chosen Apostle, Peace and
Blessings of Allah be upon him!
Light personified, the great sun, the universal leader,
friend of Adam,
Companion of Nooh, guide of Khizr², Peace and
Blessings of Allah be upon him!
Worldly riches worthless as dust, empty of hand, rich
at heart,
Monarch of the country, no throne or retinue, Peace
and Blessings of Allah be upon him!
Running fountain, Sign of the Lord, dust his steed,
breeze of spring,
Holder of mirror, pride of Alexander, Peace and
Blessings of Allah be upon him!
Soaked in love each nerve and fibre, writing of
Na'at my life's occupation,
Day and night, all the time, on my lips: Peace and
Blessings of Allah be upon him!

After Amir Minai, it was the turn of his renowned contemporary, Mohsin Kakorwi, who had dedicated his life and redoubtable literary ability to the writing of the panegyrics of the holy Prophet, so much so that when he was writing a

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1. The prayer of Shaheedi was fulfilled. As stated in *Gul-i-Ra'ana*, he performed the Haj in 1255 A. H., and was taken ill on his way to Medina, after the Pilgrimage. Shaheedi, somehow, managed to reach the place from where the Prophet's Mausoleum could be seen. He cast a sorrowful glance at it and died.
 2. Name of a Prophet who is said to have discovered the fountain of life and drunk of it; a leader; a guide.

Na'at he did not like to write anyother thing with the right hand. Listeners respectfully suggested that since his poetry was so profusely embellished with figures of speech and allusions that only the scholars could properly enjoy it, he recited a poem they, too, could understand. The poet, thereupon, read the verses dealing with *Meraj*—the Journey by Night—, the coming of Gabriel, rousing up the Prophet from sleep, and placing him on the heavenly steed.

Woke him with respect,
Or awaked his own destiny.
As Truth-beholding eye opened,
Sweet slumber melted away.
What a strange spectacle met his eye?
The whole house shone like the moon.
Book of secrets of the Unseen informs,
Such a day shall never dawn again.
No sleep now, no waking up,
Let Time, forever, rotate.
This night is not in anyone's destiny,
His star may awake a hundred times.
The earth shall never be honoured like it,
A thousand times may dust turn to alchemy.
Light is descending in endless stream,
Dew of stars falling like rain.
Gabriel is here; so is heavenly steed,
Messenger is present; so, also, eagerness.

Khawaja Altaf Husain Hali, then, came to the dais whose *Musaddas*¹ is one of the most widely read books in Urdu. Even children know it by heart. Many of the listeners said to him that though they had heard the eulogistic verses of his *Musaddas* a number of times, it would be a rare pleasure if he read them out himself on that occasion. Maulana Hali obliged:

The recipient, among Divine Apostles, of the title of
Mercy,
Granter of the wishes of the poor;

1. A poem whose stanzas consist of six lines.

Helper of strangers in need,
 Comforter of friend and foe;
 Shelter of the destitute, refuge of the weak,
 Supporter of the orphans, protector of slaves.
 Forgiver of the guilty, thinking no more of him,
 Winner of the hearts of the evil-minded;
 Uprooter of evils, exterminator of vice,
 Binder of tribes in intimate friendship;
 From Hira he came down to his people,
 And brought with him the recipe of alchemy.
 Transformed copper into burnished gold,
 Separated the pure from the impure;
 The Arabs steeped in Perversion,
 He changed their destiny in the twinkling of an eye;
 Fear of the storm no more for the fleet,
 Direction of the wind was changed outright.
 The metal that lay useless in the mine,
 Good for nothing; not worth a straw;
 The special properties it intrinsically possessed,
 By mixing with dust had turned into dust;
 On the Tablet of Destiny it was inscribed,
 It will change into gold at one glance.

After Maulana Hali, came a young poet who by his features and dress seemed to be a Punjabi. The Maulana escorted him to the dais with honour and affection¹. His name was Zafar Ali Khan and about him it was said in some sections of the audience that he was the greatest *Na'at*-writer in Urdu of his time, and as far as majesty of words and dexterity of composition were concerned, no panegyrist of the holy

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1. Maulana Hali has written a poem in praise of Zafar Ali Khan, the last two lines of which read :

If the Punjab be proud of you,
 It will not be wrong, unjustified;
 Living is the country and the nation,
 That can boast of a live-hearted man like you.

Prophet could compare with him. He was begged to recite the poem which though he had written in his early days was still sung at the inauguration ceremonies of Islamic Madrassas and other religious congregations. It read:

The candle that illumined the caves for forty years,
Was to shine, one day, in palaces of the world.

If the heavens and the earth did not resound with

Laulaak Iama,

Neither the colour will be in gardens nor radiance in
the stars.

The secret philosophers could not unravel, nor
thinkers explain,

Was revealed in a few signs by him whose only
garment was the blanket.

Faith is not a commodity one can buy at philosopher's
shop,

The wise will discover it in the thirty Paras¹ of the
Quran.

Abu Bakr, Omar, Osman, Ali, rays of the same
flaming light,

Friends of the Prophet of equal rank, no difference
in these four.

When the poem was over, the audience pressed Zafar Ali Khan for another panegyric upon which he read the following lines:

Thy beauty is the adornment of whole creation,
Lustre of both worlds a benefaction of thy charm.
From thy forehead is manifest the Supreme Being's
reflection,

Dust of thy street, collyrium of the eye of the Universe.
From the Court of The Eternal on thee were
bestowed,

All angelic powers; all celestial splendours.

1. The holy Quran is divided into thirty parts. Each part is called a *Para*.

Thy beneficence is evident from Caucasus to Qairwan,¹
 From Ka'aba to Somnath, the lusture of thy grace
 For making salutation to thee, birds of the heavenly
 garden are

Hopping from branch to branch, dancing from tree to
 tree.

On seeing thy might, ranks of Infidelity dispersed,
 The neck of Habal² was bent; the spell of Lat³ was
 broken.

By a movement of the eye, thou changed outright,
 All conceptions of the mind; all emotions of the heart.
 How? Why? And wherefore? To what extent enquiry
 and debate?

In one word thou resolved all eternal questions.
 Turned stranger into kinsman; filled the sting with
 honey,

And restored broken relations in no time.

What a revolution it was that in its mould all were cast—
 Lisbon and Paris, Damascus and Peking, Delhi and
 Herat?

The family of Adam regained its honour; did away
 with all

Disparties of race and blood, distinctions of caste and
 colour.

Simplicity of Medinites reflected the glory of the Lord,
 Before which recoiled the pomp and ceremony of Iran.
 Whoever, like me, wetted his tongue with thy praise,
 In his pen was produced the flow of river Euphrates.
 For all is thy mercy, be he high or low,
 From earth to highest heaven, *Salāam*⁴ and *Salat*⁵ on
 thee.

1. Name of a Tunisian town. In olden days it was famous as a seat of learning.

2.&3. Names of two most important idols of Pre-Islamic Arabia.

4. Salutation

5. Blessings

O that each hair of thine is dyed in compassion,
 To whom may I relate my tale of woe save thee.
 Dark is the night, the boat is caught in the storm,
 The tide of evil is in wait, coast of salvation far away.
 Holding the leg of ninth heaven, beseech the Lord
 with utmost respect,

For thee, alone, is the fountain-head of kindness and
 clemency.

"Good or bad the bondmen, Thou art The Kind,
 The Gracious One,

Why should now favours of the Beneficent be
 withheld?

Why this wrath, today, on him who was regarded
 with benevolence?

Why is the kindly eye not turned on us any more?"

The spontaneity of Zafar Ali Khan's diction, the grandeur of his expression and command over Persian idiom led the listeners think of Iqbal Suhail. Both of them were the products of the same Alama Mater¹ and had sat at the feet of the same master.² They begged Iqbal Suhail to recite his well-known panegyric, the opening lines of which were:

However much the sunbeam tries,
 Beyond darning, now, is morning's collar.
 The poet obliged with the following verses:
 Mohammad, the very first word from Nature's pen,
 Mohammad, the bearer of Divine signets.
 The conqueror blue revolving dome's satin whose
 banner,
 The Unlettered One before whom the wisest a
 school-boy,
 The Binder who made Faith and Intellect one, like
 milk and sugar,
 The Separator who from devoutness removed the
 stain of monasticism.

1. M.A.O. College, Aligarh

2. Allamma Shibli Nomani

The Speaker before whom nightingale of the lote-
 tree is dumb,
 The Truthful to whose veracity the Word of God
 itself testifies.
 The Just in whose Scales of Justice,
 Dust of destination and glory of imperial crown are
 equal.
 The Joiner who put together scattered beads,
 And pulled down walls between man and man,
 The Treasure-house of truths, in each word of
 whose
 Principles of Philosophy, secrets of Psychology,
 mysteries of Sociology are hidden.
 The Revealer of Secrets who in a few hints laid
 bare,
 Concealed store-house of sciences, both ancient and
 modern.

Iqbal Suhail was, then, asked to read some verses of his popular *Nas'at* entitled *Mauj-i-Kausar*. Amir Minai and Zafar Ali Khan who, also, had composed eulogiums in the same rhyme and meter joined in the request. Upon it, the under-mentioned lines were read by him :

Ahmad the Messenger, Pride of both worlds, Peace,
 and Blessings of Allah be upon him!
 The First Manifestation, the Last Messenger,
 Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him!
 Love personified, soul embellished, heart illumined,
 light distilled.
 Embodiment of good, personification of beauty,
 Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him!
 Who dispersed the gloom of Paganism, distributed
 freely wealth of Faith,
 Unfurled the flag of Divine Oneness, Peace and
 Blessings of Allah be upon him!

Cultivator of garden of the world, who did away
with slavery,
And readorned the garden of Adam, Peace and
Blessings of Allah be upon him!
Comity of nations was in disorder; pearls of the
Lord lay scattered,
The Prophet united and arranged them all, Peace
and Blessings of Allah be upon him!
Broke fetters of superstition forged man's bond with
One God,
Turned upside down the world of Polytheism,
Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him!
Individual and community, authority and obedience,
greed and contentment, forgiveness and power,
Solved all the problems that were vague, Peace
and Blessings of Allah be upon him!
Agreement and strife, submission and command,
poverty and wealth, justice and compassion,
Laid down the limits of them all, Peace and Blessings
of Allah be upon him!
Attention to ranks and regard for equality, effort and
resignation, friendship and enmity,
All were included in Divine commandments.
Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him!
Mirror of Mercy on the earth, shadow of Mercy on
Day of Judgement,
Banner of the Praise of God in hand, Peace and
Blessings of Allah be upon him!
Whoever put thorns in his path, showered abuse
pelted stones,
On him he sprinkled the dew of love, Peace and
Blessings of Allah be upon him!
King of both poverty and wealth, healer of body
and the soul,
Confluence of Faith and material world, Peace and
Blessings of Allah be upon him!

It was, now, the turn of Amjad Hyderabadî who was requested to recite the poem in which he had vividly described the Migration of the holy Prophet from Mecca to Medina. He read the following lines:

The spring-breeze leaves the courtyard of Ka'aba,
 The carriage of flowers goes to Medina.
 The Mercy of the Lord is departing,
 Everyone is groaning and bewailing.
 Someone is saying with a broken heart,
 "Just a glance, O departing one".
 River of blood from the eye of Zam Zam¹ flows.
 It, too, a mourner in the precincts of Harem.²
 Each heart is restless like the lightning,
 The refrain of everyone is: "Listen to me.
 Turn not thy face away from us; do not go,
 Who is here to take care of us, the helpless ones?"
 Hearts of Safa³ and Marwa⁴ torn and bleeding,
 What a thunderbolt it was that rent the rocks!
 The House of Ka'aba is dressed in mourning,
 The Cave of Hira cries out in distress;
 "Where thou goest, my delicately brought up one?
 Return to my lap, O Emigrant!"

Attention was, then, directed towards Hafeez Jullundri who was requested to recite the *Salaam* of his *Shahnama-i-Islam* which was highly popular with all the sections of Muslims. He read the following lines in his well-modulated voice which evoked an enthusiastic response from the audience

Salutation to thee, O son of Amina,⁵ beloved of God,
 Salutation to thee, O pride of creation, glory of
 mankind.

-
1. Name of the celebrated well in Mecca. Also known as Hagar's well.
 2. The sacred territory of Ka'aba in Mecca
 - 3.&4. Names of two rocks in Mecca
 5. Name of the mother of the sacred Prophet

Salutation to thee, O shadow of The Beneficent,
 light of the Lord,
 Thy footprint, the tablet of life's forehead.
 Salutation to thee, O secret of Divine Oneness,
 sun of the World of Faith,
 How fortunate, you came! How boundless the honour!
 With your coming, springtide came to garden of life,
 Favour of the Lord became, again, accompaniment
 of destiny.
 Salutation to thee, O possessor of best of morals,
 Who taught mankind virtuous deeds, spiritual
 conduct.
 Thy face, thy character, thy charm, thy lustre,
 Thy smile, thy speech, thy benevolence, thy cheerful
 countenance.
 Though 'poverty is my pride', the mark of thy
 contentment,
 Pomp of Cyrus and Khagan,¹ yet under thy feet.
 For a new order the world is waiting,
 Since long elements of life have been scattered
 May every nook and corner of the world be illumined,
 And each dust-particle radiant with thy reflection.
 Poor Hafeez, too, a beggar at thy door,
 Forehead of devotion is luminous by thy grace.
 My head there be and thy door; my heart and thy
 apartment,
 Brief is my yearning, though long the prologue.
 Salutation to thee O destroyer of fetters of Falsehood,
 Salutation to thee, O mender of broken hearts of clay.

After Hafeez Jullundri, request was made to Mahir-ul-Qadri to recite the *Na'at* in which he had dwelt upon the stupendous revolution wrought by the holy Prophet in the annals of mankind. Mahir-ul-Qadri, thereupon, read these

1. Title of Chinese and Turkish Kings

lines:

Paganism sowed mischief on earth, Injustice fanned
the fire,
Hatred woke up in the hearts, and man fought with man.
The strong tyrannised over the weak, crushed them
underfoot,
When oppression had crossed the limits, came
Mohammad to the world.
Clouds of mercy gathered on the sky; hopes of
humanity were fulfilled,
Poured forth goodness and beneficence; showered
matchless pearls of virtue.
Grazers of camels enkindled the lamps of civilisation,
Gave the worth of flowers to thorns; brightened the
fate of dust-particles.
Forged the bond with the Almighty; broke the spell
of falsehood,
Turned the tide of time itself; sailed ships in the storm.
Gave the sword and the Quran; the world as well as
the Hereafter,
Described death as martyrdom; taught correctness in
mode of living.
Land of Mecca and the ninth heaven! In a moment
here, in a moment there.
Granted tongue to the stone; cleaved the moon into
two.
Listened to the cry of the oppressed; shared the
sorrow of the poor,
Applied balm to the wounds; succored the hearts in
deep anguish.
Gave the mantle of modesty to woman, and the rouge
of honour too,
Imparted delicacy to glassware¹; heightened the
attributes of character.

1. Meaning the fair sex.

The tide of Monotheism could not be checked, nor
 the flag of Islam lowered,
 The Pagans were beside themselves though, and the
 Devils fumed and fretted.
 O name of Mohammad, Blessings of the Lord be on
 thee, thou art Mahir's everything,
 Smile appeared on the lips, and tears welled up in
 the eyes.

On hearing these eulogiums, people, naturally, were reminded of Medina and its lord and master. The old wounds of the listeners who had already made a pilgrimage to the blessed town were revived, and those who had not yet had the opportunity were seized with the desire to do so. Eyes, then, fell upon Hameed Siddiqui who had come to be known as *Za'ir-i-Haram* (The Pilgrim to Medina) owing to the numerous visits he had paid to it and the heart-warming poems in which he had related his experiences. He came to the dais at the insistence of the audience and recited these lines in his inimitable style.

What a time it was when I bade farewell to the town
 of light and fragrance¹!
 What a scene it was when I took leave of the
 Master's doorstep!
 Reciting the *Durood* fervently, in agony and in ecstasy,
 Now standing near the lattice, now standing away
 from it.
 The eye-soothing lustres, peace of the heart,
 tranquillity of the soul,
 Who, in the world, can dare gaze at the curtain of
 light?
 The soft, gentle breeze, the morning hour, and,
Azan,
 Everyone blissfully lost in remembrance of the
 Prophet.

1. Benediction of the holy Prophet.

Beneficence and the downpour of it, boundless
 mercies and benefactions.
 If anyone could only behold the splendour of epiphany
 from the alcove of light.
 Never could the music of rebeck and lute hold charm
 for me,
 Isn't my heart drunk with the music of the birds of
 Medina's garden?
 In my eyes, even today, is the beauty of that full-
 moon night,
 The radiance that is diffused in the atmosphere from
 the dome of light.
 How do I long for Bir-i-Ghars,¹ my thirst, itself, will
 testify,
 It is a thirst that cannot be quenched with the draughts
 of purifying² wine.
 What the eager eye wishes to see is nothing other
 than Mount Ohud,
 It cares neither for the Garden of Delight nor for
 Mount Sinai.
 O pilgrims to Medina, if ever you pass by the desert
 of Badr,
 Say my *Salaam* to occupiers of graves of that hallowed
 place.
 To whom may I reveal the hidden grief? Why are my
 eyes shedding tears?
 The heart, here, is bereft of peace it derived from
 proximity to the Prophet.
 May death come to me, O Hameed, in this state of
 restlessness,
 The same poem will be on my lips when I arise on
 the Last Day.

The word *Nishoor* (Day of Resurrection), occurring in the

-
1. Name of a wall near the Mosque of Quba
 2. Of the Paradise

poem made people think of Nishoor Wahidi, and those who had already heard his *Naat : Kohna Galeemey, Taza Payamey*, (Old the Blanket, New the Message) requested him to recite it once again. The poet responded with following lines:

To talk of him, with tearful eyes,
 Of whom the history itself is proud;
 Absolute of Faith, firm of command,
 Embodiment of light, life of this world, and the next;
 Essence of Guidance, named Mohammad,
*Yathrib*¹ his place, *Batha*² his garden.
 Eversince the beginning of creation,
 The world has been blowing with violence;
 Worthless is the boat, false the shore,
 The Last Messenger, the only hope;
 The friend of all, high and low,
 Old the blanket, new the message.
 But for the munificence of *Alast*,³
 The world would not have been built anew;
 The Prophet's shadow,—the radiance of life,
 He who abolished worship of Falsehood;
 Moon in hand, sun in foot,
 What a morning his morning! What an evening his
 evening!
 Frenzy of love had not sung the song,
 Nor discovered the secret of Apostleship;
 No one had ever yet come in privacy,
 There was the lustre, but no shadow;
 Siddiq the Great, his worthy successor,
 The first Caliph in the religion of Ahmad.
 Quietly, silently, proclamation of Faith,
 Minaret of light in the path of seeking;

1. Medina

2. Mecca

3. 'Am I not?' The allusion is to the Quranic verse that reads: 'Am I not your Lord?' (VII:172)

The naked sword; the refulgent judgement,
 Sraightener of the world; immortal in time;
 Farooq the Great, the people's man,
 New the word; eternal the writing
 The way of Osman, mercy and compassion,
 Constancy in fortitude and resignation;
 Taught to mankind evenness of mind, self-
 control,
 To remain silent under the knife;
 Blood in throat, Quran on tongue,
 In communion with God, though speechless.
 In the body of Ali, the perfect soul,
 A glorious conflux of Knowledge and Action;
 Perfect of Faith; perfect of Awareness,
 Bread of barley, and a perfect man;
 Loftiness of emotion; profundity of thought,
 Tooba¹ in pocket; Kausar² in his cup.
 The lamp of Faith, again, is burning bright,
 The World of Politics is tottering;
 History of the past is repeating itself,
 Mankind is advancing towards Ka'aba;
 Stage by stage; step by step,
 World the wayfarer; Ka'aba the goal.

In the end, the eulogy in Persian by Aziz Safipuri was thought of, once again, the opening line of which was :

The delicate beloved killed me without a sword,
 Sweet of speech; merciful; heart of hearts;
 captivating.

Someone, then, recalled that Molvi Mohammad Sani had written a *Tazmin* on it in Urdu and it was thought most appropriate that the wonderful evening came to an end with it. The candle was, then, placed before him, and he recited the

-
1. Name of a tree in Paradise
 2. Name of a fountain in Paradise

following verses :

This dust-particle, and to speak of him prettier than
moon,

The hidden secret of love, indeed, how is he to
reveal?

How can this wretched beggar praise the lord?
He should first wash his tongue with musk, and, then,
utter :

The delicate beloved killed me without a sword,
Soft of speech; merciful; heart of hearts; captivating.
I compose thy eulogium, O my Master, King of the
world,

How lovely is thy name; pure of body ; clean of mind!
Cheerful thy countenance; luminous thy forehead;
mouth lovely as the bud,

Musk of Khattan¹ a slave to the fragrance of thy tresses,
Jasmine; envy of jasmine; life of the garden; or my
life;

The charming ; the precious; the proud; the wilful.
Thou a boundless ocean; I a minor stream,
Thou the embodiment of light, glory of both the
worlds;

Blessed be! life-breath of the world of colour and
scent,

Caesarism by thy advent was put to shame;
Destroyer of Paganism; animator of hearts; lovely;
polite; amiable,

Pure of faith; clean of heart; more beautiful than
them who are beautiful.

The shining star or the full moon,—what should I say?
Life of the heavens and the earth; or the heart?
Thou art the beacon of the path and destination.
Hearts are drawn spontaneously to thee, how
irresistible is thy charm?

1. A district of Tartary famous for musk.

Delicate; elegant; beautiful as the moon; puller of the
heart; and its killer,

Alluring; heart-melting; art thou a pearl or a star?
Like mad did I go to the beloved's street,
Drunk with wine of love; in a state of utter bliss;
When I could not restrain myself, I went there every
day,

Reciting this *Na'at*, breathless and impatient;
Pure; natural; artless; intoxicating; entrancing,
Drunken eyes; even temper; how marvellous the
spectacle!

Good disposition personified; loved by all,
Out of oblation to thee, discretion was granted to us;
Dust of thy doorstep, collyrium of the eyes,
To die at thy door, life's greatest desire;
Sad and distressed, in extreme agony am I, Aziz,
Each moment, he takes away heart, imparts life in a
new manner.

It was long past midnight and the host brought the lust-
rous function to an end with the verse that was ideally suited
to the occasion :

Tell him, O zephyr, after paying my respects,
Thy name is on lips, next to Allah's Name¹.

1. It was rendered into Urdu, from the Arabic, by Molvi Mohammad el-Hasani. For the selection of Persian verses advice was taken from Prof. Ghulam Dastgir Rasheed.