

# **Need of Imam of the Age**

English Translation of the Urdu booklet  
*Zarūrat-ul-Imām*

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# Need of Imam of the Age

Let it be clearly understood that, in accordance with an authentic hadith, that person who does not recognize the Imam of his time, dies in a state of ignorance. This hadith is sufficient to inspire the heart of a *muttaqī* (one who fears Allah) to search for the Imam of his Age, because the death in the state of ignorance comprises such a comprehensive collection of ills that no evil or misfortune is excluded from it. So, as a result of this testament from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, it has become necessary for every seeker after truth to be on the constant lookout for the real Imam.<sup>1</sup>

It is not true that the name *Imam of the Age* can be attributed to every person who has received a true dream or for whom the door of *ilhām* (revelation) has been opened. Instead, the true nature of the Imam is a comprehensive affair and relates to a perfect and complete condition and that is why his name is Imam in Heaven. And this, too, is quite evident, that a person cannot be called Imam merely on account of his *taqwā* (righteousness) and self-purification. Allah, the Most High, has said:

*Wa-j'alnā lil-muttaqīna imāma* [the Holy Quran, 25:74]

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<sup>1</sup> “Mu’awiyya said that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: Whoever dies without (recognizing) the imam dies a death in (a state of) ignorance”, *Musnad Ahmad*, volume 4, page 96. It is also reported in the words: “Whoever dies and does not have over him an imam of the community, his death is the death of ignorance”. Reported by Hakim from the hadith of Ibn Umar and the hadith of Mu’awiyya, and reported by Bazzar from the hadith of Ibn Abbas.

“...and make us Imams for those who guard against evil”.

Thus, if every *muttaqī* is Imam, then all righteous believers will become Imams too, and this is contrary to the intent of the verse. And so, according to the clear verses of the Holy Quran, every recipient of revelation and true visions cannot be given the title of Imam for, in the Holy Quran, the following glad tidings is given to all believers:

*La-humul-bushrā fil-hayātid-dunyā* [10:64],

i.e., in this life, believers will be granted the favour of receiving true dreams and true revelations. And, in another place, the Holy Quran states:

*Innal-ladhīna qālū Rabbunallāhu thummas-taqāmū tatanazzalu ‘alaihmul-malā’ikatu alla takhāfū wa la taḥzanū...* [41:30]

that is to say, those who believe in Allah and persevere in the right path, angels convey to them glad tidings by revelation and comfort them. Thus it was that consolation by means of revelation was given to the mother of Prophet Moses. But the Holy Quran makes it clear that this kind of revelations or true dreams are bestowed as a spiritual grace on all believers, whether male or female, but those who receive these revelations are not qualified for the designation *Imam of the Age*; and many such revelations refer only to their personal affairs and bring nothing to the fields of knowledge nor are they worthy of any extraordinary notice. Many, too, are unreliable; in fact, on many occasions they can cause the recipient to stumble. And unless the agency of the Imam brings the grace of knowledge, one can never be safe from dangers.

Testimony to the truth of this matter is found in the heart of Islam itself. There was a man who was a scribe of the Holy Quran, and sometimes, because of his proximity to the light of spirituality, he would receive in revelation Quranic verses just at the time when the Imam, that is, the Holy Prophet,

wanted those same verses to be recorded in writing. One day, the fancy came to him that there was no difference between himself and the Holy Prophet, for he, too, was receiving revelation. This led to his [spiritual] destruction. It is written that his grave, too, threw out his body, just as Bal'am was destroyed [in the time of Moses]. On the other hand, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, used to receive revelation, but he entertained no pretensions about himself and he never wished to consider himself a partner in the heavenly *Imamat* which Allah had established on earth. In fact, he looked upon himself as a lowly servant and slave. Consequently, through Allah's grace, he was made a successor to the righteous *Imamat*.

Awais Qarni, too, used to receive revelation, but he made himself so humble that he thought it an act of impropriety to enter into the presence of the Imam, the Sun of Prophethood. Our Chief and Master, Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, would often turn his face towards Yemen and say, *Ajidu rīḥar-Raḥmāni min qablil-Yaman* i.e., "I smell the perfume of Allah coming from Yemen". This was an indication that the light of Allah had descended on Awais. But it is sad that, in this age, most people do not think that there is a necessity for a genuine Imam, and just because they receive a true dream or a few fragments of inspiration, they think that they have no need for an Imam of the age. "Are we any the less?" they ask, and they do not realize that such a thought is an outright sin. For our Holy Prophet has established the necessity for an Imam of the age in every century and has plainly stated that if a person comes to Allah in such a condition in which he has not recognized the Imam of his time, then he will remain blind and will die the death of ignorance. In this hadith, the Holy Prophet did not exempt any recipient of revelation or true dreams. So, it is obvious from this that whether a person is a recipient of revelation or true dreams, if he does not join the Movement of the Imam of the Age, then his end is imperiled, for it is evident that in this hadith all believers and all

Muslims are addressed. Among them, there have been, in every age, thousands who received revelation and true dreams. Indeed, the truth is that in the *Umma* of the Holy Prophet there must have been millions of devotees who received revelation. Then besides that, it is established from the Holy Quran and the Hadith that if anyone, in the time of the Imam of the Age, receives a true dream or a revelation, then that, in reality, was only a reflection of the true Imam's light which falls on the heart of every fit and deserving person. The fact is that when an Imam of the Age appears, he brings with him thousands of lights and an atmosphere of joy is created in heaven and through the diffusion of spirituality and light, people of pure temperament awaken. Thus, whoever has a latent capacity for revelation begins to receive revelation. And he who has the capacity to understand religion through profound thought and reflection, he finds that his insight and power for deep thinking are augmented. And he who has a love for worship is blessed with more pleasure in his service and worship. And he who is engaged in religious debates with non-Muslims is given the power of incontrovertible arguments and complete proofs.

All these matters are, in fact, the result of this spiritual diffusion which comes from heaven with the Imam of the Age and descends on every person worthy of it. And it is a general law and the way of Allah which is made known to us through the guidance of the Holy Quran and the authentic Hadith, and personal experience has also testified to this effect. However, in the time of the Promised Messiah, there is, over and above this, a similar quality which is recorded in the Books of the former Prophets and their reports, and that is that when the Promised Messiah appears, this spiritual diffusion will be so widespread that even women will receive revelation and minors will prophecy and ordinary people will speak under the influence of the Holy Spirit. And all that will be a result of the Imam's spiritual reflection. For example, if the rays of the sun fall on a wall, the wall becomes brighter and if it is white-washed it becomes even more refulgent so

that if a mirror is placed in a position to reflect its brightness, then its brilliance becomes so great that one's eyes are not able to withstand it. But the wall cannot take personal credit for all that because, after the sun sets, no vestige of that brightness remains. So, too, every spiritual light is a reflection of the Imam's light, and unless there is a bad turn of fortune or a trial from Allah, a man of good nature can easily understand this subtle point. And if, God forbid, a person does not perceive this Divine secret, and having heard the news of the appearance of the Imam of the Age, does not form a bond with him, then initially such a person makes it manifest that he is above the need of an Imam. After this feeling of self-sufficiency, he becomes estranged, and after estrangement evil thoughts begin to increase, then after evil thoughts, enmity is born, and after enmity, we seek refuge in Allah, he reaches the point where his faith is snatched away.

And so it happened that at the time of the Holy Prophet's appearance, there were thousands of ascetics who used to receive revelation and see visions, and who were always relating the good news of the imminent coming of the Prophet of the Last Age. But when they rejected the Imam of the Age, who was the Last of the Prophets, then the thunderbolt of Allah's wrath destroyed them and all their relationship with Allah was completely severed. There is no need to recount all that has been written in the Holy Quran about them. It is to them that the Holy Quran truly referred when it said: *wa kānū min qablu yastaftihūna* [2:89]. The meaning of this verse is that those people used to beseech Allah for the triumph of religion and they used to receive revelation and visions although those Jews who were disobedient to Prophet Jesus had fallen from Allah's grace. However, when the Christian religion died because of the worship of Allah's creation, and it became bereft of truth and spirituality, the Jews were then delivered of the sin of not becoming Christians and spirituality once more entered into them. Many began to arise from among them who were recipients of revelation and visions and their priests were men of high

moral calibre and they continuously received revelation telling them that the Prophet of the Last Age and the Imam of the Time would soon be born and for this reason many learned doctors of law kept coming to the land of Arabia. Even their little children knew that soon a new movement from heaven would be established.

This is the meaning of the verse: *ya'rifūnahu kamā ya'rifūna abnā'ahum* [2:146]. That is, they recognized this Prophet just as distinctly as they recognized their own sons. But when that Promised Prophet received the message of God, then pride and prejudice destroyed many priests and their hearts became black. However, many fortunate ones became Muslims and their submission was sincere. Thus, this is an occasion for fear; indeed, a time for great fear, that Allah does not allow any believer to suffer an evil fate like that of Bal'am. O Allah! protect this *Umma* from troubles and keep them far from being the likes of the Jews. Amen, again Amen.

At this point, it must also be remembered that just as God the Most High created tribes and nations with the intention of establishing one structure for this physical civilization, so that with the establishment of physical ties and bonds between them they may show compassion towards one another and be helpers one of another, for the same reason He has established the institution of Prophethood and *Imamat* so that in the *Umma* of Prophet Muhammad spiritual bonds may be created and that some may be intercessors for others.

Now one very important question is: Who is known as Imam of the Time, what are his characteristics, and wherein lies his superiority over others who receive revelation, dreams and visions? The answer to this question is that the title of Imam of the Age is given to that person for whose spiritual upbringing Allah, the Most High, is the Trustee, Who reposes in his nature such a brilliant flame of leadership that he can debate with all the intellectuals and philosophers in every way and defeat them. Receiving power from Allah, he

answers all kinds of the most subtle of objections in such an excellent manner that finally one has to confess that he has come into this transitory abode with all the necessary requirements for the reformation of the world. Therefore, he cannot be embarrassed in the presence of any enemy.

In a spiritual sense, he is Commander-in-Chief of the army of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and it is the will of Allah that, by his hand, the victory of religion will once more be achieved. All those who come under his banner are also bestowed extraordinary powers, and he is granted all the necessary preconditions for reformation and the whole range of knowledge necessary for repelling objections and for explaining the virtues of Islam.

In addition to this, because Allah the Most High knows that he will have to confront the disrespectful and foul-mouthed people of the world, therefore He bestows upon him a high degree of moral fortitude and in his heart there is genuine compassion for mankind. By moral strength is not meant being gentle willy-nilly on all occasions, for this is contrary to the basis of moral wisdom. Rather, the meaning is that the manner in which small-minded men burn with rage at the words of an enemy or a crude person, so that their disposition quickly changes and on their faces there appear, in an abhorrent form, the signs of that grievous punishment called anger, and words of fury, rage and passion burst from their lips in an uncontrollable and out of place fashion, this is never the condition of the people of high morals. It is true that, according to the needs of time and place, they sometimes use strong language as a remedy; however, at the time of such use, their hearts do not burn with rage nor do they experience any kind of fury within them, nor do they foam and froth at the mouth. It is true, too, that sometimes they manifest a contrived anger in order to instill awe, but their heart never loses the state of peace, joy and happiness.

For this reason, although the Prophet Jesus did use many severe words against his audience, words such as swine, dog,

faithless, adulterous etc., yet we cannot say, we seek refuge in Allah, that he was bereft of distinguished morals; for he himself taught good manners to others, and laid emphasis on gentleness. In fact, those words which issued from his mouth were not uttered in the heat of anger nor in frenzied rage, but were applied in the right place very calmly and dispassionately.

In short, it is obligatory on Imams to display perfect morals. And if a word is not spoken in burning rage or uncontrollable anger, but is said in the right place and is necessary, then that is not contrary to a good moral state.

It is worthy of note that the capacity of *Imamat* is engrained in the very nature of the person who is made Imam by the hand of Allah. Just as the Divine Wisdom, by virtue of the verse of the Quran, "He gave to everything its creation" [20:50], has placed beforehand in every beast and bird that potential which Allah, in His Omniscience, knew that it would need, in the same way the spiritual powers required for the office of Imam were reposed beforehand in those souls who, in Allah's eternal knowledge, were destined for the task of *Imamat*. And all those abilities which would be required in the future were already sown in his pure and unsullied nature.

It is my observation that in order that they may be of benefit to and shower their grace on mankind, Imams must possess the following capabilities:

**Firstly, moral strength.** As Imams have to come into contact with all kinds of bad, vulgar and foul-mouthed people, it is imperative that they possess within them a high level of moral fortitude so that the heat of anger and mad fury may not arise in them and people may not be deprived of their bounties. It will be an occasion for great shame if a man, who is regarded as a friend of God, should fall prey to base morals and be unable to show patience of the slightest degree to coarse language. If a person is called the Imam of the Age and he is a man of such immature disposition that he froths at the mouth at the least provocation and his eyes blaze in hot

rage, then he can never be the true Imam of the Age, for the verse, “You indeed possess the most sublime morals” [68:4], must be truly fulfilled in him.

**Secondly, the Authority of *Imamat***, by reason of which the name Imam has been bestowed on him. That is, he should possess a great urge to make advancement in good words, righteous deeds and all knowledge of Allah and love for Him; that is to say, his soul must not be happy with any deficiency nor should it be content with any defective state, and he should feel pain and grief if his spiritual progress is impeded. This is an innate power of the Imam, and if perchance people do not seek his knowledge or wisdom nor walk in his light, even then, by virtue of his inborn power, he is still Imam. In short, it is important to remember this subtle insight that *Imamat* is a power placed in the very nature of the person whom the Divine will has chosen for this work. If the word *Imamat* is to be translated, it can be called ‘the power to excel’. In fact, this is not just some temporary position which is conferred at some later stage in life, but just as there exist faculties for seeing, hearing and understanding, so this is the faculty for advancing, and excelling all, in Divine matters. And the word *Imamat* points to these meanings.

**The third power** is extensive knowledge which is essential and obligatory for the position of Imam. As the meaning of *Imamat* incorporates advancement in the desire to supercede all others as regards knowledge of profound truths, and in wisdom, and all the requisites of love, sincerity and faithfulness, therefore he puts all his other abilities in these pursuits and is every moment making this supplication: “My Lord, increase me in knowledge” [the Quran, 20:114]. And from the very beginning his deep perception and refined senses have capability in these matters. This is why, by the grace of God, he is granted vastness of Divine knowledge, and in his age there is no other who is his equal in knowledge of Quranic insights, power of benefiting others, and presenting arguments to perfection.

His sound judgment corrects the knowledge of other people. And if in the elucidation of religious truths another's opinion is opposed to his, he is proven to be true because in acquiring the knowledge of truth he is aided by the light of spiritual insight, while others are not granted the resplendent rays of that light — "That is Allah's grace; He grants it to whom He pleases" [62:4]. Just as a hen takes her eggs under her wings and causes them to hatch, and then by taking the chicks under her wings she infuses her own nature into them, in the same way this man keeps colouring the knowledge of those persons who keep his company with the colour of his own profound spiritual knowledge and steadily increases them in faith and insight. But this kind of extensive knowledge is not required for other inspired and devout personalities because the task of educating mankind is not entrusted to them. So, if there is any deficiency or lack of knowledge in these pious seers of visions, this is no ground for criticism because they are not captains of a ship but are themselves in need of a captain. However, they should not fall into the silly error of thinking that they are above need of a spiritual captain of ship, considering themselves to be fully capable. Instead, they should remember that they certainly need such a person, as a woman needs a man.

God has created every person for a particular task. Therefore, if a man was not created for the work of *Imamat* but makes this claim, he will only invite the ridicule of others on himself just as a certain naïve saint had caused people to laugh at him in the presence of the king. The story goes that in a town there was a devout man who was righteous and God-fearing but he was bereft of knowledge. The king had faith in him but the king's minister was not his follower because of his ignorance. Once both the king and the minister went to visit him and he purposelessly broached the topic of Islamic history, telling the king that Alexander of Greece too was a great king of the Muslims! Then the minister, finding a good opportunity for scoring a point, immediately interjected with the sarcastic rejoinder: "Look, sir, the mystic, apart from

his excellences of sainthood, is also an expert in Islamic history”.

So the Imam of the Age, when confronting objectors and questioners in general, is more in need of the power of knowledge than of revelations. For, in regard to the *Sharī'ah* there exists every kind of objector: those who object from the point of view of medical sciences, astronomy, the natural sciences, geography, and the accepted books of Islam, objecting on the grounds of logic and on the grounds of knowledge. The Imam of the Age is called the protector of the egg of Islam, and is appointed by God the Most High as caretaker of the garden of Islam. It is his duty to refute every objection and to silence every critic. Moreover, it is not only imperative for him to triumph over criticisms, but also to manifest to the world the perfection and beauty of Islam.

Thus, such a person is highly deserving of honour and he is like the philosopher's stone, because from his being the life of Islam is manifested and he is the pride of Islam and a conclusive evidence from God for all human beings. It is not allowed for anyone to separate himself from him because he is, by the will and order of God, the supervisor of the honour of Islam and the benefactor of all Muslims, and encompasses all religious perfections. In every arena of combat between Islam and unbelief he is the one who is successful and by his holy breath infidelity is destroyed. He is like the whole, while all others are like parts of him.

**The fourth power** is *'azm* (iron determination) which is of paramount importance for the Imam of the Age. *'Azm* means not to flag, whatever the circumstances, nor to give up hope, nor to become lax in will. Many a time such trials befall prophets and messengers and saints, who are Imams of their age, that they are enmeshed so deep in difficulties that it seems as if God has forsaken them and wishes to visit them with destruction. Sometimes there is a cessation in their receiving of revelations and inspirations and a long period passes without any Divine communication; sometimes some

of their prophecies are like a trial, the truth of which does not become clear to the public; sometimes they face much delay in achieving their goal; often they appear forsaken, humiliated, cursed and rejected in the world, so that every person who curses them thinks that he is earning great reward in heaven. And everyone hates them and looks with aversion upon them, not even wishing to return their greetings. At such times their determination is being tested but they never become despondent because of these trials, nor do they waver in their mission, until the help of Allah comes.

**The fifth power** is *iqbāl 'al-allāh* (going before Allah), which is an indispensable quality of the Imam of the Age. By *iqbāl 'al-allāh* is meant that, in the time of difficulty and trial, and also such times when an implacable foe has to be faced, and a sign may be demanded or a victory may be needed, or it may be a duty to show sympathy for someone, at such times they incline only to God the Most High. They turn to Him with such submission that their prayers full of truthfulness, sincerity, love, faithfulness and unbreakable resolve cause a tumult among the higher angels; and through their intense absorption in humble supplication, a heart-rending uproar breaks out in the heavens, making the angels restless. Then, just as after the peak of the intensely hot season, at the beginning of the rainy season clouds start to gather in the sky, likewise the severe heat of their *iqbāl 'al-allāh*, that is, the passionate fervour of their intense turning to God, starts to make something new in the heavens so that destinies begin to change and the Divine will takes on a different colouring until the cool refreshing breeze of the decreed fate begins to waft gently. Just as the substance that causes fever originates from God, and then the medicine to expel that substance also works by the decree of the Almighty, so, too, is the effect of these men's turning to Allah.

The *iqbāl 'al-allāh* of the Imam of the Age, that is, his having resort to Allah, is swifter in result and more efficacious than that of all the other saints of Allah. Just as Prophet Moses in his time was the Imam of the Age and Bal'am, too,

was a saint in that age who was granted communication with God and his supplications also were answered, but when Moses had to face a conflict with Bal'am that confrontation destroyed Bal'am just as a sharp sword severs the head from the body instantly. The wretched Bal'am had no idea of this rule, that although God may speak to a person and call him His beloved and chosen one, yet if he opposes one who is superior to him in drinking from the fountain of grace, he doubtlessly will be destroyed. And at that time, no revelation of his will be of any avail, nor will it help him that God used to answer his supplications. That was only one Bal'am, but I know that in the time of our Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, thousands of Bal'ams were destroyed, as the ascetics of the Jews, after the death of the original Christian faith, were mostly of this kind.

**The sixth** is the phenomenon of visions and revelations which is a necessity for the Imam of the Age, who frequently receives knowledge, truths and deep insights from God by way of revelation. And his revelations cannot be compared to those of others because, in terms of quality and quantity, they are of such an elevated rank which is impossible for man to supercede.

Through this medium, knowledge is disclosed and Quranic insights become known and intricate and complex issues of religion are unravelled, and prophecies of a high order which can strongly influence the opposing religious nations are manifested. In short, the visions and revelations of the Imams of the Age are not limited to their personal concerns; but for the sake of support of religion and the strengthening of faith they come as a blessing and are extremely useful. And God speaks to them with great clarity and He answers their supplications. Sometimes questions and answers form a continuous series so much so that on a particular occasion these questions and answers begin to flow rapidly one after the other in such a sweet, clear and fluent stream that the recipient of revelation thinks that he is actually seeing God the Most High.

The Imam of the Age never receives a revelation in the form that it is as if a person has thrown a brick surreptitiously and has run away, and no one knows who he was or where he went. But God the Most High draws very close to him, and to some extent He removes the veil from His holy and brilliant countenance, which is all light. This experience does not fall to the lot of others, but instead they sometimes find [when receiving inspiration] as if someone is mocking at them.

On the other hand, the revealed prophecies of the Imam of the Age possess the quality and power to disclose the Unseen, that is, from every point of view they take control over the Unseen just as a rider takes the reins of a horse in his hands, and their revelations are imbued with this power and disclosure so that their pure inspirations may not be confused with satanic inspirations and that they may constitute a strong proof for others.

Let it be clear that satanic inspirations are a fact, and some raw spiritual wayfarers experience them. So too do they experience ‘suggestions of the lower self’ (*ḥadīth-un-nafs*) which is referred to as ‘confused dreams’ (*aḍghāth ahlām*, the Holy Quran, 12:44 and 21:5). If a person denies this, he contradicts the Holy Quran; for the Holy Quran itself testifies to the existence of satanic inspirations, and Allah the Most High has warned that until man has thoroughly and perfectly purified his inner self, he is vulnerable to satanic revelations, and to him applies the verse “they [the devils] descend upon every lying one” [26:222].

However, the holy ones are immediately alerted to the whisperings of Satan. It is a pity that some Christian clergymen, in giving an explanation in their books of the incident relating to Prophet Jesus when Satan took him to a mountain, write with such audacity that this was not a physical event that the world could have seen or the Jews could have witnessed but three times Jesus was attacked by satanic revelations which he did not accept. When I hear such interpretations of the Gospels, I shudder to think how the

Messiah could have satanic revelations! Now if we do not accept this satanic conversation as satanic revelation, and believe that Satan had actually taken human form and met Jesus, then the objection arises that if Satan, who is the serpent of old, had in actual fact assumed a physical reality, taking on the external shape of a man, and had gone to that holy temple of the Jews around which hundreds of people lived, then it would have happened that thousands of people would have flocked together to see him. In fact, Jesus ought to have loudly summoned the Jews to show them Satan, whose existence was denied by many Jewish sects. Making them see Satan would have counted as a sign of the Messiah, from which many people would have received guidance and the high officials of the Roman Government, having seen Satan and witnessed his flight, would certainly have become disciples of the Messiah. But that did not happen. This makes it certain that it was a spiritual dialogue which, in other words, can be called 'satanic revelation'.

This idea also comes to my mind that in the Jewish scriptures many wicked people were referred to as Satan. And thus, figuratively speaking, the Messiah, too, had called one of his own senior disciples as Satan, the one to whom the keys of Paradise had been entrusted just a few lines before this present incident was narrated in the Gospel. Therefore it is possible that some Jewish Satan may have approached Jesus to ridicule and mock him. And just as he gave the name Satan to Peter, he must have called this person Satan, too. The Jews used to commit mischief of this kind, and asking this sort of question was their peculiarity. And it is possible also that all these stories may be fabrications which must have been written down deliberately or as a result of some misconception. For these Gospels are not those of Jesus nor do they bear the stamp of his approval, but the disciples or some others have written them according to their ideas and understanding. This is why they also contain contradictions. Therefore, it can be said that, because of their own ideas, some writers fell into error, just as this error was made that

some of the Gospel writers thought that Jesus had died on the Cross.<sup>2</sup> It was in the nature of the disciples to make mistakes like these, for the Gospels inform us that they did not possess a sharp intellect. Jesus himself testified to this shortcoming of theirs, that they were weak in understanding and analysis and even in power of action.

In any case, it is a fact that satanic ideas cannot lodge in the hearts of righteous people. If any passing insinuations should float in the vicinity of their hearts, then those satanic whisperings are promptly driven and removed far away and no stain whatsoever tarnishes their pure raiment. In the Holy Quran, such a whispering, which resembles a dull and half-baked idea, is given the name *tā'if*, and in Arabic lexicons it is also called *tā'if*, *ta'uf*, *tayyif* and *taif*. This whispering makes very little impression on the heart, much as it does not exist, or one can say that just as the shadow of a tree is very weak at a long distance, so too is this kind of whispering. It is possible that Satan, the accursed, may have desired to project this weak kind of insinuation in the heart of Jesus who, with his prophetic power, repelled the evil thought.

We have been forced to say this because this incident is related not only in the Gospels but finds expression in our authentic Hadith too:

“Abu Hurairah said, Satan came to Jesus and asked him, ‘Don’t you believe that you are true?’ He answered, ‘Certainly.’ Satan said, ‘Then climb up this mountain and throw yourself to the ground.’ Jesus then retorted, ‘Woe to you! Don’t you know that Allah has commanded us not to put Him to trial by our death, for He does whatever He wills?’”

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<sup>2</sup> From among the many Gospels of the Christians one is still extant with them in which it is written that the Messiah was not killed on the Cross. This explanation is authentic because it is supported by the existence of the “ointment of Jesus” (*marham-i-’Īsā*) which is mentioned by hundreds of physicians.

Now it is clear that Satan must have appeared in the same manner as that in which Gabriel approached the prophets, for Gabriel does not descend like a man riding a carriage or mounted on a rented horse and wearing a turban and cloak; but his descent is in the manner of the next world. Then how can Satan, who is inferior and most degraded, appear so openly in the shape of a man? In any case, this investigation leads to the same conclusion that has been explained by Draper.

However, we can say that Prophet Jesus, because of his prophetic power and light of truth, never at all allowed Satan's inspiration to come close to him, never at all, and he immediately busied himself in repelling and driving it far away. Just as darkness cannot exist in the presence of light, so, too, Satan could not stand against Prophet Jesus and he ran away. This is the real meaning of the verse: "As regards My servants, you [O Satan] have no authority over them" [The Holy Quran, 15:42], because Satan's authority, that is, his influence, only extends over those who pay heed to his satanic whisperings and inspirations. But as to those who wound him from afar with the arrow of light and beat his face with the shoe of scolding and reproach, never obeying him in the nonsense which he utters, they indeed are immune from satanic dominion.

However, since God the Most High wishes to show them the full kingdom of the heavens and the earth and Satan is part of the kingdom of earth, it is necessary for them, in order to witness the complete circle of creation, to see the face of this strange creation and to hear the words of him who is called Satan. But no stain attaches to their pure and chaste character because of this. Satan, in his age-old custom of casting doubt, made a request to Prophet Jesus as a trick, but his holy nature immediately rejected it and yielded not to it. But this does not diminish his glory. Does not a criminal sometimes speak in the presence of a king? Therefore, in this way, Satan, in a spiritual manner, cast a suggestion on the heart of Prophet Jesus, who paid no heed to this satanic

inspiration but, on the contrary, rejected it. This, indeed, is a highly commendable act and to find fault with it is really ridiculous and betrays an ignorance of spiritual philosophy. However, while Prophet Jesus, through the power of his own light, castigated and repelled the suggestion of Satan and instantaneously exposed the uncleanness of his inspirations, nevertheless this is not the work of every ascetic or sufi.

Sayyid Abdul Qadir Jilani relates that once satanic inspiration came his way also. Satan tempted him thus: "O Abdul Qadir! all your prayers have been accepted. Now everything that is unlawful for others is lawful for you and you are exempt from performing *salah* too. Whatever you wish, you may do." He immediately replied, "Satan, begone! How can these things which were not permissible for the Holy Prophet be allowed for me?" Whereupon, he related, Satan and his golden throne vanished from his presence.

Now if satanic inspiration can come to so unique a man of God like Abdul Qadir, then how can the common people, who have not yet completed their spiritual training, be safe from it? Where do they have those spiritual eyes to recognize, like Abdul Qadir and Jesus, the inspirations of Satan? Remember, too, that those soothsayers, who abounded in the land of Arabia before the appearance of our Holy Prophet, also received satanic inspirations in abundance and sometimes they used to make prophecies, too, by means of these inspirations. And strangely, some of their prophecies turned out to be true. Accordingly, Islamic books are replete with these stories. Thus, a person who denies the existence of satanic inspirations is not only contradicting the teaching of all the Prophets but is also denying the entire chain of prophethood. It is recorded in the Bible that once four hundred prophets received satanic revelation and they, because of inspiration which was the work of a spirit, prophesied the victory of a certain king. Eventually, that king suffered a humiliating defeat in that battle and was killed, and a prophet who had received revelation from Angel Gabriel had announced that the king would be killed, dogs would feed

on his flesh and he would be totally annihilated. This news proved to be true but the prophecy of the four hundred prophets proved false [1 Kings 22:5–38].

At this point, a question naturally arises in the mind, that since satanic inspirations occur in such abundance, this reduces the credibility of revelations in general, and no revelation can be considered reliable for it is possible that it is from Satan; and especially since a great prophet like the Messiah experienced such an event, then lesser receivers of inspirations are powerless against it. So, is revelation nothing but a trial? The answer to this question is that there is no ground for despondency. In the laws of nature of God the Most High in this world, it happens that associated with every precious jewel there is its adulterated counterpart. For example, there is the pearl that comes from the sea and the other is the imitation pearl that people themselves make and sell. But the realization that there are counterfeit pearls in the world cannot close down trade in genuine gems, because jewelers who have been gifted by God the Most High with insight can tell at a glance between the genuine and the false. So the jeweler of revealed gems is the Imam of the Age. By remaining in his company a man soon learns to discriminate between the real and the fake. O sufis, and you who are caught in this alchemy, be mindful when you take a step in this path, and remember well that the true revelation that comes purely from God the Most High has with it the following signs:

1. It takes place at such a time when a man's heart, having melted through the fire of pain, flows like pure water towards God the Most High. Hadith points to this when it says that the Holy Quran was revealed in sorrow. Therefore we are urged to recite it with a sorrowful heart.

2. A true revelation contains within it a peculiar quality of pleasure and ecstasy and bestows certainty for no apparent reason and pierces the heart like a steel nail and its diction is eloquent and free from error.

**3.** True revelation descends with dignity and majesty and makes a powerful impact on the heart and a powerful and fearsome voice hits the heart. But in a false inspiration, the voice is faint, stealthy and effeminate because Satan is a thief, a eunuch and womanly.

**4.** A true revelation bears the impress of Allah's power and it is sure to contain prophecies which will be fulfilled.

**5.** True revelation increases a man in goodness, day by day, and it purifies him of inner impurities and errors while making him advance in moral rectitude.

**6.** True revelation is such that all the internal powers of man bear witness to it and a new and pure light falls on every faculty and man experiences a transformation within himself. His past life dies and a new one takes birth and he becomes a source of compassion to all mankind.

**7.** A true revelation does not end abruptly with a single communication because Allah's discourse has a continuity. He is extremely tender and forbearing to whomsoever He turns His attention. He speaks to him and answers his questions, and man can receive an answer to his petitions at one time and place, although sometimes a time of cessation also comes over this communication.

**8.** The recipient of true revelation is never cowardly, and if he has to face a false claimant to revelation, however formidable an opponent the latter may be, no fear comes over him, for he knows that God is on his side and will make his enemy suffer an abasing defeat.

**9.** True revelation is often the means by which many kinds of knowledge and insights are obtained, for God does not wish to leave His inspired servant without knowledge and in ignorance.

**10.** True revelation brings with it many other blessings, and the one to whom Allah speaks is bestowed with glory from the Unseen and majesty is conferred on him.

Nowadays we are living in such an imperfect age in which most scientists, rationalists as well as the Brahmo Samaj sect are deniers of the existence of revelation. Many have already departed this world in the state of this denial. But the crux of the matter is that truth is truth, even if the whole world denies it, and falsehood is falsehood, even if the whole world takes it for truth.

It will be the height of folly if those people who profess belief in God the Most High and consider Him the Regulator of the world and also know Him to be Seeing and Hearing and Knowing, should, after accepting that much, still deny that He speaks. Is He Who Sees and Knows and Whose knowledge, without the aid of any physical means, encompasses every single atom, unable to speak? This statement, too, is erroneous that His power of speech existed in the past but has now terminated, as if His attribute of speech has been left behind and is not for future use. In fact, that assertion is cause for deep despondency. If some of the attributes of God the Most High, having been in operation up to a particular era, then become extinct so that no vestige of them remains, then there must be concern also regarding the remaining attributes. Pity on the thinking and beliefs of those who, after confessing belief in all the attributes of God the Most High, wrongfully take a knife and cut off an important portion of them and cast it away. Sad, too, that the Arya Samaj had placed a seal on the word of God the Most High after just the revelation of the Vedas. But the Christians, too, did not allow revelation to remain unfettered, as if only up to the time of the Messiah was man in need of eyewitnessed revelations in order to acquire personal insight and deep knowledge of God. And so unfortunate are future generations that they are forever deprived of that grace, although man is ever in need of eyewitnessed observations and personal insight.

A religion can only remain alive as a source of knowledge up to that age till the attributes of God the Most High are being manifested afresh again and again, otherwise it becomes reduced to stories and soon dies. Can any human

conscience accept such a state of failure? And since deep within us we feel that we need complete spiritual knowledge, and this need cannot be satisfied in any way without Divine communication and great signs, how then can the mercy of God the Most High close the door of revelation on us? Have our hearts changed in this age, or has God changed? We concede and accept that in a particular age the revelation given to one person can invigorate the knowledge of hundreds of thousands and it is not necessary for every individual to receive revelation, but we cannot accept that the whole concept of revelation itself is entirely removed, leaving in our possession only such stories as we have not witnessed with our own eyes.

It is evident that if a matter is passed down over hundreds of years in the form of stories, and no new example arises to verify it, then most people with an enquiring bent of mind cannot accept those stories that are devoid of weighty evidence, especially when these stories testify to such matters that in our age appear to be contrary to reason. It is for this reason that after a long period of time, adherents of natural philosophy always start scoffing at those miracles and do not even give them the benefit of the doubt. And they are within their rights, for the thought passes through their minds that, as it is the same God with the same attributes, and we have the same needs, so why has the chain of revelation been cut off even though all souls are crying out loudly in their need for fresh spiritual revelation? That is why hundreds of thousands among the Hindus have become atheists, for the Pundits have repeatedly been giving this teaching that the flow of Divine revelation and communication has been cut off since millions of years. The idea crossed their minds that, compared with the time of the Vedas, their age is more in need of new revelations from God. Again, if revelation is a fact then why did it not continue after the Vedas? It is this that has caused atheism to flourish in India. And that is why among the Hindus there can be found hundreds of such sects who ridicule the Vedas and do not believe in them. For example,

among them is the sect of the Jains. Indeed, it is because of these views that the Sikhs separated from the Hindus, because firstly there are hundreds of things in this world which are regarded as partners with God by the Hindu religion, and so vast is this partnership that there is no sign of God in it, and secondly the claim that the Vedas are revealed books is merely a baseless assertion, referring to a time hundreds of thousands of years ago but which has no new proof whatsoever. Therefore, those who are staunchly Sikh, do not accept the Vedas. Thus in *Akhhār-i-Ām* of Lahore, 26 September 1898, an article from a Sikh gentleman was published in this connection, and in support of the point that the Sikhs do not believe in the Vedas and that their religious leaders (gurus) have instructed them never to do so, he has also quoted hymns or verses of the Granth, the gist of which is that they should never accept the Vedas and it is affirmed that they are not followers of the Vedas, nor do they accept them.

It is true that it does not acknowledge following the Holy Quran either, but the reason for this is that the Sikhs are unfamiliar with Islam and unaware of the light which God, the Most Powerful, the Ever Living, has placed in this religion, and because of ignorance and prejudice, they are not informed of those spiritual lights with which the Holy Quran overflows. In fact, they do not share the same national affinity with the Muslims as they do with the Hindus; otherwise it would have been enough for them to follow the legacy which Baba Nanak Sahib had written on his holy cloak, because he had written in it that besides Islam no other religion is right and true. Therefore, to neglect this important legacy of so venerable a man is indeed cause for great regret. In the possession of the Sikhs there is only the holy cloak which is a memento of Baba Nanak's hands, while the poems of the Granth were composed long after, and research scholars have expressed much disagreement about this. God knows how many changes have been made in it, and who are the authors of this collection. Anyway, this story is not

relevant here. What I really mean to say is that in order to keep the faith of mankind ever fresh, there is always the necessity for new revelations and these revelations are recognized by their authoritative power because, besides God, no satan, *jinn*, or demon possesses such authoritative power. And the revelation given to the Imam of the Age is a proof of the authenticity of the other [contemporary] revelations.

I have already explained that the Imam of the Age intrinsically possesses within himself the power of *Imamat*, and the hand of nature itself infuses within him the quality of leadership. It is the way of Allah that He does not wish to leave mankind scattered. But just as in the heavenly system He has gathered many stars and made the sun the head of this order, in the same way, too, He has blessed the ordinary believers with light, each according to his merit, like the stars, and has appointed the Imam of the Age as their sun. That is the way of Allah, so much so that in His creation one can observe that among the honey bees, too, this system operates whereby they have an Imam that is called *Ya'sūb*. And in physical rulership also, God the Most High has willed that each nation should have a ruler or a king. And the curse of God is upon those who like division and do not remain under the command of one ruler, whereas Allah, the Glorified, has commanded: "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you" [the Holy Quran, 4:59].

In the worldly sense the meaning of "those in authority" is the king, while spiritually speaking it refers to the Imam of the Age. In the worldly realm, whoever is not opposed to our aims and from whom we can obtain religious benefit, is from among us. Therefore, my advise to my Movement is that they should include the rule by the British as "those in authority among you" and be sincerely obedient to them, for they are not an obstacle to our religious objectives; in fact, we live in much peace due to their presence and we would be unfaithful if we do not admit that the British have assisted our religion in one way, in which even the Muslim kings of India did not do. For, many Muslim kings of India, because of their

neglect, had forsaken the province of the Punjab and, because of their indifference, in the time of the various Sikh governments such overwhelming misfortunes befell us and our religion that it became difficult to say prayers in congregation in the mosques and to sound the call to prayer publicly, and in the Punjab the religion of Islam had come to an end. Then the British arrived, and as a result our good fortune was restored and they provided protection for the religion of Islam and granted full freedom for us to perform our religious obligations and our mosques were opened again. And so, after a long period of time, the signs of Islam came to be seen once more in the Punjab. So is this not a favour worth remembering? In fact, the truth is that many cowardly Muslim kings, on account of their sloth, had pushed us under the rule of unbelief and the British brought us out of it. Thus, to keep hatching plots of rebellion against the British is to forget the favours of God the Most High.

To return to the original point, I say that just as the Holy Quran has emphasized that even in physical society we should gather under the command of one ruler, so, too, this same emphasis has been laid with regard to the spiritual realm. It is to this that the prayer taught by Allah the Most High points: "Guide us on the right path, the path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy favours" [the Holy Quran, 1:4-5].

Consider that no Muslim, in fact no human being nor even an animal, is deprived of the favours of Allah. But it cannot be said that God the Most High has commanded us to be their followers. Therefore, the meaning of this verse is: Guide us to follow the path of those people upon whom the rain of spiritual favours has descended in a complete and perfect manner. So in this verse, there is a clear inference that we should join the Imam of the Age.

Remember that the term 'Imam of the Age' (*imam-uz-zaman*) includes a prophet (*nabi*), a messenger (*rasul*), a saint (*muhaddas*) and a reformer (*mujaddid*), all of these.

However, those people who have not been commissioned for the guidance and leadership of the creatures of Allah, and who are not vouchsafed the required accomplishments, whether they be saints of one kind or another, can never be called Imam of the Age.

And finally the question remains: Who is the Imam of the Age in these times, whom Allah has made it obligatory for the Muslim masses, the ascetics, and the recipients of dreams and inspirations to follow? Therefore, without fear, I now announce that through the grace and gift of God the Most High:

### **I am the Imam of the age.**

And in me, God the Most High has vested all the necessary signs and conditions and has raised me at the head of this century, of which fifteen years have already elapsed. I have appeared at a time when differences had spread and expanded regarding Islamic beliefs and there was no doctrine which was exempt from disagreement. In the same way, greatly erroneous ideas had proliferated regarding the descent of the Messiah, and the differences about this belief were so much that some people believed that Jesus was alive and others that he was dead; some believed in his bodily descent while others believed in the descent in a spiritual sense; some would have him alight in Damascus and others in Makka and some in Jerusalem and others at the head of an army of Islam, and some even felt that he would make his appearance in India. Thus all these conflicting opinions and assertions warranted the coming of someone to give a judgment on them, an arbiter (*hakam*). Therefore, I am that arbiter. I have come to break the Cross in a spiritual manner and I have been sent to decide all controversies. These two matters demanded that I be sent. It was not necessary for me to present any further proof to support the truth of my claim, for necessity itself is sufficient proof. But still, God the Most High has manifested many signs in my support. And just as I am the arbiter to settle other controversies, so, too, I am the arbiter in the

dispute concerning whether Jesus is dead or alive. I declare as correct the beliefs of Imam Malik, Ibn Hazm and the Mu'tazila sect about the death of Jesus, and I consider the other *Ahl-as-Sunna* groups as committing an error. So, in my capacity as arbiter, I issue this verdict to the disputants that in terms of 'descent' itself the *Ahl-as-Sunna* sect is right because the descent of the Messiah in a spiritual sense is necessary. However, it is true that in explaining the nature of the descent they are wrong, for his descent is in the form of spiritual manifestation and not physically.

On the question of the death of the Messiah, the Mu'tazilites and Imam Malik and Ibn Hazm and others of the same opinion, are correct, because in the light of the clear and decisive verse of the Holy Quran "when Thou didst cause me to die" [5:117] it was necessary for the Messiah to die before the Christians had gone astray. This is a verdict from me in my capacity as arbiter. Now, he who does not accept my judgment is really not accepting Him Who appointed me as arbiter.

If the question arises as to what proof there is to support my claim of being the arbiter, then the answer is that the era that demanded the coming of the arbiter is no other than this present age. And the nation whose erroneous beliefs about the Cross had to be rectified, that nation exists. Moreover, the signs that had to be shown in support of this arbiter have already been shown and even now the flow of these signs is continuing unabatedly. Heaven is still manifesting them and so too is the earth. Blessed are those whose eyes do not remain closed now.

I do not ask you just to believe the previous signs, rather I say that if I am not the arbiter then compete with my signs. And against me, who has come at the time of disagreement in beliefs, all disputations are worthless. Only in the argument as to whether I am the arbiter everyone has a right, which I have fulfilled. God has given four signs:

1. As a reflection of the miracle of the Holy Quran, I have been gifted with the sign of eloquence in the Arabic language and nobody can compete with me in this.

2. The sign of elucidating deep truths and spiritual insights of the Holy Quran has been bestowed on me and no one can compete with me in this.

3. The sign of abundant acceptance of my prayers has been given to me. No one can equal me in this and I say on oath that nearly thirty thousand of my prayers have been granted and I have proof of it.

4. I have been blessed with the sign of receiving news of the unseen. There is no one who can match me in this. These are the testimonies of God the Most High which I possess, and the prophecies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad in support of my truth were fulfilled like radiant signs.

“Heaven rained down signs of the times, and the earth also spoke. These two are witnesses to confirm my truth.”

A long time has passed since the solar and lunar eclipses took place in the month of Ramadan. The *Hajj*, too, was suspended, and in accordance with [the prophecy of] the Hadith the plague has stalked the land. Many more signs were displayed by me, and there exist hundreds of Hindus and Muslims who have witnessed them, which I have not mentioned. Because of all these reasons, I am the Imam of the Age and Allah is my Supporter. He stands ready like a sharp sword for me and I have been informed that if anyone should oppose me with evil intent, he will suffer humiliation and disgrace.

Look! I have fulfilled the command entrusted to me and I have already written these points many times in my books. But the incident that impelled me to write about these matters again is the error of opinion of a friend of mine. When I came to know of it, I wrote this booklet with a pained, heavy heart.

The details of this incident are as follows. These days, that is, in the month of September 1898 which corresponds to *Jamādi'-ul-Awwal*, 1316 A.H., a friend of mine whom I know to be a good man, righteous, God-fearing and abstinent, and of whom I have held a very favourable opinion from the very beginning — Allah is his Recokner — but whom I believe to be in error as regards some of his views, and am concerned about him because of the harm that this error may cause him, he undertook the rigours of a journey and came to me in Qadian accompanied by another dear friend of mine and related to me many revelations he had received. It brought great joy to my heart to know that God the Most High had honoured him with revelation. However, among his revelations, he also related to me a dream of his in which he had said about me: “Why should I enter into his pledge (*bai'at*), rather he should enter into my pledge”.

From this dream it appears that he does not accept me as the Promised Messiah and that he is also unaware of the concept of the true *Imamat*. Consequently, my compassion demanded that for his sake I should write this pamphlet in order to explain the true *Imamat* and to dilate on the nature of *bai'at*. So concerning the rightful Imam who has the right to take others into *bai'at*, I have written much in this booklet. As to the concept of *bai'at*, it is this, that the word *bai'at* is derived from *bai'*, which is applied to a mutually agreed transaction in which one thing is given in exchange for another. So the purpose of the *bai'at* is that the one entering into *bai'at* sells himself and all his faculties into the hands of a guide so that in return he may receive true spiritual knowledge and blessings to perfection which will lead to spiritual insight, salvation and the pleasure of Allah the Most High. It is clear from this that by *bai'at* is not meant mere repentance, because a man can make such *taubah* (repentance) all by himself, but what is aimed at is that kind of spiritual knowledge, blessings and signs which draw a person to true repentance. The real objective of the *bai'at* is to give yourself in bondage to your guide and in return acquire from him

knowledge, spiritual insights and blessings which strengthen faith and increase knowledge, and create a pure relationship with God the Most High. In this way, having gained deliverance from the hell of this world, salvation may be obtained from the hell of the next life, and that having been healed of spiritual blindness in this life, one may be in safety from the blindness of the next life. So if there exists someone who can bestow the fruits of this *bai'at*, it would be the worst type of perversity for one to turn away from him knowingly and deliberately.

Dear friend, I hunger and thirst so much for spiritual knowledge and deeper truths and Divine blessings that a whole ocean cannot satisfy my thirst. So if someone wishes to take me into his service then there is a very simple way: let him, bearing in mind the meaning and true concept of the *bai'at*, make the transaction with me. And if he should possess such truths and knowledge and heavenly graces that were not bestowed on me, or if such knowledge of the Quran was disclosed to him as was not given to me, then, beginning in the name of Allah, that venerable person should take my hand in his service and obedience, and may he bless me with that spiritual knowledge and those Quranic truths and heavenly graces. I do not wish to give too much trouble. Let my inspired friend give, at a gathering, an explanation of the deeper truths and insights contained in *Sūrat-ul-Ikhlās*, and if I fail to better them by a thousand times then I will be his disciple.

In any case, if those spiritual truths, insights and blessings are available with you which cast a miraculous influence, then not only I, but my entire Movement will enter into your *bai'at*, and it would be a man of the most evil nature who would not do so. But what can I say or write? I seek pardon for saying that when I listened to your written down revelations, there were grammatical and linguistic errors in them in many places. Please do not be offended, for it is merely in good faith and with humility, as religious good advice, that I have expressed this observation. Nevertheless,

in my opinion, if the revelations of some uneducated or unlettered person contain errors of grammar and language, that does not provide an objection against the essence of the revelation itself. This is a very subtle question which deserves a lengthy exposition, but this is not the place for it. If some formalistic *mulla*, upon hearing such errors, gets provoked then he also must be excused for he has no admittance into the avenue of spiritual philosophy. However, this kind of revelation is considered as of a low order which is not invested with the full manifestation of the light of God the Most High, for revelations come in three grades: lower, middle and higher.

At any rate, these errors caused me much embarrassment and I kept praying within my heart that my revered friend would not relate these revelations, which on the face of it are subject to objection, to any evil-minded, formalistic *mulla* as he would needlessly deride and ridicule them. Any revelation that is devoid of deep spiritual truths and knowledge, and also is full of errors, cannot benefit anyone whether friend or opponent, especially in this age. In fact, instead of benefit the fear is that it may cause harm. I swear with full conviction and truth that this is absolutely right.

My dear friend! make more progress in turning towards Allah<sup>3</sup> so that as the heart increases in purity, similarly will the revelations grow in purity of eloquence. This is the secret why the revelation of the Quran surpasses the revelation of all the other prophets not only in spiritual knowledge but in fluency and eloquence of diction as well, because our Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, was granted purity of heart more than anyone else. Therefore, in terms of its content that revelation consisted of spiritual knowledge, and in terms of its text it possessed clarity and eloquence.

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<sup>3</sup> I am certain that if this noble friend should turn more deeply to Allah, then very soon his revelations will acquire a perfect form.

My friend should also remember that, as I have explained, *bai'at* is a transaction of buying and selling. I say on oath that the truths and knowledge of the Holy Quran which our learned friend Maulvi Abdul Karim *sahib* expounds when he is preaching, I certainly do not expect that even a thousandth part of that could come from the mouth of my dear friend. The reason for it is exactly that the mode of revelation is as yet defective and the method of acquiring is entirely forsaken. I do not know if you have yet had the opportunity to listen to Quranic exposition from any scholar or not.<sup>4</sup> Please do not be offended for the sake of God. So far, you have not fully grasped the nature of the *bai'at*, as to what is given in it and what is received. In my Movement, and among the servants of God who have entered into my *bai'at*, there is a man, an illustrious scholar, and he is Maulvi Hakim Hafiz Haji Nur-ud-Din *sahib*, who seems to possess all the commentaries of the Holy Quran in the world with him, and so does his heart contain a treasury of thousands of deep Quranic insights.

If in fact you have been blessed with the excellence of taking others into your *bai'at*, then teach him any one of the thirty parts of the Holy Quran along with its deep truths and spiritual knowledge. These people have not lost their senses that they have entered into my *bai'at*, leaving all the other inspired ones. If you had followed in the footsteps of the above-mentioned Hazrat Maulvi *sahib*, it would have been greatly to your benefit.

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<sup>4</sup> I do not deny that the fountains of revealed knowledge may be opened to you. But that has not yet happened. Dreams and visions are dominated by metaphorical and figurative language, but you have taken your dream literally. The Mujaddid *sahib* of Sirhind had seen in a vision that through him the Holy Prophet Muhammad had received the rank of friend of Allah. And more than that, Shah Waliullah *sahib* had seen a vision in which it appeared that the Holy Prophet had entered into *bai'at* at his hand. But because of their vast knowledge, they did not think what you have thought, but construed it differently.

Just think, that this celebrated scholar who left his home to come and stay with me and to occupy such humble quarters under trying circumstances, is he willingly tolerating this privation without seeing any benefit?

My dear friend, who receives revelation, should remember that by entertaining such views he is deeply in error. If, before displaying his power of revelation, he shows the said Maulvi *sahib* a sample of his Quranic scholarship, and through the splendour of this miracle he takes into his *bai'at* a passionate lover of the Holy Quran like Nur-ud-Din, then I and my whole Movement will devote ourselves to him. Can a few unrecognizable words of revelation, many of which are not even correct, bestow the status which makes a man consider himself to be the Imam of the Age? Dear friend, there are many conditions for the Imam of the Age to fulfil and only then can he stand against the opposition of the whole world.

My dear inspired friend should not remain under an illusion because he receives revelation frequently. I say truly, absolutely truly, that there are in my Movement so many recipients of revelation of this kind that the revelations of many of them can fill a book. Every week, Sayyid Amir Ali Shah sends me one page of his revelations. And many women, too, who believe in my truth have received revelation in Arabic, even though they have not read a word of Arabic. I am very surprised, too, that compared to yours, his revelations contain fewer mistakes. On September 28, 1898, I received a few of his revelations through a letter from his blood brother Fateh Muhamamd Bazdar.

Likewise, there are several recipients of revelation existing in my Movement. One resides in Lahore itself. But can such revelations exempt a person from taking *bai'at* at the hands of the Imam of the Age? I do not excuse myself from entering into the *bai'at* of anyone, but the purpose of the *bai'at* is for increase in spiritual knowledge and strengthening of faith. So please tell us, in your *bai'at*, which knowledge

you will teach and which Quranic truths you will expound? Come and show us the accomplishment of *Imamat* and we shall all take *bai'at* at your hands.

I am proclaiming loudly and publicly that whatever God has bestowed on me has all been intended as evidence of the position of Imam. If anyone can display this sign of *Imamat* and demonstrate that he surpasses me in spiritual graces, I am ready to give him my hand to pledge myself to him.

But the promises of God cannot be changed. No one can stand in confrontation with Him. Almost twenty years ago the following revelation was published in *Barāhin Ahmadiyya*:

“The Beneficent, He taught the Quran that you may warn a people whose forefathers were not warned, and the way of the guilty be made known. Say: Of this I am commanded, and I am the first of the believers.”

According to this revelation, God has bestowed upon me the knowledge of the Quran and given me the title “first of the believers”. He has filled me with deep knowledge and truths like an ocean, and He has revealed to me again and again that in this age no one can equal me in knowledge and love of Allah. So, by God, I am standing ready in the field of combat. Whoever does not accept me will soon be brought to shame after death, and has now been brought down by the argument of Allah.

Dear friend, no work, whether of the world or of religion, can be accomplished without capability. I remember that once a man of an established family was recommended to an English commissioner for the post of local tax-collector, and the man was entirely illiterate, not even knowing Urdu. That English official said: ‘If I appoint him as tax-collector, who will decide the cases in his place? I cannot employ him except as an orderly for five rupees.’ In this connection Allah the Most High, too, has said: “Allah knows best where to place His message” [the Quran, 6:124].

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Do you think that the man to whom thousands of friends and foes bring questions and objections, and on whom the mantle of vicegerency of prophethood is placed, his status only requires that he should possess a few words of revelation, and even those be without proof? Can his followers and his opponents be satisfied with just this?

I now wish to conclude this writing. If there is any harsh remark in it, then I seek forgiveness from every person and also from my inspired friend, for I have written these few lines with the purest of intentions. I love this beloved friend with my heart and soul and I pray that God may be with him. That is all.

Your humble servant,

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad from Qadian

District Gurdaspur.