

TRUTH IN EVERY WORD

(Harf Harf Haqeeqat)

Wasif Ali Wasif

Translated by
Muhammad Salim-ur-rahman





KASHIF PUBLICATIONS

TRUTH IN EVERY WORD

by

Wasif Ali Wasif

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Publisher's Note

The celestial wisdom of Wasif Ali Wasif has nourished the intelligentsia of his time. He bequeathed to us a profound intellectual cum spiritual legacy, preserved both in the spoken word as well as in the written page. From poetry to refined Urdu prose, his pen moved with authority, audacity and authenticity, giving full expression to a mind rooted in contemplation and truth.

Today, there is a pressing need to translate his writings as well as his recorded discourses into the world's major languages, so that the universal radiance of his wisdom may reach both the East and the West, to engage the intellect engaged in a directionless material pursuit.

Wasif gracefully entered the literary circles with his poetry collection *Shab Charagh* (1978), followed by *Kiran Kiran Sooraj* (1984), a work of luminous prose. In the same year, he initiated a weekly reformatory column in the daily *Nawa-i-Waqt*, a dialogue that continued uninterrupted throughout his life. Three of his prose volumes—*Dil Darya Smundar*, *Qatra Qatra Qulzam*, and *Harf Harf Haqeeqat*—are compilation of these columns. Brevity is a distinguished feature of his prose. He has got a gifted talent of compressing an entire river of meanings into a single sentence.

Meanwhile he devoted himself fully to address the quest the seekers of Gnosis. Twice a week, sessions of questions and answers were held, attracting earnest seekers of truth from every walk of life. Transcriptions of these sessions gradually evolved into the *Guftagu (Dialogue)* series, posthumously. Though scattered clips of these dialogues are very much viral in social media, to tune the listening mode of the youth, there is a dire need of translation of this treasure.

The central concerns of Wasif Ali Wasif's thought include awareness of Truth, purification of the self, enhancement of moral values, service to humanity, unity of Ummah, and devotion to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Much like *Iqbaliyat*, *Wasifiyat* has emerged as a distinct intellectual and literary discipline. Modern in expression yet classical in impact, Wasif's prose offers a key to understanding the spiritual essence of Islam. The clarity of concept remains the main stay of his teachings.

The translation of his works into English should, perhaps, have been completed much earlier. Notably, *Kiran Kiran Sooraj* was translated into English by Wasif Ali Wasif himself, under the title *The Beaming Soul*—a translation remarkable both in fidelity and grace. Another major work, *Qatra Qatra Qulzam*, was rendered as *Ocean in a Drop* by the distinguished translator Muhammad Salim-ur-rahman, a translation that the author himself greatly admired. We are honoured to present here, from the same accomplished pen, the English translation of *Harf Harf Haqeeqat*, entitled *Truth in Every Word*. Muhammad Salim-ur-rahman is internationally recognized for his mastery as a translator, and it is our confident hope that readers will receive this work with equal appreciation. We are also pleased to inform our readers that the English translation of Wasif Ali Wasif's first collection of essays, *Dil Darya Smundar*, has been completed and will be published soon after this, Insha'Allah.

This volume offers English oriented readers to taste the luminous wisdom of Wasif Ali Wasif.



Contents

Words	1
Sublime Character	7
Mercy.....	17
O Divine, O Divine, O Lord!	25
Man and Man	29
Clarification.....	35
The Child	41
Don't Rebuke	46
Story.....	51
Eyes.....	56
Universe and Universe.....	61
The Halfway Point.....	66
Companionships	71
Vastnesses	78
Great People	84
The Rich and the Poor	91
Of All Hues	100
Justice	108

Rights	114
Purpose.....	120
Destination	128
Justification of Existence	135
While Thinking.....	141
Where I am	147
What are we Doing.....	156
Disorder	161
Contact.....	167
Relationships	172
Advice	178
Voice of the Conscience	185
Hard Work	191
Nature.....	197
Reality	203
Worth Seeing	208
Disinterest	217
The Known and the Unknown	223
Final Wish	229

Words

Every thought arrives clothed in a specific attire—an attire woven from words. He who inspires our thoughts also grants us the words to express them. It is because of words that man is superior to animals. Man is noble because he can speak. He has been blessed with the wealth of language. The word “narrative” refers to the orderly arrangement of words. Through this arrangement, ideas are expressed beautifully.

Although man portrays ideas through his own effort, the true excellence lies hidden in the fabric of words. A person becomes a stylist when he selects words with care. The sculptor’s art lies in revealing the image hidden within the stone—it is a refined skill, not one everyone possesses. Similarly, a person becomes an author when he understands how words come together to form a composition.

Without words, the elegance of a thought is like a fleeting spark—like a beautiful dream dreamt by one who is mute. Thoughts without words are no more than a dictionary—like a pile of bricks that never formed a building.

The true power in the world belongs to words. The universe came into being through a word—a divine command. Hidden within the word *Kun* (Be) was an entire cosmos, a complete system, a whole story. It was a word that commanded everything to begin its duty. It was an extraordinary miracle: nothingness turned into existence. The journey from non-being to being started with *Kun*, and the journey from being back to non-being will also occur by its power.

The power of words is evident at every step. If you want to awaken a nation from heedlessness, strike it with words. The strength of national poets lies in their mastery of words. Words stir the blood. Slavery collapses, and freedom rises. The actions of people are corrected. If you examine the common vocabulary of a society, you can assess its moral standards. Societies on the rise tend to use more refined language.

It is words that kindle the lamps of hope, and it is words that cast the shadows of despair. A particular arrangement of words can set one in motion. Our national anthems channel our feelings in a specific direction. Even forming ranks against an enemy is made possible through words.

Love is an emotion—a yearning to draw near. Though love can remain silent, words give it a new taste and color. Love has its own essence, but verses imbued with its spirit become a transformative vision. Love alone is not always desirable—our words make it enchanting.

Our relationships, affections, and animosities endure because we preserve them in words. When we call someone a friend, we overlook many faults that feel like betrayals. Often, the sense of friendship becomes the very cause of deep anguish, yet despite fading passion, we remain loyal to the meaning behind the word “friend.” Words give permanence to our bonds. We remain committed to relationships simply because we have defined them as such. To say something is to grant it endurance. By reciting the *Kalima*, a person instantly becomes a Muslim—and remains one for life. Whether or not he understands the essence of Islam is secondary; the utterance alone is binding. The *Kalima* is like a seal of permanence.

The Quran is composed of words—holy words from God, revealed to His beloved servant. The message brought by the angel Jibreel (AS) to the Prophet (SAW) was meant for all of humanity. Its structure is so immutable that Allah Himself has

taken responsibility for its preservation. Not a single vowel or dot can be altered. If Quranic words are used outside their divine context, they cease to be the Quran. When the words are from Allah, they are the Quran. The Prophet's (SAW) words are *Hadith*. The utterances of saints are pronouncements. The words of the wise are known as aphorisms. The holier the person who speaks them, the more sacred and impactful the words become.

We live in a world of words. We are surrounded by them. Words form our personality, shape our environment, and sometimes even determine our salvation. They pass through the ears to the heart, influencing it. Once the heart receives the message, it commands the limbs to act—thus shaping a person's character.

Kind words cost nothing, but their rewards are immense. Words alone make a person pleasant or unpleasant. Words are like fragrance, scenting the air around us.

Every society and group possess its own vocabulary. By listening to someone, you can tell their profession. Traders often speak coarsely. Scholars speak differently. Academics, doctors, poets—all use distinct languages. Even poetry has its own layered language, where meaning deepens with each reading. Verses, in miraculous ways, captivate listeners. When someone hears words that echo their unspoken thoughts, they exclaim: “That's exactly what I felt!” Passion from the speaker's heart adds intensity to the words. Poetry recited with genuine emotion fills the air with wonder. When passion overtakes the speaker, words fall behind—the feeling alone enchants the audience.

Azeem Prem Raagi once recounted an evening among friends. He sang for hours. The audience was pleased. Generous tips were given. But something was missing—perhaps a lack of emotional resonance. He felt unsettled. In the silence of night,

he remembered his guru, stirred his own soul, wrote some simple lines, and began to sing:

*“Sweetheart, help the lovers to see each other.
Lover, help the sweethearts to see each other.”*

That was it. The fire in his heart spread to every other heart. A mystical atmosphere took over. The listeners felt as if they were losing their senses. His inner ache became everyone’s ache.

In short, words hold feelings that, when expressed, work like magic. The tone of delivery matters too. Even beautiful words, if said harshly, lose their charm. Moulana Rumi gives a compelling example:

Two caravans—one Muslim, one Jewish—camped close together in a desert. At dawn, a Muslim gave the call to prayer in a repulsive voice. Later, a Jewish man arrived with gifts and said, “These are from our leader.” The Muslim caravan chief asked, “Why?” The man replied, “Our leader’s daughter had converted to Islam. He tried everything to make her return to Judaism, but she refused. This morning, she heard the call to prayer in such an ugly voice that she renounced Islam.” The moral: A caller to prayer and a preacher must have a pleasing voice. If you want to invite someone toward goodness, do it beautifully. The call to prayer should carry the passion of Hazrat Bilal (RA).

Words also reflect regional cultures and traditions. From a person’s vocabulary, you can often discern their background. Metaphors and similes reveal geography and generation. Desert dwellers speak differently than mountain folk or city dwellers.

Ultimately, the sanctity of words depends on the speaker. If sacred words are spoken by an impure tongue, their effect is lost. Allah says if the Quran had been revealed to mountains,

they would have crumbled. Yet today, people listen to the Quran unmoved. A truthful tongue is needed to convey truth.

As a nation, we've stopped caring about words. We are drowning in an unmeasured, directionless flood of speech. Millions of words are printed in newspapers daily. But eloquent, heartfelt words are missing. Where are the words that connect hearts? There's no balm in speech—only wounds. Sweet words have vanished. Gratitude is rarely expressed. Apologies are rare. In political gatherings, words are often toxic. Harsh language is destroying society.

We must revive the use of gentle, thoughtful words. If we adopt a “live and let live” ethos, our speech will improve, and people will feel content. Hearing kind words sweetens one's own language, and this sweetness becomes self-perpetuating.

As human dignity declines, so does the dignity of words. People no longer choose their words carefully. As a result, hearts are hurt, and society is wounded. Our language has become as sharp as a blade.

Sometimes, even truth is told so bitterly that one cries, “God protect me!” If someone is blind in one eye, must we call him “one-eyed” to his face? Though true, such words reflect a lack of manners. Truth, if expressed carelessly, causes pain.

Once, a king summoned an astrologer to predict his future. The astrologer said, “All your close relatives will die before you.” The king, angered, imprisoned him. Another man came and said, “Your Majesty, you will live a long life—longer than your relatives.” The king was pleased and granted him a reward. The man requested, “Free my teacher—the one in prison. He said the same thing but lacked tact.”

Thus, knowing how to use words matters greatly.

Words, too, have their kin. The words in a eulogy differ from those in a celebration. Praise and criticism, epics and romances, ghazals and mathnavis—all require different vocabularies. Don't we need to know which words carry dignity? Ill-temper is worse than short temper, for it misuses words.

To master words is a blessing—a rare one. Using words to beautify your surroundings is a noble endeavor. Empty words solve nothing. Instead, illuminate your world with speech. Uplift your spirit through language. Encourage the people to build the nation.

Words are reality.

Words are a trust.

Words are companions.

Words are power.

Don't waste them. Don't misuse them.



Sublime Character

The philosophers of the world provide us with a criterion of ethics based on the concept of civility, which is entirely rooted in human ideas. It is not beyond conjecture to suggest that anything imagined by human beings correlates with their inner selves. In contrast, the standard bestowed upon us by Allah is free from all defects. The Creator knows best which standard of civility is most suitable for His creatures. Allah has judged the being of His beloved Prophet (SAW) with the words, “There has certainly been for you in the Prophet of Allah an excellent pattern.”

Thus, the best example of morality is found in the compassionate character of the Holy Prophet (SAW). The pinnacle of humanity's fulfillment resides in the sacred being of the Prophet (SAW). The assertion that the completion of morality is linked to the perfection of this being finds full realization. If the being is perfect, then its attributes attain a state of completion. The relationship between being and attributes is a curious one; at times, the attribute defines the being, and at other times, it is the being that exemplifies the attribute. For instance, if the attribute is truthfulness, the being will be regarded as truthful. But when we refer to the being of our exalted Prophet (SAW), we recognize he was so honest that everything he uttered is true.

The Prophet's (SAW) eminent self is so complete that, through him, the attributes achieved fulfillment. These attributes gained stature, sanctity, and recognition, reaching their pinnacle. While we can verify a common person's truthfulness through intellect and observation, the truth articulated by a prophet—especially the exalted Prophet (SAW)—transcends our scrutiny.

Everything that the exalted Prophet (SAW) conveyed regarding life was undeniably true because it was observable. However, the remarkable quality is that whatever he said about Allah and the Hereafter is also true, regarded as absolute truth, even if it remains beyond our investigation. The miracle of his perfected attribute is that we accept everything he proclaimed as true without subjecting it to scrutiny. We recognize it as our belief—the very foundation of our faith.

Until his arrival, prophethood was specific and partial. Yet in his persona, prophethood achieved a completion so vast that no further prophets are needed. He advanced morality to a state of perfection, rendering further details unnecessary. He initiated a revolution in individual and collective morality that left witnesses in awe.

As a result of his teachings, history tells us that while the master walked, the slave rode. Because of him, civility and its attributes were stamped with authenticity. His influence was such that when he spoke, the audience listened intently, heads bowed, as if birds were perched atop them. The elegance of his civility was so powerful that anyone who chanced upon him was left in wonder. Those who became acquainted with him grew to adore and respect him. He elevated morality to a level of perfection such that not only Allah and His angels praised him, but even those willing to sacrifice their lives for the Prophet's (SAW) sake continue to honor him in prose and verse. Muslims and non-Muslims alike pay him tribute. Despite the fourteen centuries that separate us from him, he remains ever close to our hearts.

Through His highly sanctified being, Allah bestowed the final touches upon humanity, completing the essence of prophethood. He also perfected the most distinguished manners and attributes. The character of the Prophet (SAW) represents the pinnacle of high moral standing. His sayings are

the loftiest expressions one can conceive, and the book revealed to the Prophet (SAW) constitutes the final words of all divine revelations. His manners were so exemplary that they served as validation of his prophethood. In Surah Yunus, it is stated, “I spent a lifetime among you before I was made a prophet. Don’t you understand?” Thus, the forty years preceding his elevation to prophethood were a compendium of exceptional integrity.

Prophethood is not merely a result of morality; rather, morality is a gift granted by prophethood. When Allah refers to prophethood, He specifically means the prophethood of our Prophet (SAW). This distinction is a testament to the highest mark of Allah’s blessings. When Allah, the Compassionate, reveals the civility of His beloved Prophet (SAW) as a standard, its completeness becomes evident. Civility, when genuinely pursued, becomes harmless and beneficial for Allah’s creation. Although human notions of civility can be effective, when a prophet outlines a framework for civility, it represents the direct results of God’s teachings. Allah knows best which disposition is truly suitable for His creation.

Both history and the Quran bear witness to the civility of our exalted Prophet (SAW). The Quran states, “You came into existence to complete high civility.” The Holy Prophet (SAW) himself illuminated the consummation of civility, declaring, “I have been sent to perfect the nobility of manners” and “I have come to complete the meritoriousness of civility.” There is scarcely any moral principle he encouraged others to adopt that he did not practice himself. He transformed his life into a profound embodiment of civility.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) is the guardian of civility, the interpreter of civility, a phenomenon of civility, a fountainhead of civility; he is civility personified and the very essence of it. When we reflect on the eminence of his civility,

we, in truth, examine his entire life. Among the components of civility, he exhibited resolute action, gracious behavior, fairness in dealings, justice and equity, generosity and munificence, altruism, hospitality, simplicity and candor, modesty and bashfulness, resolve and determination, courage, truthfulness, trustworthiness, a commitment to keeping promises, piety and restraint, humility and contentment, and mercy and affection. He showed compassion towards others' pain, kindness to unbelievers and polytheists, and love for the poor, as well as empathy for animals and birds. He was an embodiment of mercy and affection, always ready to offer console and care. He loved his children dearly.

What can we say about the Holy Prophet (SAW) that has not been expressed already? His civility and qualities are extensively documented in the collections of Hadith and his biographies. Every event of his life serves as a testament to civility and noble traits. The most notable aspect of his civility is that he acted in complete accordance with what he preached. His immaculate being undeniably surpasses all other great prophets and worldly reformers simply because his actions attest to his knowledge. The teachings of the Holy Prophet (SAW) align perfectly with his practices.

The perfection of his civility is further evidenced by the fact that in an era when the lights of truthfulness, honesty, and trustworthiness had dimmed, he earned the titles of "The Truthful and the Trustworthy," even from his opponents. Those closest to him unanimously declare that he was softhearted, good-natured, and exceptionally gracious. Hazrat Ayesha (rza) said that he never responded to wickedness with wickedness. He always forgave and pardoned; he never broke anyone's heart. When someone spoke, he never interrupted. He always wore a smile, spoke softly, and exemplified kindness.

When he received the first revelation from Allah, he was overwhelmed by its intensity and began to tremble. In his disturbed state, he described his feelings to his wife, expressing fear for his life. Hazrat Khadija (rza) consoled him, noting his civility, saying, “Not at all. God will never dishearten you. You treat your relatives and kin with kindness. You lighten the burdens of the weak, the helpless, and the poor. You give to those who have nothing. You entertain your guests and assist them in times of trouble. You possess all these qualities because you never diverge from the truth.”

What were his morals like before he was entrusted with prophethood? Who could provide a better witness than Hazrat Khadija (rza)? As a champion of truth, he embodied the very essence of it. Allah, the Almighty, outlined the principles of human civility for our earthly existence in the Holy Quran, and these were exemplified in the revered actions of the Holy Prophet (SAW). He understood fully that he was sent into the world as a teacher of civility. His deeds and sayings serve as undeniable proof that the concept of civility reached completion through him.

Here are some of his distinguished sayings: “A believer who possesses good morals is a perfect man, and his faith is complete. When your actions are weighed, nothing can equal the elegance of your civility. This elegance is akin to an act of worship; the best among you are those who exhibit good manners.”

He was once asked, “Which virtue is the greatest?” He replied, “To feed people and to greet everyone, meaning you should pray for their well-being and security.”

When he heard Abu Zar Ghaffari (rza) scold one of his slaves, he admonished him, saying, “Abu Zar, you have not rid yourself of your earlier ignorance. The slaves are your brothers. Allah has made them subservient to you. If you have

a brother who is subordinate, you should provide him with the same food you eat and dress him as you dress yourself. Do not force him to do what he cannot bear. And if the work is tough, assist him.”

The elegance of civility plays a vital role in the Holy Prophet’s (SAW) exalted manners. He asserted, “I swear by Allah, he remains an unbeliever. I swear that he remains an unbeliever, remains an unbeliever.” His companions asked, “Who do you mean, O Prophet of Allah?” He replied, “The one whose neighbor is not safe from his mischief.”

Thousands of instances in his life and words demonstrate that he came into the world to perfect the virtues of civility. He was endowed with every noble quality: mild in manners, eloquent in speech, solemn yet courteous, and never one to hurt another’s feelings.

If someone arrived late to see him and found no place to sit, he would spread his sanctified cloak for them. His kindness extended even to children; he instructed that the children of the heretics should be treated with leniency. His benevolence toward slaves is evident in the fact that even today, being regarded as his bondsmen guarantees individuals a high status. He showed active sympathy towards the poor and helpless, setting the highest standards of equality in the world. After the conquest of Mecca, he declared, “O clan of Quraish, Allah has ended the arrogance of your disbelief and the pride of your lineage. All men are the sons of Adam, and Adam was created from clay.” When it comes to civility, he epitomized the greatest form imaginable, saying, “Every religion has a code of civility, and in Islam, the code of civility is modesty.”

Every quality possessed by the Holy Prophet (SAW) is eternal. He is perpetually content, perpetually pious, perpetually passionate, perpetually patient, perpetually truthful, perpetually commanding, and perpetually thoughtful.

In short, he is blessed with every conceivable virtue. Beauty itself is among his qualities, and his very essence embodies beauty. He remained cheerful, liberated from worldly fears and desires through his love for Allah and fear of Him.

In a tradition attributed to Hazrat Saad Ibn Hasham (rza), he once asked Hazrat Ayesha (rza), “O mother of the believers, tell us something about the manners of the exalted Prophet.” She replied, “Have you not read the Quran?” He responded, “I have read it.” Hazrat Ayesha (rza) stated, “The civility of the exalted Prophet was entirely the Quran.” In other words, he was the Quran personified. His conduct aligns perfectly with the teachings of the Quran. When one reads the Quran, it becomes evident that the civility it teaches mirrors that of the Prophet (SAW), and upon reflecting on the Holy Prophet’s (SAW) life and character, we realize that his civility is exactly as delineated in the Quran. Allah’s favored civility is reflected in the personality of the Holy Prophet (SAW), and his civility is encapsulated in the Quran. The only path to earn Allah’s approbation is by following the civility exemplified by the Holy Prophet (SAW).

All schools of ethics concur that mercy embodies a high degree of civility. In the blessed being of the Holy Prophet (SAW), there is such an abundance of compassion and mercy that Allah has proclaimed, “And have We not sent you except as a mercy for all the worlds?” He appears as a personification of mercy for all creation—whether they are familiar companions, mere strangers, believers, or infidels; whether animals, birds, or living and lifeless entities; it matters not. The merciful shade of the Holy Prophet (SAW) extends to all and endures forever. When someone asked him to curse non-believers, he would always respond, “I have been sent not to curse anyone but to show mercy to all.”

It is said that a visitor, overwhelmed by the Prophet's (SAW) solitude and majesty, began to tremble. The Holy Prophet (SAW) reassured him, saying, "Steady on! I am not a king, but the son of a Quraishi woman who used to eat dried meat." He forgave those who erred or stumbled. Hazrat Anas (rza) narrated, "I served as an attendant to the Holy Prophet (SAW). I never heard him say to anyone, 'What made you do this?' or 'Why didn't you do it this way?'" His kindness extended even to slaves. When someone asked, "O Prophet of Allah, how many times should we forgive our slaves for their mistakes?" The Holy Prophet (SAW) remained silent. When asked thrice, he replied, "Seventy times every day."

The exalted Prophet (SAW) often prayed, "O Allah, let me live among the poor. Let me pass away as a poor person. Let me be with the poor on the Day of Reckoning." Hazrat Ayesha (rza) inquired, "Why do you say this?" He explained, "Because the poor will enter paradise before those who are wealthy."

His daily life was marked by simplicity. There was no pretense or affectation in his demeanor. He embraced simplicity in his prayers, his meals, and his lifestyle. He disdained displays of wealth and regarded trivial matters with disdain. Once, when a companion built a new house with a high dome, the Prophet (SAW) inquired, "To whom does this house belong?" Upon learning the owner's name, he remained silent. When the homeowner visited him and offered greetings, the Holy Prophet (SAW) turned his face away, prompting the man to realize why the Prophet (SAW) was displeased. He went and demolished the dome. When the Holy Prophet (SAW) passed by again, he remarked, "Every construction that is unnecessary is an encumbrance."

One day, he rested on a mat woven from date-palm leaves. When he rose, his companions noticed the imprints of the mat

on his body. They said, “O Prophet of Allah, allow us to provide you with a more comfortable bed.” The Holy Prophet (SAW) replied, “What do I care for the world? As far as the world is concerned, I am like a traveler who rests briefly under the shade of a tree, only to leave it behind and move on.” He emphasized that a simple life is essential for lofty thinking; his life exemplified this ideal.

It may be difficult for those entrenched in a society driven by greed and desire to imagine that there once existed someone who was revered as the foremost among prophets, beloved by Allah, and a leader of his clan—whose very name became entwined with the faith of the people, whose knowledge resonated within their hearts. People believed it was salvation to lay down their lives at his slightest gesture, asking them for such sacrifice; yet, the sacred body of this extraordinary being was draped in a garment full of patches, which he had sewn with his own hands. He had access to boundless wealth, and his status was the pinnacle of honor, yet he led a life so humble that Hazrat Umar (rza), witnessing it, wept deeply and remarked, “While Caesars and Sassanian kings revel in luxury, you, the Prophet of Allah, live in such simplicity.”

In response, the Holy Prophet (SAW) said with quiet assurance, “O Umar, is it not preferable that the world belongs to them and the Hereafter to us?”

The exalted Prophet (SAW) elevated human civility to celestial heights. The moral code that Allah deemed worthy for humanity reflected the morals of Muhammad (SAW). The civility of the Holy Prophet (SAW) was indeed the pinnacle of virtue in Allah’s eyes. There is no quality absent from the numinous and exalted being of the Holy Prophet (SAW). He was a paragon of fidelity. On one occasion, he remained in the same place for three days. A Muslim from Madinah had asked to stay at a certain spot and later forgot his request. When he

passed that way three days later and recognized the Holy Prophet (SAW) still there, he recalled what he had said. The Holy Prophet (SAW) simply remarked, “You caused me great trouble.”

There is no limit to what can be said about the civility of the Holy Prophet (SAW). Allah validated his graceful manners, and the world accepted him as the ultimate teacher of civility. Prophethood, humanity, and civility reached completion in his person. We can say no more than this about the Holy Prophet (SAW):

To tell the truth, you are the grandeur of the Lord,
The grandeur that led to the creation of all grandeurs!



Mercy

Allah, the Almighty, Himself bestowed upon us the concept of divine mercy, providing undeniable proof of its existence. He emphatically states, "Do not despair of My mercy." In other words, "Beware! Never lose hope in My mercy." If the deeds of people consistently reached logical conclusions, the term "divine mercy" would lose all significance. A person would toil hard and attain their desires. If they commit an evil act, they would be punished; if they perform a good deed, they would be rewarded. Every cause leads to an effect, and every effect has a cause. If causes and effects were merely that—causes and effects—the notions of hope, expectancy, and mercy would vanish from the human heart. Divine mercy exists to save humankind from the punishment that their misdeeds warrant. In essence, the mistakes we make incur a deserved punishment; it is only divine mercy that offers salvation. Thus, Allah commands, "Do not despair of My mercy." This signifies, "O man, do not lose hope for your future," and "O man, remember that if you err, you will indeed face consequences, but never forget that My mercy surpasses My wrath. I am the one who will punish you for your misdeeds, and it is My graciousness that allows for forgiveness. I overlook your transgressions and extend the power of My mercy to set aside your frailties."

A voice, clear and resonant, addresses a man filled with trepidation over impending troubles, proclaiming, "Beware! I alone possess the power to forgive your sins; I can pardon all mistakes and transform your sins into good deeds. I guide man from the depths of darkness to bestow upon him light. This journey from utter obscurity to radiance is only possible through My mercifulness. I do not punish the infidels; rather,

I first grant them the wisdom to seek and follow the right path. I provide unbelievers with an abundance of belief.”

If we closely observe Allah's divine mercy, the Gracious, we realize it permeates every aspect of our lives. We are indebted to Him for each breath we take. It is through His mercy that we awaken in the morning after a night of rest. Humans often have little awareness of the myriad challenges they navigate. Our lives are filled with observations. We notice that those who believe in divine mercy often face significant struggles. They may possess wealth, yet lack peace of mind. They achieve their desires, yet are denied the richness that comes with a tranquil heart. Only the graciousness of Allah can truly enrich a person's heart with serenity and rest.

It is Allah, the Gracious, who fills our minds with the notion of mercy. Simply contemplating this idea allows our imagination to experience the joyous renewal of spring. A desire, even without rightful claim, flourishes in the hope for mercy. Muslims live their lives yearning for entry into paradise, confident that a better hereafter awaits, fueled by their belief in the existence of mercy. Within this belief lies the honor of anticipating Almighty Allah's divine mercy. A Muslim never relinquishes hope, understanding that mercy is their rightful claim. Our reliance lies not on our deeds, but on Allah's benevolence. We recognize that true worship is that which Allah deems acceptable. We know that even countless years of prayers can be rendered vain by a single act of disobedience (as seen in Satan's refusal to prostrate before Adam), leading one who was seemingly close to Allah to become an outcast. It is acceptance that matters here. Willingness grants access. Ultimately, the outcome of one's deeds relies not on the deeds themselves but on divine favor. Justice holds significance, yet grace is far more powerful than justice. Almighty Allah understands that, as a created being, man is feeble, ensnared by the colorful temptations of life.

Those who manage to evade this snare find safety within the embrace of divine mercy. Allah, the Almighty, appointed His prophets, those who enjoyed His confidence and trust, and sent them into the world to liberate people from the darkness of sin and disbelief, guiding them to escape the obscurity of ignorance. He granted hope and mercy to those ensnared by worldly desires, empowering them to break free from their shackles.

All the prophets sent into the world served humanity, directing people toward paths that lead to their welfare. Among them, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) stands as the most eminent, the beloved prophet, the luminous guide, and the leader of all prophets. Allah, the Almighty, sent him as a phenomenon, revealing through him the fullness of His mercies. Allah, the Exalted, states that He has sent him as a mercy for all worlds. This assertion warrants deep contemplation. Can a man truly embody mercy or serve as a source of mercy for all humanity and all realms? If one is a messenger for all people, for the entire universe, for the past, present, and future, what a remarkable individual he must be! Rather than dwelling on this matter, we should offer our praises and salutations to him. An ordinary person may struggle to be a source of mercy for themselves, yet the Holy Prophet (SAW) embodies mercy for the entire universe, ensuring that it is free from despair.

It becomes clear that drawing close to the Holy Prophet (SAW) is synonymous with attaining mercy; those who are deprived of this closeness face condemnation due to their misdeeds and serve as a cautionary example. The only way to save oneself from the repercussions of infidelity and past wrongs is to rely on the grace of the Holy Prophet (SAW). His exalted presence serves as a shield from the vicissitudes of our actions. The blessed existence of the Holy Prophet (SAW) is,

on one hand, the reason for the creation of the universe, and on the other, the reason for its continuation and redemption.

People often become so entangled in worldly disputes that they forget the purpose of their journey and their ultimate destination. They squander their time on frivolities, losing sight of their true objective. The exalted nature of the Holy Prophet (SAW) guides those who have strayed, illuminating the straight path. Allah says to the Holy Prophet (SAW), “You are one of My messengers, and you are on the right path.” In essence, whoever follows the path laid out by the Holy Prophet (SAW) draws closer to Allah. Why should such a person fear the ups and downs of life when they are treated with kindness not only by the Holy Prophet (SAW) but also by Allah Himself? Allah has said, “O My beloved Prophet (SAW), how can I torment those who are with you?” This signifies that if someone's heart remembers you, they will always find solace; and what place could be more comforting than paradise? The love we hold for the Holy Prophet (SAW) enables us to attain redemption.

It is said that the miracles performed by the distinguished individuals who lead lives of intentional renunciation are manifestations of the Holy Prophet (SAW). We have witnessed that the Holy Prophet's (SAW) gaze is a guarantee of mercy. The mercy of the Holy Prophet (SAW) is, in fact, the mercy of Allah, for the Holy Prophet (SAW) himself embodies Allah's mercy. It is Allah who transformed Maulana Rumi into Mevlana. It is this mercy that elevates a man from ordinary to exceptional and from exceptional to supremely distinguished. It is mercy that transformed Iqbal into a sharer of profound secrets. Iqbal knew that his poetry did not outshine the works of other poets, nor did he articulate his thoughts any more eloquently than other philosophers. Hali, too, deeply felt the anguish of the Muslim nation. As Iqbal admits, long nights of vigil were not peculiar to him; Attar,

Rumi, Raazi, and Ghazali had all endured similar experiences. However, the acclaim Iqbal received was unique; the nation held a special place for him in its heart, solely because he was blessed by the Holy Prophet (SAW). Although, if judged by his character, Iqbal was not a ghazi (warrior of Islam), he was exalted to the status reserved for spiritual masters. What he conveyed to the nation resembled the impassioned voice of a camel driver, whose song spurs the camel to move faster. The tears Iqbal shed under the cover of night have become a message of awakening for the nation, encouraging them to wholeheartedly embrace the ideology that would eventually be called Pakistan. This was precisely what Iqbal envisioned.

Mercy instills in humanity the notion of a hopeful future and grants a sense of immortality. The dust from which Adam was formed rises and reaches the heavens. The head that bows in gratitude for mercy is lifted and made prominent.

Mercy transforms an ordinary life so profoundly that a common individual can rise from being a mere speck of dust to shine like the moon or the sun. Those who guide the future are those who have been graced by mercy; their thoughts emerge as miracles performed by mercy. Their eloquence and fluency are wonders of mercy. It is mercy that elevates us to great heights, endowing mortal beings with everlasting life, illuminating the path by which a part becomes whole, and gathering the multitude into the embrace of unity. It kindles lamps of hope when despair threatens to envelop us and turns the improbable into the possible.

Through mercy, a poor man can feel like a king, while a king may experience the humility of a poor man. We often regard someone seated in humble surroundings as merely ordinary, when, in truth, they may dwell in a realm of greatness.

The Holy Prophet (SAW), who brought a message of mercy for both this world and the hereafter, felt compassion when

witnessing the suffering of people. He faced no personal sorrows; instead, he would remain awake until midnight, prostrating before Allah and weeping. Upon observing the state of the Muslim nation, his only grief stemmed from their deviation from the path he had illuminated. However, hope remains, providing light even now. We are navigating through phases of confidence-building, and many still possess faith in the mercifulness and benevolence of the Holy Prophet (SAW), even if they feel undeserving of it. Nevertheless, they believe they have the right to earn the Holy Prophet's (SAW) favor. In this belief, they are not wrong. It reflects the true essence of Allah's command, "Never despair of My mercy." In other words, even if one's actions fall short and they claim no right to mercy, they still cling to the belief that they are entitled to it from the compassionate Holy Prophet (SAW). This is the path to overcoming despondency.

This unwavering belief is a precious gift from Allah; it is He who has blessed us with faith, showered us with His favors, bestowed sight upon us, created a luminous universe for our perception, and made our journeys through the world manageable. He commanded rivers to part for us and urged mountains to allow our passage through them. Every secret has been instructed to reveal itself for humanity's sake. He who commands each concealed thing to emerge affirms that His mercy is unyielding. Mercy is an inevitability. Sins will be pardoned provided there is genuine repentance—a sincere renunciation of wrongdoing—and a profound desire to connect with the Holy Prophet (SAW) while holding firmly to Allah's cord. In essence, the condition is to desire mercy, and the reward will be that you shall receive it. Those eyes that witness the marvels of mercy often brim with tears. The merciful, even while they inhabit this world, remain alive in their thoughts of the hereafter. Even the days long past do not hinder their connection to the Holy Prophet (SAW). In their

eyes, the centuries that separate them hold little weight. A vision that traverses time illuminates the lives of humble ascetics. The Holy Prophet (SAW) continues to draw people near him, remaining ever-present. This is the miracle of mercy. In this realm, neither past events are too distant nor future ones unreachable. Distances, whether historical or geographical, lose significance in these matters. A person who recalls an ancient manifestation will discover that it still exists for them. Those who call out for a vision from days gone by are not denied, for manifestations never cease to be. The sun still shines with light, and the moon continues to glow. The heavens keep revolving. How can the source of mercy for the universe fade into the past? It is impossible. The universe is present before us, and so is mercy. Even if the universe were to cease, mercy would persist, for it is a quality of Allah, the Ever-living, the Ever-lasting. It is this divine quality with which the Holy Prophet (SAW) was blessed. If this quality cannot end, how can one who possesses it, may Allah forbid, be mortal? We remain recipients of mercy even after death.

We pray that Allah shows mercy to our parents. May He treat our children with grace, and if our parents or children have passed away, we can still pray on their behalf, ensuring that mercy will be extended to them. What mercy can be given to bones or the empty lifeless husk of flesh and skin? Mercy is shown to our parents, and if they are not alive, what does the term "parents" signify? We do not pray for mere illusions. Allah, the Ever-living, the Ever-lasting, has commanded us to make this prayer. He does not tell us to pray for the redemption of delusions. This continuum of mercy is eternal and will remain so forever. Mercy is granted to those who ask for it, and it is also bestowed upon those who do not. Sometimes, those who do not seek it appear to be the more fortunate, as every individual acquainted with profound mysteries prays for them.

Allah even remembers those who forget Him. He does not disregard those who overlook Him. He does not abandon those who turn away from Him. Allah sent His messengers to guide these heedless individuals. They did not deserve His care, yet bestowing mercy upon them is a glorious aspect of His nature. He illuminates lamps in the vast night. He reveals the radiance of belief amid the darkness of disbelief.

The mercy of Allah, who is the Ultimate Truth, seeks out those whose eyes are perpetually filled with tears. Those on the verge of shedding tears remain very close to the mercy of the Ultimate Truth. Those who show compassion for human suffering are enveloped by His mercy. Those who are granted mercy are, in fact, the ones who attain it. Those who remain close to humanity draw nearer to Allah, and those who are near to Allah live in proximity to His beloved, the Holy Prophet (SAW). This closeness signifies a profound connection to mercy. Every act and saying of the merciful Prophet (SAW) serves as a conduit for achieving mercy. The Holy Prophet (SAW) never sought revenge against anyone; he urged that servants be forgiven seventy times a day. He instilled mercy for the entire universe and protects those who belong to him from arrogance, regardless of their prayer habits, granting those who miss their prayers an understanding of mercy and encouraging them towards prayer. Those who voice complaints receive the right to access mercy. He who gains the right to be shown mercy finds refuge by drawing near to the merciful Prophet (SAW). Everything becomes easier for one who finds sanctuary in the proximity of the Holy Prophet (SAW). In other words, offering salutations and praising the Holy Prophet (SAW) is the true recipe for attaining mercy.



O Divine, O Divine, O Lord!

O my Lord, who hears unspoken words, O Almighty God, You are aware of all our circumstances and know how Your created beings fare; show mercy upon us. You alone understand our deprivations. Create us anew, as You did once before. Perhaps we are no longer ourselves; everything remains unchanged yet seems a little different.

Once upon a time, our sky was beautiful to behold, but now it feels like a heavy burden weighing us down. The ground beneath our feet seems to be slipping away. We are increasingly alienated from Your kindness that graced our past. Our lives have strayed far from the path walked by Your beloved Prophet (PBUH).

We are deprived of human love. When one person draws close to another, it feels as though danger is about to encounter danger. Brothers fear each other, and an epidemic of uncertainty has struck us. Everyone is wary of others. We speak as if we possess the resolve to conquer mountains, yet we falter when faced with morale-sapping events. A nation that no longer respects its scholars and writers is doomed. We are troubled and uncertain about how things will ultimately unfold.

My Lord, lead us out of this darkness. Show us light; guide us to the way of Your love, to a series of triumphs. The destination of certainty is becoming increasingly rare. We need Your benevolence. You have always treated us with kindness; Your compassion has been abundant, and You have looked upon us favorably. What has gone wrong now?

Perhaps we have stopped thanking You. We are becoming a fault-finding and critical nation, and our future may be one of

total deprivation. My Lord, You have said, “If you thank Me, I will grant you divine blessings in abundance.” We repent for our ungratefulness. We repent for being forgetful of Your favors.

My Sovereign, we thank You for allowing us to be born into a community that holds allegiance to our dear Holy Prophet (PBUH). This is the greatest favor among all favors—a true blessing. Grant us the wisdom to acknowledge Your kindness. My Lord, this country is a blessing from You, possible only through Your grace and compassion. You awakened a hundred million enslaved Muslims to the reality of freedom and instilled in them the courage to attain it. These countless downtrodden Muslims succeeded in acquiring a nation, yet today, they fail to take responsibility for safeguarding this country and its freedom.

O Allah, thank You for all the favors You have bestowed upon us. Please amplify Your blessings. Inspire us to embark on a journey toward a meaningful destination. We are divided into factions; some among us are tyrannical, while others are oppressed. Have mercy on us. When the deprived and poor find themselves in such despair that they lose all hope in Your mercy, that is when the hour of reckoning for the rich begins. O Allah, make the affluent generous, and keep those destined to remain poor close to You.

Our Kind and Merciful Lord, we fear we might become an example of admonition due to our misdeeds. Spare us from the infamy—a warning by itself—that could befall us because of our actions. Let us not end up like the old woman who diligently spun her yarn, only to mess it up completely. Do not allow our hard work to waste away, my Lord. We are tormented not by an enemy without but by the foe within. The earnings of the decent middle class have been stripped away by an establishment that once printed the Quran, Your holy book. The finance companies have dealt a heavy blow to the

poor. Bring about change and improve our circumstances. You alone have the power to effect change. Please create a soothing environment for us.

We can see the plight of Muslims around the world. We fear the day when our deeds may block our path, serving as dire warnings, leaving us with no way out. O Allah, make it easy for us to achieve our goals. Grant us the blessing of the opportunity to repent. O Allah, let us be a nation pleased with our past, present, and future. Deliver us from doubt. Save us from arrogance and despair. We are becoming a nation fixated on accumulating wealth, counting it diligently. We engage in theft and plunder, compromising our safety.

Only a state where a beautiful woman, adorned with lavish jewelry, can travel fearlessly from one end to the other can be regarded as successful— a society devoid of oppression and deprivation. My Allah, will such an era arise? Everything is possible when You decree it. All You need to say is Kun (be), and the very fabric of existence will change. It ultimately depends on Your kindness. Let Your mercy envelop us; we rely solely on Your grace.

Revive our hearts with Your radiance. Let our nights be spent in Your remembrance. Bestow upon us souls brimming with passion. Save us from ostentation and depravity. Shower us with Your benevolence. Make it easy for us to attain a gnosis of divinity. Offer us once more a cup filled with the same profound love. Let derelict homes bustle once again with life. Grant this nation another opportunity to restore its harmony. Allow us to write a resplendent history and contribute a bright chapter to the Islamic narrative.

O Lord, grant us lives that bring happiness and favor in Your sight. What we seek in our lives may differ from what our religion demands. O Allah, bridge the gap between the expectations of our lives and our faith.

O Allah, protect us from the onslaught of misguided leaders. Bestow upon us a leader who obeys You and Your beloved, the Holy Prophet (PBUH). It is through our obedience to him that we truly obey You. Make this nation a guardian of equilibrium—an equilibrium of justice in trade and politics, of knowledge and teaching, and in the systematization of those who safeguard what they have been entrusted with.

O my Lord, You grant us what we have not thought to ask for, often without our awareness. We do not even know what to seek from You. Whatever You provide, even if we didn't ask for it, is ultimately for our benefit. Please do not let us request anything that is not good for us.

O Allah, let this nation's days unfold in honest labor. Please introduce us to what lawful sustenance truly means. May our nights be spent in Your remembrance. A nation that relinquishes its tears and cries at midnight knows no peace of mind. O Allah, let us fear You alone and keep us free from all other fears. Instill respect among people, rooted in heartfelt connection. Endow us with the traits that will elevate us into a great nation. Shield parents from their children's rudeness, and protect children from their parents' resentment. Render our future brighter than our present.

Make us a nation that fulfills its promises, granting us the courage to forgive our enemies and the humility to seek forgiveness for our mistakes. Transform this country into a unified nation. O Allah, for the sake of Your Oneness, bring unity among Muslims so that the nation of Your closest friend, the Holy Prophet (PBUH), deserves to be regarded as the nation of Your beloved. Above all, we seek the pinnacle of Your benevolence—let us love Your beloved, the Holy Prophet (PBUH), more than anyone else!



Man and Man

Those who seek Allah follow the path illuminated by humanity. Man is both the seeker and the embodiment of divine attributes. Allah created man to express Himself through him, endowing him with intellect to contemplate the universe and its Creator. It was through man that Allah made Himself and His creation known. We pray daily, “O Allah, guide us to the righteous path, the path of those You have rewarded.” In other words, the path of the rewarded is the path to God.

Those who disregard or disdain their fellow human beings while seeking God will never succeed. The Quran, the book of Allah, is filled with accounts of humanity and reveals humanity's ultimate fate. Allah has bestowed upon man a high status, causing even angels to bow before him. Man cannot stray from Allah's path; Allah built His house with mankind's assistance. Man's tongue recites Allah's names, and his heart remembers Him. Allah is pleased when you serve mankind. He commands, “Serve humanity. Feed the hungry. Do not scorn the beggar. Do not deprive orphans of their possessions. Keep your promises. Be gentle and kind. Do not act arrogantly.” These commands emphasize helping others. Make mankind happy, and Allah will be pleased. Allah says, “Do not be unkind, even in the slightest way, to your parents. Never rebuke them. Speak to them softly. And when they are old, cherish and embrace them tenderly.” Honoring your parents pleases Allah.

It matters less where you believe Allah resides. You encounter Him in prayer, but you also win His favor by feeding the poor. There are times when individuals turn away from humanity, claiming to love God, but such claims are often false. Allah

has not only exalted His own name but also the Kalima (declaration of faith) and the word “man.” He revealed His word to the human heart and, for humanity's sake, proclaimed His truth through mankind.

All our knowledge and understanding of Allah originate from mankind. Those whom Allah draws close to Himself are also those who remain close to humanity. The person whom Allah loves dearly is also one who loves his fellow human beings. This explains why the Holy Prophet (SAW), dearest to the Lord of all the worlds, is a mercy to all the worlds. Those who love Allah cannot be indifferent to humanity; those who are indifferent to humanity cannot draw close to Allah.

We must consider: how do mankind's love and Allah's love differ? Our love for others and our service to humanity can obscure the fact that everything is connected to Allah. We remain oblivious of the hereafter, becoming lost in worldly concerns. This explains why a code of ethics without theology can mislead society. Helping a poor man is a good deed, a way to gain Allah's favor, but it is crucial to ensure that the money used comes from legitimate means. Oppression and deceit are inherent in illegally acquired wealth; therefore, a seemingly good deed could be seen as pernicious. Similarly, pilgrimage funded through bribery is not only a transgression against Allah's commandment but also a rejection of His system. If you wish to please Allah, follow His laws, earn honestly, and use those earnings to help the poor, the needy, and orphans, regardless of their identity. If you feed the hungry, Allah will be pleased. Religious restrictions do not apply in this instance; you must feed those in need. However, one providing sustenance should consider the source of that sustenance. To build mansions with ill-gotten wealth and claim it as a divine blessing is sheer arrogance.

Allah frequently mentions humanity. He states that when we remember Him, He remembers us. The importance of humanity in Allah's eyes is profound. In the vast universe, mankind is the noblest creation, uniquely designed. Breaking a person's heart offends Allah; He abhors the denial of another's rights. When events unfold according to Allah's will, mankind can hold his head high; it becomes an era of justice and respect. Only by obeying Allah's commands does humanity earn honor. Virtue is synonymous with treating fellow humans kindly. A good deed alone does not constitute piety. We perform an act of kindness and are rewarded by Allah. We help the poor, demonstrating generosity; in a sense, the poor are our benefactors, giving us the opportunity to show generosity.

By serving the poor, we achieve a status that worship alone cannot attain. Allah commands us to pay Zakat (obligatory charity) to aid the poor. Allah possesses all earthly and celestial treasures; He is the Supreme Lord and could provide for all directly. Why then the Zakat? Allah commands man to assist the poor using his own wealth; thus, wealth, which can harden the heart, can instead soften it. Systems of charity and public funds are intended to support those left behind, lifting them up with dignity. Otherwise, this ephemeral life will end, one way or another, and there will come a day when man will be asked, "What did you do with Allah's blessings? How did you treat your fellow humans?"

Our virtues and vices are related to humanity; the system of reward and punishment is determined by our actions towards others. Without humanity, rewards and punishments would be irrelevant; we would be no better than inanimate objects or animals. This activity and concern is because of people. It is in Allah's name that we gather and form groups. It is out of fear of Allah that we do good to others; it is this fear that deters us from sin. We do not violate the rights of others because we

fear Allah; we follow the path shown to us by the Holy Prophet (SAW). The practical application of Allah's commands is clearly seen in the life of the Holy Prophet (SAW). Through him, we learn that life is not merely about worship; it is about striving, love, triumph, solitude, and community. We prostrate ourselves before God in solitude; life is also a gathering of people. Allah's love is manifested through humanity. It is impossible to claim closeness to Allah while remaining unloved by mankind. To claim love for Allah while neglecting His creation is arrogance, vanity, and emptiness. Satan refused to acknowledge man, rendering his prostrations before Allah meaningless. The entire system of worship is designed to serve humankind. Our prayers are generally communal. "O Lord, have mercy upon us. Guide us to the righteous path. Do not burden us beyond our capacity. Protect us from wrongdoing." Allah's intention is to transform "I" into "We." Without a collective "We," the individual's "I" is a falsehood. Man should be alone only in prostration before Allah and in contemplating His majesty.

All that we perceive is related to humanity. No one can survive without interacting with others. I have sight, but the scenes I behold are filled with human faces. Without something to see, my sight would be purposeless. My hearing depends on human voices; without the chatter of people, my ears would be useless. Allah gave mankind the gift of speech. If no one were to listen, what would speech matter? My ability to speak depends on the presence of ears that hear; my heart needs the love expressed on another's face. My emotions and feelings are connected to human beings. I need guidance, and only a divinely blessed person can reach the destinations reserved for those who seek Allah. All goodness, evil, reward, punishment, happiness, and sorrow arise from my interactions with others.

We fail to appreciate the multitude of efforts that provide even the simplest of things. How many hands worked to bring us

the water we drink? How many years were spent building the roads we travel? How much toil went into their completion? With open eyes, we realize how much we owe to others. We must thank these individuals. Allah states, "How can you thank Allah without thanking mankind? One who disregards the kindness of their parents, who raised them, can hardly believe in an unseen God."

Allah reveals Himself in this world through humanity. Allah hears silent prayers and grants wishes. Divine manifestations are evident everywhere in human form. This world is filled with Allah's signs. Those who consider themselves His devotees find that remembering Allah is akin to lighting candles; may those who seek new destinations, with Allah's grace, find their paths illuminated by these candles.

Finding Allah is easy; He is closer than our jugular vein, yet approaching Him is difficult because man is man, and Allah is Allah. The recent cannot be primordial, and the primordial cannot be recent. The only difference is that we worship Him, and He is worthy of worship. We are born and die, but He, who lives eternally, transcends birth and death. He existed before all beginnings and will continue to exist after all endings. He is close, yet we cannot see Him, just as we cannot see our own sight, even though it is always with us. Our self is constantly present, yet it remains unknowable. Fish live in the ocean but cannot see it; only when leaving the water can it be seen, but the fish would no longer be itself. Allah's manifestations are always present, yet their nature and location remain beyond our grasp; we can only perceive them. The most practical expression of Allah's love is loving and obeying His beloved Prophet (SAW). Allah states, "O Prophet, tell the people that if they love Allah, they must obey Me, and Allah will hold them dear." Loving Allah is thus inseparable from loving mankind. Allah will not love you if you claim to love Him while rejecting the Prophet (SAW). To

seek closeness to Allah requires being human, and the perfect example of humanity is the Prophet (SAW), who spent his life remembering Allah and serving mankind.

To achieve a gnostic understanding of Allah, one must recognize the stature of mankind. Loving humanity is an aspect of loving Allah. On the path to Allah, we encounter humanity at every turn; the path to Allah traverses through humanity. Those who praise Allah, those willing to sacrifice their lives for Him, those who embrace martyrdom on His path, and those who are wholly absorbed in remembrance of Him—all are manifestations of the divine. Progress toward Allah's oneness requires traversing these stages. Care for those on earth, and the Divine Being will take care of you. Sometimes, those who consider themselves devoted to Allah have been oppressed in His name. We must ensure that people are not harassed. Humanity facilitates our progress. The manifestation of oneness lies hidden within multiplicity, but understanding this requires careful attention and a capable teacher.



Clarification

Following the publication of my last column, “The Stature of Man,” many friends expressed both pleasure and confusion. One reader wrote passionately, stating, “I was delighted to read your column because it made me realize that you, too, are a humanist like us. The purpose of life is civility and humanitarianism. Only those who help others can truly be called human. Otherwise, they are not human at all. The world's religions teach us to serve humanity and live ethically; organized worship is simply a method for training everyone to help each other. That's all.”

He continued, “We should all join together and launch a movement in favor of humanism, saving ourselves from the harm caused by the Mullah. You seem best suited to lead this movement. For example, your sentence, ‘The person who is the Lord of all the worlds is also a mercy for all the worlds,’ supports this.” This gentleman believed that man was his own lord while also acknowledging the Holy Prophet (SAW) as the most noble among mankind, a mercy to all the worlds.

Reading this from my well-wisher, I was both surprised and saddened. I had written nothing of the sort. How could he have misinterpreted it? My sadness stemmed from the fact that, as a believer, I wouldn't want anyone to doubt my faith or consider me a heretic. A review of the newspaper revealed an accidental typing error. In his haste, the typist had omitted a word from my sentence. The correct sentence is:

“The person dearest to the Lord of all the worlds is also a mercy to all the worlds.”

In essence, the person who embodies mercy for the entire cosmos is also the most beloved to the Lord of all the worlds.

Those who neglect humanity while focusing solely on God become lost. A clarification is needed here: serving humanity is a matter of ethics.

Defining ethics is not easy. What constitutes ethical conduct in one era might be considered unethical in another. Ethical codes relevant to specific geographic areas may differ greatly when applied to countries with disparate conditions. Generally speaking, however, the principles of ethics are: serve the people; feed the hungry; keep your promises; refrain from causing harm or distress; prevent riots and disorder; obey your parents; conduct yourself modestly; hold learning in high esteem; avoid lust and greed; speak gently; and treat others as you wish to be treated. The progression of ethics, in short, begins simply and concludes with something that benefits all. These shared emotions and actions that contribute to collective improvement are all part of ethics.

Civilized nations demonstrate good manners and are industrious. They receive fair compensation and treat others according to their rights. Every religion strives to clarify these concepts. Reformers among us have emphasized what it means to serve humanity. Efforts have been made to reveal the truth to human beings, currently divided by race, ethnicity, sect, tribe, doctrine, and spiritual allegiances, that all sprang from a single soul. Humanity's multiplicity finds its origin in the singularity of Adam. Those who imparted this knowledge are known as preceptors and reformers.

A code of ethics may arise from man's reasoned reflection, but such a code would only be valid if man's life were confined to his earthly existence. Life is not merely a matter of outward moral behavior; countless interpretations are possible, and this highlights the distinction between a thinker and a prophet. Prophets have revealed that life does not end with apparent death but continues beyond, with man being held accountable for his actions and receiving appropriate rewards or

punishments. Religion further reveals that to understand this life and its potential, one must first understand the origin of one's being. Was man created by his own choice or free will? Had he possessed such free will, he would never have left this world; if he had the power, he would have remained here forever. His brief stay here demonstrates the existence of a higher power involved in bringing him into, and taking him out of, this world. If mankind were born solely through the interaction of parents, they would have the right to choose only sons or daughters, as they wished. But this is not the case; man is frail, powerless, and subject to fate. Thus, man comes and goes as fate determines.

The prophets revealed that the same Being who created the universe also created man. The Being who created the luminous moon and stars also gave man his form and face. Man was sent to this world for a specific purpose and for a limited time. This power is generally known as nature; the prophets have further explained that the Being who bestows upon nature the power of design is the Supreme Originator. He created the earth and the heavens, and the changes within them are His work. His name is Allah, and Allah, the Merciful, has neither parents nor offspring. He is eternally alive and unchanging, existing before time itself and persisting after its end. In essence, He existed before creation, before every beginning, and His being will endure after every ending. The prophets also revealed that Allah, the creator of life, created man and sent him on a journey, dictating the purpose and duration of his life.

These pronouncements are considered prophetic pronouncements. These chosen individuals possessed such elevated civility that people recognized their authority. The prophets clearly stated that man is incapable of formulating a code of ethics because his thoughts are limited, and he can only perceive a limited span of time. The power to give and take life belongs solely to the Creator.

The purpose of worship is to draw closer to the Supreme Being; similarly, civility serves as a means to approach the Ultimate Truth. To clarify: when we act according to our understanding of virtue and vice, righteousness and wickedness, we are seeking to please someone, whoever that might be. Seeking to please a king can result in tyranny disguised as civility. Therefore, even just kings had wicked courtiers who tormented their subjects. When one seeks to please oneself, experience shows that a man might compromise his honor to avoid starvation. Self-gratification amounts to self-deception and marks a departure from morality. If the Being is that of Allah, there is no room for governance, expediency, or self-indulgence. Prostrating oneself before Allah once eliminates the need to prostrate oneself thousands of times before others.

A distinction arises between the ethics of a creed and the creed of ethics. The scope of ethics is limited; indeed, the creed of ethics is not a creed at all, becoming instead a personal and subjective code. Religious ethics, however, offer a consistent framework across eras and epochs. To clarify, ethics are inseparable from religion. By following Allah's commandments, acting as if accountable for every action, and adhering to ethical principles, mankind will draw closer together, and Allah will look upon them with favor.

Of all the reformers, our exalted Prophet (SAW) is the most trustworthy and honorable. He is the teacher of civility for all humankind. He possessed an intimate knowledge of Allah while also maintaining profound empathy for his fellow human beings. He commanded us to feed the hungry, regardless of their faith. His kindness is unparalleled. During his lifetime, he never harmed anyone and never sought revenge. Upon conquering Mecca, he asked, "How shall I deal with you today? How shall I retaliate?" The people replied, "You alone know best." He then said, "I will say something that my brother, Prophet Yousaf (AS), said to his brothers:

‘No punishment for you today.’” His exemplary civility and kindness are beyond words.

On one occasion, returning from battle with his companions, the Prophet (SAW) observed a mother dog nursing her pups. He instructed his companions to take a different route, lest they disturb her. Such consideration for animals is remarkable, even for exceptional people, and certainly not expected of ordinary individuals. The Prophet (SAW) was truly exceptional, and his prophethood exemplifies his profound virtue. It is the Prophet’s (SAW) right to set the standard; those who study ethics are obligated to follow his example.

Furthermore, mankind often fails to understand what truly serves his best interest. Many have acted in good faith while unknowingly committing evil; seemingly virtuous acts often have detrimental outcomes. This happens continually. Consider the reign of a tyrant. Pharaoh declared, “It is better for you to bow down before me, and for me to rule over you.” Some insist on equality, yet they often contradict themselves by declaring: while all men are equal, some are more equal than others. The right to dominate and the right to be subjugated become separated—thus calamities have befallen us in the name of ethics. A man might embrace something harmful and reject something beneficial. Children who waste their time exemplify this; such behavior can ultimately prove ruinous. Man's love of comfort inclines him toward ease, but this leads to hardship. Therefore, it is better to submit to Allah's will. If theology is removed from ethics, crimes committed in solitude cease to be considered crimes; only those caught by the law are criminals. Those who escape legal consequences are not seen as criminals. However, once theology is integrated into ethics, a sinner remains a sinner, regardless of outward piety. Such a person is inherently evil, even if he deceptively assumes the guise of an ascetic.

It must be emphasized that a purely ethical system is only relevant to a particular time, whereas faith, blending ethics and theology, makes man accountable to the Creator, who gives life purpose. Allah states, “O congregation of men and jinn, I created you to worship Me.” Worship can then be defined as a course of action whereby man serves others and draws closer to Allah. Its most complete form is exemplified in the Holy Prophet (SAW). Therefore, the civility of the Holy Prophet (SAW) is the true standard of civility, and his Sharia is the path to Allah.

Monasticism is forbidden in Islam. To reject interaction with humanity in favor of religious devotion is a form of monasticism; to withdraw from fellow human beings and dedicate oneself solely to worship is another. By integrating ethics and theology, and applying this to our understanding of good and evil, we can distinguish between crime and sin. A crime violates laws established by a government, while a sin contravenes the divine laws of theology. An act may therefore be a sin but not a crime. This is where we often fall into the trap when discussing humanism. We believe in assisting others, but we must not worship man. Our “humanism” involves worshipping Allah and serving mankind.

Therefore, I must inform my reader that launching a movement under the banner of humanism is inappropriate. We adhere to one movement only—that established for our benefit by the Holy Prophet (SAW), the benefactor of mankind. He instructed us to make humanity the focus of our efforts, to serve our fellow human beings, and to implore Allah for mercy and kindness. This, for us, comprises sufficient action, knowledge, and civility.



The Child

I saw a child—alone and wistful, yet not in pain or despair. Unlike other children, he wasn't overexcited or restless, nor was he carefree. It was deeply strange. He wasn't truly lonely either; there were many people around him—all adults. He was alone only because there was no other child in sight.

I approached him, hoping to learn who he was, who these people were, and what this open field was. But before I could ask, the child began to speak. That, too, was a surprise. The way he spoke made it seem as though he already knew me—or perhaps I knew him.

My curiosity deepened.

The child said, “No good comes from impatience. You must see before you speak or listen. Look—just look at what's happening. These people appear to form a crowd, but each one is utterly alone. No one cares how the others are doing. They recognize each other, but refuse to acknowledge anyone—and so, they pass by as strangers.

“There's another crowd moving with them. They're silent, but inside them, there's an uproar—a crowd of thoughts. That's why they appear to be alive.”

He continued: “And yes,” he said, “let me also answer your questions. Who am I, who are these people, what is this place, and what's going on? You've asked so much that I hardly know where to begin.”

There was nothing childish in the way he spoke. If he could speak like this at such a young age, what would he be like as an adult? Lost in thought, I listened, but he paid no attention to my wonder and kept speaking.

“They are my relatives—my kin. They were once mine. Until yesterday, they kept me company. We all lived together in a distant village. Then, one by one, they began to leave, though they promised to return soon. But when they reached this open field, they forgot everything. They no longer recognize each other, nor do they remember themselves. Perhaps they’ve even forgotten the promise they made. They’ve forgotten the way back home.

“I live alone in their land now, and only their memories remain with me. Their memories are like bats—hanging upside down in ancient ruins. One can only glimpse them in the darkness of night. They left behind vast spaces, yet they never think of me. It seems their hearts have lost their capacity. I waited for them for a long, long time. At last, disheartened, I came here to find them.”

“This is a place of egotism—you might call it a marketplace of ambition, wealth, and fame. Here, they’ve raised their stature. They’ve changed their tone of speech. They no longer have hearts. In dealing with machines and computers, they’ve become machines themselves. They see me but don’t recognize me. They hear my cries but no longer trust their ears. Sometimes they do remember me, but the machines have stolen their emotions. They’ve outgrown themselves and lost touch with their true selves.”

The child’s words cast a spell over me. I felt helpless, unable to hide my confusion. And then he said, “Do you know why I’ve started talking and you’ve become the listener? Because you haven’t completely outgrown yourself yet. There’s still a spark of life in you. You alone can serve as a bridge between me and them. Keep listening—you have no choice.

“Now tell me, what are they trying to populate after having laid waste to their own homes? Maybe they’re already dead, but haven’t yet realized it. Perhaps they died in agony, in

obscurity. But no—they're not dead. They merely await death. Most of them is already lifeless. Only their breath remains. Their emotions are dead. Their hearts are dead. Their memories are dead. Their past is dead—and so is their future.

“They can no longer hear. Their vision has become a hindrance to their eyes. Their power of speech is lost in a chaos of noise. They belong to no one—not even to themselves. They cannot love. They can only fight. And their final battle will be against death itself.

“Look closely—what are they doing? They are devouring time, killing time. And in the end, time will abandon them. Still, they won't die easily. They have access to large, well-run hospitals. They'll continue to live—bedridden—for months, even years. They'll be kept alive by countless tubes. Hiding from death, they'll lie still so that no one sees the truth of their condition. They've become men of high stature.”

“See that man watching us? He's trying to recognize us. He was once one of us—very close to us. He wants to approach, but he doesn't have the time. He's a slave to a schedule set in advance. He can no longer move freely. He is a man of status now. He doesn't even have time for himself.”

The child's speech had completely enthralled me. I was spellbound. I tried to pull away, to pretend I hadn't heard a word. But the child said, “You can't run. You can't escape. You're under my influence now. Think for a moment—who are you, in your own eyes? You're changing. You're becoming me. You are already like me. Look at yourself—you've become me. I am no longer needed.”

And with that, the child vanished.

I saw that I was now the only child standing in the field. I heard my own voice calling out:

“Come—let us go back. Come, let us revive the good old days. Come, let us return to who we truly are. Come to the place where the winds are fresh and alive. Let the machines run themselves—and let us escape.

“Let us draw near the natural world, whose nearness awakens truth. Let us stop poisoning this brief life. Let us repent the act of hurting others—and of hurting ourselves. Come, let us remember the days gone by. There is still time. Let us reconnect with the past. Let us lighten life’s burdens. Let us not live for ourselves, but for others. Let us listen to the laments of the brokenhearted. Let us release the bats, and rebuild the ruined ages. Let us rekindle the extinguished lamps. Let us forgive each other.

“The Sunnah of victory has been fulfilled. Now let us fulfill the Sunnah of forgiveness. Let us recite once more the *Kalima* we had once recited. Come—let us bring joy to every follower of the Holy Prophet (SAW). Let us save the lives of others—and our own hereafter—from destruction. Come, companions! What kind of companions are you, if you will not even join hands with me?

“Come, let us seek the light of faith. Let us dwell in the palm groves of love. Come—for we are torrents that belong to the same river. We are passengers of the same boat.”

Let us put an end

- to egoistic grandstanding,
- to the glorification of falsehood in newspapers,
- to the shameful practice of turning religion into a marketable product,
- to the disorderly flood of cheap desires,
- to deeds that disgrace others in the marketplace of infamy.

Put an end to all of it—because soon, you will be called to account.

On that day, you will stand in the presence of your Lord.
You will not be able to lie.
He who had once concealed your faults will lay them bare.
Will you not be humiliated, with no way to change the past?
The word *repentance* will still exist—but it will no longer
mean anything.
That day seems distant—that’s why you ignore the
hereafter.”

I was about to speak when I heard a voice say, “Enough.
Now leave this place. This is a dream world. Why all this
fuss?”

Everything changed. The dream ended. I awoke.

The first thing I did was look at myself in the mirror.
I was there, intact.
Thank God—I was no longer a child.

But I still ponder:
Who was the child?
Who was I?
And what was all this?

Was it truly just a dream?



Don't Rebuke

A person who berates, intimidates, or threatens others has forgotten that he himself is a human being. He has no right to scold or belittle anyone. To consider oneself entitled to this is a false privilege—an illusion born of an inflated ego. And arrogance, in itself, is a misfortune.

Those who are truly fortunate—who have divine favor—live with humility and modesty. Even when they rise to prominence, they remain unassuming. Conceited rulers inherit the fate of Pharaohs. The humble are the ones who prosper. They thrive eternally. They view their wealth and authority not as personal possessions, but as trusts—gifts granted by God. They declare: *He* is the true owner. The land belongs to Him. He grants kingdoms to whom He wills, and dethrones whom He pleases.

We deceive ourselves into thinking that the ballot box gives us the license to rule. And so, we keep meddling with elections, while divine power watches and mocks us. When we lose power, we believe that fiery speeches and passionate rhetoric will restore our status. In doing so, we forget what true power is—and where it truly comes from.

Anyway, we were speaking about berating others. The Almighty has commanded us never to rebuke a supplicant. Here lies a great secret: God sides with the poor, the supplicant, and the needy. Every person who is in need—who reaches out for help—is a supplicant. Whether you help them or not is another matter entirely. But never scold them. Never speak harshly.

Many eyewitnesses recount an incident:
A revered dervish, pure in character and soul, once stepped

out of the mosque after the morning prayer, accompanied by his disciples. Outside, he saw a sweeper struggling to lift a large basket of trash. The load was heavy. The saint approached him and, with his own hands, helped him raise the basket.

The disciples, embarrassed, began to scold the sweeper. “Sir, you are our spiritual guide. You should have asked *us* to help. Why did you trouble yourself?”

The saint replied, “You foolish people understand nothing. It is by the will of God that this man is in such a condition, and we have been granted prosperity. He needed help, and I offered it. This is a blessing from Allah. As for you—you help no one. You only berate. Repent, and fear the One who needs nothing. What use is our guidance or humility if we cannot aid the destitute?”

So clearly, we tend to scold only those who receive nothing from us. First, we refuse to help them. Then, we insult them. And finally, we puff up with pride over our own importance. To hell with such prominence, which benefits no one. And may God protect you from knowledge that serves even *you* no good.

Wealth that emboldens you to scold the poor is a curse. Power that frightens instead of protecting the helpless is a calamity—a mark of Hell.

The supplicant carries a profound secret. Outwardly, he appears to be asking for something—but in reality, he is a *giver*. We fail to recognize him. We overlook his mission. We are arrogant, and thus, blind to the message that only the supplicant brings.

I once encountered such a supplicant myself— It was during the early days of my acquaintance with what people call “depression.” One evening, a gloomy one, I sat alone in a

garden, lost in thought. The sun had set, leaving streaks of red across the sky. Suddenly, I noticed a supplicant approaching. I couldn't see him clearly, yet I instantly disliked him.

He was undeterred by my indifference. He said, "You should at least acknowledge someone who approaches you as a supplicant."

I looked at him blankly and asked, "What do you want?"

He replied, "What we always ask. I need help."

His tone and demeanor struck me. Overwhelmed by his presence, I reached into my pocket, took out a five-rupee note, and carefully handed it to him. "Here you go, old man."

He smiled and said, "I accept, son—but listen closely. I've been sent to tell you that what you perceive as a torment is, in fact, the dawn of a new era. When Yusuf (AS) was cast into the well, he had no idea it was the first step on a journey toward prophethood and kingship. The end of one era is the beginning of another. Never lose hope. And never berate a supplicant. He is both your well-wisher and your guide."

His words were like flames, illuminating the darkness in my heart. He spoke of things about me that no one could have known. I longed for him to continue. "Please, go on," I said.

"No," he replied.

"Why not?"

He said, "Just as you spared only five rupees out of the two hundred in your pocket, your share of my knowledge will be equally limited—no more than what you gave."

"Will we meet again?" I asked.

"We certainly will," he replied. "Now, give me your address—we wander, you see."

He handed me a gold-colored card, about the size of a ostcard. I wrote down my address and signed it.

By then, darkness had fully fallen. “Right, sonny, don’t follow me,” the old man said. “I take my leave.”

He walked away in a particular direction. I followed him—but to no avail. He had vanished. So had my depression. New insights began to take shape. That old fakir had flooded my soul with light.

But that was not the end.

Years later, after the fall of Dhaka, I once again fell into depression. One day, after Maghrib prayer, I left the mosque. It was late evening. Up ahead, I noticed someone walking—a venerable figure, barefoot, with long hair, and a rosary in hand. I began to follow him.

After a while, he suddenly stopped, turned around, and said, “Why do you follow me? Didn’t I once tell you not to pursue me? And yet, here you are. Well, tell me—what’s troubling you now?”

I said, “Just a bit of advice...”

He cut me off. “Never berate a supplicant. We are your well-wishers—your mentors. There’s no reason to despair. Are you more worried than we are? Everything will be all right.”

He reached into his pocket and pulled out a card. “Take me to this address,” he said.

I looked at it—and was stunned. My name, my address, my signature—all in my own handwriting. I stood there speechless.

He was the same man I had met fifteen years ago—yet also, not the same. He looked completely different.

Sensing my confusion, he said, “Don’t be puzzled. We keep changing our appearances. But we are always the same—supplicants, well-wishers, guides. We don’t come to take; we come to *give*. We ask for money only to save you from becoming a miser. Our purpose is to turn you into a generous soul.

It is only through the supplicant that a person becomes a friend of God.

Never berate a supplicant.”

And once again, he vanished.

And once again, my depression lifted.

Light broke through the gloom. Hope flared like a torch and burned away the despair.

“He who arranges my affairs has never forgotten me.”

I still see that old man before me. A guide. A mentor.

One who turns a miser into a generous giver,

One who leads a soul estranged from God back to friendship with the Divine.

He doesn’t come to teach us cruelty or rudeness—but to teach us courtesy, decency, and compassion.

When the blessing of God knocks at your door, it says:

Beware. Be not heedless.



Story

Our existence itself is a story—an ancient one at that. The moment the first child was born, the story began. One story led to another, and soon there was no end to them. A vast network lies spread out before us: some stories are complete, others unfinished; some lack a beginning, others never reach a conclusion.

Even when there is no storyteller around, the story continues to unfold by itself. It goes on even when no one is listening. The story existed before Adam came into being, and after his creation, it took a new turn. The tale of celestial paradise, the monstrous evil, Satan, the forbidden fruit, the fall from grace, man's descent to earth, and exile from heaven—all formed a self-contained story.

Then began another story: the ascent of mortal man. Once you begin seeking the place from which you were expelled, you start creating a paradise of your own. So many people, so many stories—perhaps a different one for each soul. A tragic story for the sorrowful, a comic tale for the mirthful, travelogues for wanderers, epics for the brave-hearted, dramas for thinkers. Symbolic stories, moral tales, short stories, long stories, meaningful stories, nonsensical ones, religious stories, spiritual ones, erotic tales—fleeting and timeless, forgettable and unforgettable. The world is nothing but a tapestry of endless stories.

Travel anywhere and you'll find local stories. Stay put, and your imagination will create its own. Stories will persist as long as there are people eager to hear them. We will continue sharing our never-ending narratives. And if even that becomes impossible, we will return to the familiar phrase: "Once upon a time."

The love for stories begins in childhood, or an environment nurturing it is formed. Libraries are bursting with stories. Scientific tales emerged with the advent of science. Man cannot escape stories. If there are no human tales to tell, we turn to animal fables—treasure troves of wisdom and insight. Take, for instance, the story of the thirsty crow, the greedy dog, or the blessings of unity, the faithless friend and the bear, or the tale of the foolish and wise goats, which goes like this:

It is said that there was a very narrow bridge across a mountainous stream—barely enough for one to cross. One day, two foolish goats from opposite ends of the bridge met in the middle. There was no room for either to proceed or turn back. They began blaming and cursing each other, but soon their quarrel escalated. They butted heads—and both tumbled into the stream. Later, two wise goats encountered each other at the same spot. Sizing up the situation, they used their heads instead of their horns. One goat lay down, allowing the other to cross over safely. Both passed unharmed.

There was a time when children were taught “Gulistan” and “Bostan” as part of their curriculum, shaping an ethical society. Today, the stories shown on video are different—laden with sexual violence and terrorism—and we now witness their spread in our society. Once ideas are embedded in the mind, reform becomes nearly impossible.

A story must have a central idea. For instance, the central idea in Pakistan’s story is Iqbal. It also needs a pivotal character, such as Quaid-e-Azam, a starting point like 1947, and an atmosphere—our own atmosphere. A story, even if ignored by newspapers, needs a climax. A climax is a temporary peak—it never lasts. Every ruler thinks his era marks a climax, unaware that every summit is followed by decline. Thankfully, Pakistan has not yet reached its climax; we are still moving forward.

A famous story illustrates this idea of climax. It is said that long ago, a certain land rose to great heights. God, seeing that its people had begun interfering with the natural order, instructed Jibrail (Gabriel) to abolish death. Jibrail requested permission to gauge the inhabitants' level of knowledge. He found a shepherd tending his flock and, in human form, asked, "Brother, do you know how to compute the unknown?" The shepherd replied, "A little." Jibrail said, "Then figure out where Jibrail is right now." The shepherd drew a few lines on the ground and said, "He is not in the heavens." Then more lines: "He is not on the earth either." Finally, he said, "One of us must be him—you or me. Since I know I am not, you must be Jibrail." After this, that land was obliterated.

Maulana Rumi solved mystical problems through stories. He wrote stories about the soul's inner knowledge. He says if passion is lost, life loses its purpose. For him, love is the cure for all ailments. Every tale he tells is brimming with passion and insight. He teaches us to connect with our inner selves, elucidating complex points with great clarity. Iqbal inherited his wisdom through Rumi's spiritual grace. Rumi says that unless lovers of truth are bound to the healer, healing remains superficial. Only the beloved's touch can heal; a crowd of indifferent physicians can only worsen the illness. Today, we are trapped by our leaders. May God protect us from them. May He grant us a true leader.

Stories serve not only for education and preaching but also for self-realization. "Saiful Malook" is a fairy tale on the surface, but in essence, it's about self-discovery—a mystical journey through wonder, longing, and the ache of separation. Mian Muhammad Sahib expressed this imaginary tale in vivid colors. It is a song of gratitude from those who recognize nobility and honor:

I was nothing but rubbish littering the road
You, my Lord, picked me up and placed me
In a palatial mansion.

In other words, a generous Being transformed our worthlessness into significance—elevating us from the gutters to grandeur. If He wills, a mere drop can become an ocean. It is a tale of high mysticism, an allegory of spiritual awakening.

The true story is being drowned in a flood of other stories. In listening or narrating such tales, we may become part of them ourselves. We must stay vigilant. We are surrounded by gifted storytellers who peddle pleasant lies to the poor—promising riches, yet leaving them more destitute. As the poor hear about their heavenly rewards, they forget their feet are still planted on the ground.

Data Ganj Bakhsh also conveyed profound truths through stories. He addressed topics like divine unity, prophethood, and spiritual knowledge. He once asked his Shaykh, “What is divine unity, Master?”

The Shaykh replied, “I will tell you later.”

A few days later, on their way to perform Hajj, they rested after midday prayers. A rider approached. The Shaykh welcomed him and listened to his quiet request. The Shaykh declined, and the man left. Data Sahib asked, “Who was he?” The Shaykh replied, “This was your answer. He was Khizar (AS). He offered to join us on the Hajj. I refused, fearing I would be so preoccupied with serving him that I might forget my true purpose.”

Thus, unity means steadfastness of purpose. Do not divide your attention—even if all options are noble. Righteousness is one thing; unity is another.

Another story: While traveling for Hajj, Data Sahib’s group appointed a leader. Bandits attacked and brought them to their chief, who ordered, “Hand over everything you have.”

They obeyed. The chief then said, “Search them.” Gold coins were found on the group leader. The chief ordered, “Kill him.”

Data Sahib intervened: “You can’t kill him. He’s our leader. We won’t allow it.”

The chief replied, “How strange. How can a liar lead truthful men? Let him go. We are not bandits—we are sent to distinguish the wicked from the pious. We ensure pilgrims truly submit to God. Remember this: the leader of a caravan must be truthful and trustworthy. False leaders have brought ruin to the Muslim nation.”

Stories can awaken the soul—or stir division and discord. They have played a role in fracturing the Muslim Ummah. One man says, “Have you heard this story?” Another replies, “No, but I’ve heard a different one.” And so the divergence begins. One book leads to one sect, another book to another sect. Stories keep multiplying, and so do the sects. We once stood united under one God, one Prophet ﷺ, one declaration of faith. Today, we are divided into seventy sects. Who founded them? None of us stood with Hussain (RA) or Yazeed—yet the stories continue to divide us. Pens kept scribbling—and truth was buried. This story, which began halfway, should be ended right there.

It is enough if we become united again through the central truth of the Kalima. The story of Pakistan begins with Iqbal’s exalted thoughts—may it blossom fruitfully. Otherwise? Nothing else will matter.



Eyes

Among the wonders of the world, none are as astonishing as the human eyes. They resemble a camera, but in designing them, nature—the supreme artist—has displayed unmatched mastery. The eyes add charm to the face and are a distinctive feature of an individual's personality.

Eyes are the means through which we remain connected to the cosmos. The Being who blessed mankind with sight also created a captivating universe—something for the eyes to admire. God brought countless manifestations into being, thereby demonstrating His limitless power.

An artist reveals his talent by creating a spectacle; through this, he expresses himself. If there were no eyes to behold, colors and light would serve neither purpose nor meaning. The perfection of the revealed word becomes evident only when it is seen. It unveils both the unique beauty of the scene and the depth of the one who perceives it. The vibrant creativity of nature, which transforms the dull earth into a radiant display, serves a singular purpose: that the eyes, gifted with vision, may find the world praiseworthy. Only those who can truly see are able to be moved by this life blooming with vitality. Eyes that remain blind to all this are, ultimately, without vision.

The eyes can see billions of stars at once. They bring the heavens down to earth and draw distant realities near. What is it that the eyes cannot behold? They can see everything—except themselves. To view their own form, they require a mirror; they need an external aid. While the vast expanse of earth and sky lies before them, their own reflection remains hidden. To explore your inner depths, you need the assistance

of another. This relationship with an external other becomes the most profound tool for introspection. Knowing God is impossible without first knowing oneself. It is the mirror that helps reveal the path inward. If no such mirror is present, the eyes, in believing themselves complete, become prone to arrogance.

The eyes witness endless, wondrous scenes. When they are absorbed in seeing, their delight is itself worth witnessing. When fully immersed and overcome with awe, the eyes experience an ecstasy in the presence of beauty. Lost in this revelation, the observer becomes still, unaware of self and surroundings, freed from the flow of time and the pull of space. In moments of waiting, they see a flaming plane tree, heavy with red blossoms. In times of separation, they seem to emit embers. The anguished heart longs to pour itself out in tears.

The eyes wish to view distant scenes up close. If deprived of a particular vision, do not despair. That deprivation gives birth to a new revelation. A realm of longing, pain, and passion is granted to you. Through the eyes, one acquires the ability to see beyond veils and appearances. The weeping eye becomes the greatest medium for proximity to divine truth. The eyes enable mutual recognition. When they recognize each other, it signifies an old familiarity. It is then we exclaim: *Yes, this is the vision I had always sought.*

The eyes offer guidance of a remarkable kind. When they encounter a divine manifestation, they transmit this vision—synchronized with a particular state of consciousness—to every part of the body. A distinctive disposition then takes shape. The divine vision is passed on to the heart, the brain, the soul, and the faculty of imagination. From this act of seeing, a journey of self-realization begins.

If the vision is sent to the brain, the individual embarks on a journey filled with wonder. They perceive the true nature of things. They witness creation and dissolution. They behold the downfall of those who lived arrogantly in the realm of time. They witness the severe fate of those who harmed others, the humility of those buried beneath the same earth they once walked upon with pride. Those who ignored the voice of truth meet disgrace. Where are Alexander and Darius now? Where are those who seemed permanent just yesterday? The eyes reveal epic tragedies, uncover forgotten catastrophes. This world is but a passing stop. Time's river carries all things along. Caravans vanish into deserts, palaces fall into ruin, gardens fade away. The eyes present one scene after another, until the viewer is compelled to admit that only God endures—everything else is fleeting. We owe much to the eyes; they nourish the minds of the contemplative. There are layers within layers, reflections within reflections, oceans within oceans. True wisdom lies in discerning the right manifestation. That is why we are deeply indebted to the eyes.

If, instead, the eyes forward the vision to the heart, everything becomes song and bloom, color and radiance, beauty and perfection. These include nights of longing, nights of reunion, nights spent remembering the beloved. The quiet heart is suddenly stirred by new pulses. Noble acts are inspired before us. The urge to behold overwhelms us. We realize that no image but one is worth pursuing—everything else feels hollow. When the beloved appears, they are implored to stay; when they depart, it feels like calamity. The beloved becomes sacred. The world transforms for the heart that feels deeply. Everything reveals a new delight. When eyes meet eyes, the sky and the earth shift. Seasons, sentiments, relationships, and choices all change. Even space and spacelessness are transformed.

With each new vision revealed, this world—and even the next—changes. Hearts of stone begin to melt. Sensitivity awakens. Apathy dissolves. Sweet memories arrange themselves for the days ahead. Eyes do not speak; they only see. Yet the way they perceive outshines all forms of language.

A moment comes when thought and expression reach a unique peak. One begins to love humanity sincerely. The yearning to be seen in the presence of beauty is what we call love. In essence, the eyes awaken us to love. Life, leaving the bounds of prose, enters the realm of poetry. The eyes are generous benefactors.

Sometimes, the eyes transmit the grandeur of a scene to the soul. That alone is enough to rouse a person from heedless slumber. The eyes act like the soul's *muazzin* (caller to prayer), urging: *Rise, O sleeper*. The revelation of truth awaits those who yearn for it. Remember the day when you were asked, "Am I not your Lord?" Recall your reply: "Indeed, You are." Have you forgotten? It was not so long ago. You were shown grace upon grace, favor upon favor. You were showered with blessings. He made it easy to witness His signs. He instilled the love of His Beloved ﷺ into your heart. Look—here lie the sacred thresholds of those who truly lived. Those who remembered God turned cemeteries into places of celebration. Those who forgot Him turned their lives into graveyards. What path are you on? In compassion, the eyes awaken the heedless. They unveil a scene that allows the soul to travel from one moment in time to another. Time contracts, and the soul is absorbed in prayer. Countless prostrations surge through the brow. Man reaches a station where self-knowledge becomes the gateway to divine knowledge. These are the moments that define existence. These are the moments of purification and sanctity. These are His signs all around us—a grand symphony of the Quran's encoded letters. And this is the greatest blessing of the eyes.

Sometimes, the eyes become displeased. Then they lead a person toward undesirable scenes. The person begins to wander aimlessly, enthralled by nakedness. The eyes actively seek out such imagery and present it, until the person becomes completely lost. One who chases obscenity becomes part of it—and ultimately shares the fate of these scenes. The path of temptation often begins with the eyes, and then man, like a beast, prowls in search of prey. To seek sin is itself a sin. The gaze alone can ruin a people. May God protect us from such an end. But if a nation is ever punished for abandoning its moral duty, one cause could very well be the VCR. If the viewing of obscenity were to cease, the very essence of sin would begin to vanish. The eyes that know only falsehood can be healed with a collyrium made of the dust of Madinah and Najaf.

Sometimes, the eyes reveal scenes from the past. What once happened seems to happen again. The pain that once brought tears returns with equal force. The eyes possess another extraordinary gift: at a certain moment, they present a certain scene, and old songs resurface—old songs, yes, and national anthems... But what can one do?

All the efforts of the eyes seem in vain. The age of passion has passed. People are lost in a world of self-interest and profit. Who would now step into the wilderness of sorrow? That era of passion left us only a memorial—a minaret. Not to shame us. And why should we be ashamed? Come, let us close our eyes, but—

*We still hear the tinkling of the bells,
And the dust of the caravan fills our eyes.*



Universe and Universe

The laws and principles of nature are unshakable. Nature not only follows its own rules and regulations but also compels others to do the same. Allah's system does not change. What He has decreed comes to pass, and it is so firmly fixed that deviation is impossible. The sun rises in the East and will continue to do so. It sets in the West and will keep doing so for ages to come.

It is strange that Allah—whose glory renews and transforms into fresh wonders every day—has ordered every created thing to remain in motion within its assigned limits and orbit. And what He has ordained cannot be revoked. Our intentions may change, but His command is immutable. The earth's rotation, the alternation of night and day, and the movement of the heavens are all written in a hidden book.

Those who understand know that life must come to an end. Whatever is destined will occur. When the Almighty decreed the laws of nature, He made clear what will and will not happen. A person achieves only in proportion to their effort—this is a rule. A river flows from the mountains, races toward its destination, and eventually joins the sea. Rain falls from above, plants emerge from the earth, birds fly through the sky, and fish swim in the water. All these laws are fixed. All the regulations have been established. Everything has already been decided. Every beginning must reach an end, and with every end comes a new beginning.

If things had stopped there, the universe and life would have been nothing but mechanical. But those who think, reflect, and contemplate understand that alongside this ordered, systemized universe exists another universe—one whose rules

differ entirely from those of our world. Its laws are incompatible with ours. It is a strange and wondrous realm, completely different and utterly unique.

It is a rule that fire burns. Yet how astonishing it is that within a blaze, a garden blooms—and within that garden is found a figure, radiant and secret. The One who made a rule also created its nullification. The One who made heat an essential quality of fire also commanded it to cool and protect Prophet Ibrahim (AS). The will of God can override all rules. If He so desires, things can undergo total transformation. Why should He be bound by His own laws? One rule is that sustenance comes through hard work—but when He wills to provide, He does so without limit or measure. He is the Master of all treasures in the heavens and the earth. He is answerable to no one, and no one can audit His account.

There is no rule in the universe without exceptions. Take knowledge, for instance. You receive knowledge in schools from teachers. A university can teach you about Shakespeare—but it cannot teach you how to become Shakespeare. Iqbal mastered the knowledge of both the East and the West. Yet his soul only became more restless. So what comes *after* the knowledge of East and West? The word “after” points to the knowledge of a universe that lies beyond rules. There is a knowledge not found in books. It can only be attained through “madness,” through inner vision, through sheer fortune. A rare, matchless knowledge—beyond rules, outside of laws. A knowledge that unveils a mysterious universe where action is suspended, knowledge abounds, and only observation, wonder, and unheard-of diversity exist—no laws apply there. Compared to that universe, the one we see is minuscule. That realm is a manifestation of God’s will—a universe of bestowal and grace. A universe where time comes to a standstill, and visions stir. A universe where there are no days and nights, no months or years—only rapture and

luminous manifestation. In that world, all is known and nothing is taught. Those who impart wisdom to the world belong to this universe. They are granted knowledge from unseen, blessed sources. In this universe, success is not earned by effort, but by love, reverence, and fortune.

To speak in favor of fortune is to offend those who believe effort is the sole path. Yet one cannot truly understand the meaning of fortune unless one also sees that effort often leads to disappointment. Even if effort brings success, a person whose luck has run out will still fail. Great destruction has followed even the most successful of human efforts. If effort is an elephant, then fortune is the pebble carried by a sparrow. It's a long tale, a very long tale.

In short, the point is to understand that the apparent universe—governed by effort and laws—is very different from the hidden, inner universe. In that hidden world, all brightness belongs to fortune and the fortunate. We should reflect upon that universe. It is a universe of prayer. Prayer turns a person into one who is fortunate. Prayer makes the impossible possible. Time shifts. Eras are transformed. The weak are made strong. Defeat becomes victory. The fallen are restored. That universe belongs to the soul—a realm of signs and divine visions, where the Beloved is unveiled. A universe of intention and will. This hidden realm exists within the visible world. In it, silence speaks. Trees converse. Mountains carry messages. Rivers become symbols. Seas take on dreamlike forms. Entry into this universe is granted only to those whose hearts and souls are alive—those who embody truth. The journey to this universe happens in the early hours of the morning. This universe is illuminated by tears that shine like candlelight. There is light upon light, brilliance upon brilliance, revelation upon revelation. In this world, rules are overturned. Distances collapse. The unseen becomes visible, and the visible vanishes. Death has no place there. Faraway voices seem to be

near. This hidden realm belongs to Allah's chosen ones. They are the recipients of Divine Grace. You cannot enter this universe through effort—it is purely a matter of fortune. What a wondrous moment it was when a man set out to bring back fire, and returned crowned with prophethood. What a universe it is!

This esoteric realm is first discovered within the self. Then it expands to encompass the whole universe. The laws that govern it are strange and mysterious. There are no fixed destinations, only a journey that never ends. At each stage, another stage lies ahead. To see, you must close your eyes. To hear, you need no ears. You hear with the ears of your heart. Fortunate are those allowed to enter this world. It is a realm brimming with vision. A world of selflessness. A universe where sorrow is lightened, where only those who relieve the suffering of others are welcome. Only those who bring comfort to the distressed, who spread joy—these are the truly fortunate inhabitants of this universe. They are blessed who seek to ease the burdens of others, who—no matter the circumstance—say, “I am here,” and surrender to the Beloved's will, answering the call of the Friend.

The constitution of this universe is as mysterious as the inner workings of the human soul. Whenever the inner being desires something, the outer body begins to act in accordance. If the mind wills something, the organs follow that will. If the heart is moved by love, one speaks gently. If the soul is enraged, the face betrays signs of hatred and fury. If the heart is immersed in prayer, the outer being reflects innocence.

Thus, this hidden and mysterious universe belongs to those with true willpower. What is decided there becomes visible here in the manifest world. When they pray for your well-being there, it has an effect here. A shift in intention there, and an entire era is transformed here. A change of temperament

there, and governments fall or rise here. In short, what is decreed by “Be” is seen as “It is” in the world. This mysterious realm of mysterious people is right before our eyes, yet veiled from most. There is no fixed formula for entering it. All depends on fortune and Allah’s will. He who is fortunate becomes aware of its mysteries. Those graced by Divine Will and who sigh at the break of dawn should know: this sigh, in the early hours, is the surest path to connect the manifest world with the hidden one.



The Halfway Point

What a strange creature man is. He thinks, acts upon those thoughts, and right in the midst of his action, begins thinking all over again. Revisiting his actions, he amends the very thoughts that once set him in motion. The cycle continues—like the teeth of a saw. And eventually, this relentless sawing of thoughts cuts individuals and nations into fragments. Emotions cool. The joy of the journey fades. The self-belief that once spurred movement turns into embarrassment, and the chapter of travel closes. The caravans remain stalled at their campsites. With no destination in sight, the weary traveler starts thinking anew—choosing instead to build and settle in new dwellings. Having once bid farewell to their homelands and set off on a journey, they forget their goal along the way and start erecting new homes. They dwell in the past and take pride in their latest ideas. But in the future, even these new ideas may appear flawed. This period of indecision is known as the halfway stage. Turning back becomes impossible. Moving forward, unthinkable. And thus, a nation perishes—no longer conscious of its purpose. Without purpose, the journey ceases to exist.

The kind of thinking that leads to a true destination belongs to a different order. It is a radiant wisdom—divine knowledge. The real decisions are made elsewhere and then conveyed to us. To save human thought from wandering aimlessly, prophets were sent. They told us our thoughts are fleeting, short-lived. What God declares alone is real. And the journey—one of submission—is the only path that leads to the goal. Satan refused to submit. He stood tall in arrogance, questioning how he, made of fire, could bow to Adam, made

of clay. This is how one's thinking falters. Satan traveled only halfway. Once close to Allah, he was cast out and banished.

When you set out on a course, place your trust in Allah. Believe that your campsite is your destination. That alone is your victory. Unfortunate are the travelers who, having reached the halfway point, find the journey dull. Nations and individuals who lose sight of their purpose give up at the halfway mark.

At times, it is a majority's decision that compels us to begin a journey—but such a journey is doubtful at best. The majority can be fickle, ignorant, uninformed, careless—motivated only by comfort and ease. If the majority is deceitful, how can it lead you on a journey in search of truth? If hypocrites are allowed to make decisions, those decisions will surely be flawed. Allah has said, “When the hypocrites come to you and say, ‘We testify that you are indeed Allah’s messenger,’ do not believe them. Allah knows that you are His messenger, and He bears witness that the hypocrites are liars.” That is, even when liars speak the truth, their words remain false. Even their correct decisions are invalid. Only a decision made by honest people can be considered right. A truthful minority is far better than a deceitful majority. All decisions based on majority opinion must be carefully scrutinized. Until the truthful become the majority, democratic decisions remain flawed.

A nation must be led by the truthful—not by liars and hypocrites who invite divine wrath. Liars never make it beyond the halfway point. Their destination is only halfway. Only the truthful reach the true destination. Sometimes, a truthful leader inspires truthfulness within the nation itself.

What was Quaid-e-Azam's greatest quality? He was an upright man—a personification of truth. His character cultivated integrity in the nation. At his word, people gave

their lives. They left their homes and embraced homelessness. They became refugees—yet considered themselves fortunate, despite losing everything. They set out on a journey for a noble cause, caring nothing for their lives or dignity. Had the Quaid lived longer, the outcome might have been entirely different. The man who united the nation departed, leaving behind confusion and chaos. His sudden passing slowed the journey and altered its direction. The truthful majority he nurtured turned into a purposeless crowd.

We must awaken the majority to truth, teach them to speak it boldly. If we succeed, democracy becomes ideal. Otherwise, the story repeats: a journey half-finished, ending at the halfway mark—God forbid.

Human nature loves upheaval. Monotony doesn't appeal. People crave change—new clothes, new accents, new friends, new allegiances, new political parties. They revel in horse-trading, forget their benefactors, even alter their goals. They justify every decision—past or present. Perhaps this is what leads to revolutions.

Life in Paradise failed to appeal to Adam. No chaos, no revolt, no forum for speech. So he devised a scheme. He tasted the forbidden fruit. And that sparked a revolution. Commotion erupted—had there been newspapers, it would've made headlines. Adam lost Paradise. The revolution succeeded; life suffered. Allah banished Satan for Adam's sake—and Adam, in turn, defied Allah for Satan's sake. The heavenly journey ended halfway. The earthly journey began. All earthly ambitions and deeds remain incomplete. Only the Ascension (Mi'raj) of the Prophet ﷺ stands fulfilled. Everything else is still in motion. We've only covered half the distance. The children of Adam remain divided. The journey will complete only when Adam's descendants unite.

Stars aligned form the Milky Way. Rows of lamps create luminous brilliance. Drops of water, united, become rivers and oceans.

We must awaken the travelers asleep at the halfway point. Stir them once more. Inspire them to respect each other—so the caravan may rise again and move forward. Destinations await those who slumber at the halfway mark.

It is the leader's responsibility to awaken the passion for journeying. A true leader infuses the nation with awareness. The urge to journey is a divine gift. Let us knock on heaven's door and plead: "Merciful Allah, grant us a poet ablaze with spirit—epic in voice—one who can reawaken this nation." Self-interest creates inertia; patriotism is the antidote. Let it be said: "The followers of the Hashemite Prophet ﷺ have a unique distinction."

The poor should not be burdened with earning meager livelihoods. A glimmer of hope must shine in their lives. Let them emerge from the darkness of despair and join a noble cause. Inspire them with courage and patriotism to begin the journey. The rich, too, must be freed from the obsession with wealth. Let them not flaunt it. Marriage ceremonies should reflect Islamic simplicity. Teach them to live simply, so the downtrodden may help realize our national mission. Otherwise, we are doomed to the tragedy of a journey abandoned halfway. This is a journey for everyone, for everyone's sake. The goal belongs to all. The nation belongs to all. Its resources must be shared by all. We must care for each other. Allah will ease our path. Do you remember the purpose for which this country was created? Do you? If you haven't forgotten, what stops you from achieving that purpose?

What is Islam? Should we now ask the majority to define it—or how it should be implemented? No. We must seek guidance

from God, from the Quran. We must enlighten ourselves through the practices of the Prophet ﷺ. We must follow those whose souls are awakened—who remain alert to the world around them day and night. If we do so, unity and common purpose will emerge. If those in power become truthful, truth will permeate everything.

Yes, much is being done—but much more remains. The caravan, exhausted, rests at the halfway mark. Rise—and awaken others. Time waits for none. Lost opportunities don't return. If you are fortunate, share your fortune with others. The caravan has lost heart. Its pain must be eased. Complaints and demands must end. If this nation awakens, it will lead others. Let us not forget the responsibilities the future holds. Let us not be spellbound by temporary comfort.

The time is near when Iqbal's dream will come true, and Quaid-e-Azam's efforts will be honored. The souls of the martyrs who died for this nation will find peace. If we do not lose sight of our goal, future generations will remember us with grace.

Let not our only goal be to hoard wealth for our spoiled children. If they spend it sinfully, then those who enabled them will be held accountable. If we fail to acquaint our children with Pakistan's purpose—or with the greatness of Islam—then God forbid, we will be counted among those who gave up at the halfway stage. May God protect us from such ruin. We are a great nation—and we must become even greater. This land belongs to Allah and His Prophet ﷺ and must be governed according to their will.



Companionships

Thought is a bird. It comes of its own free will, whenever and wherever it pleases, and in whatever form. If it chooses to arrive, nothing can stop it. And if it does not wish to appear, even the greatest of efforts, multiplied a million times, cannot summon it. Not at all.

If someone were to describe the sequence of thoughts that cross his mind, the result would be a strange continuity. One thought would lead to another, one narrative would merge into the next. Neither would come to an end. They are boundless.

Sometimes a thought within a thought is like a dream within a dream. And we only see dreams inside dreams. This life itself is a dream—and within it, all our resolutions, plans, and intentions are also dreams. Even if fulfilled, they are still dreams. If they remain incomplete, they are still dreams. You cannot let go of dreams. Nor can you bring them to completion. You can only witness them. Sometimes, they can even be expressed in words. It happened to me just once: a thought arrived for a fleeting moment, and then disappeared. And within that moment, time changed. My thinking transformed.

I saw—or perhaps imagined—that doomsday had arrived. It approached step by step. There were explosions, thunder, lightning, roars, and earthquakes—and then, one by one, they ceased. All those around me, whether close or distant, familiar or unknown, passed by, headed towards destinations from which there was no return. In that dream—or perhaps in my thoughts—I felt a slight relief at being alive. I felt alive. I could touch. I could be touched. I was alive amid the death that surrounded me on all sides. I was glad not to be dead.

Events continued unfolding until the chaos of doomsday was over. What followed was silence—complete stillness. No secrets remained, and there was no one left to share them.

I was alone, under duress, a mortal being—solitary and wistful. There was no one who resembled me. No joy remained—only sorrow and fear, even a deep trauma. O God! This is not life, this state of being. Yet even in those conditions, thoughts continued to visit me. I was constantly immersed in them. After some reflection, I realized: only God knows where the dead have gone.

In truth, the only one left behind was already dead. What am I, without others like me? Life without any living companionship cannot be called life. No voices, no faces—only loneliness, and the stillness of death. I felt I was no longer myself. Something within me had snapped. I felt severed from somewhere. As if I had fallen from a great height. Once, whether I was among friends or strangers, I had a sense of self. Now, that self was gone.

I kept thinking. Outwardly, I am a single being—but also part of a vast sequence. It brings me no joy that all others are dead and I alone survive. It is merely another form of my own death. If all others are gone, I too am gone. No one remains—this alone is reason enough for my non-existence. If the search ends, so does the seeker. Enemies perish. Friends perish. Elders pass away, one by one. My children, too, are no more. There is no supporter left, no advocate. I am alone, pleading my case. I grieve. There is no one to console me. It is a sorrow that never ends.

These times are like a feast spread before me. The vast sequence that stretches out—is my own. Wherever I am, there I am—and where I am not, there too, I am. The world is a continuation of my sequence. It is a shrine to my past, and a tomb of my future.

In this world, while all these people were alive, I witnessed ages pass. Within every moment, centuries rolled by. Millennia came to an end. Whatever I have received is the result of others' efforts. If all of us exist, then so do I. The words of prayer that I recite were once spoken by others, and have reached me gradually. The thoughts I think today have traveled through many minds before arriving in mine. If all of us are safe, then so am I.

That paradise is worse than hell in which I am alone. Paradise is the name of everyone's happiness, everyone's wellbeing. The being I call "I" may not be me. I am the name of many other things. To speak plainly, paradise is the name of my wellbeing. My friends complete me. My enemies give meaning to my resolutions. These are all my names. My different aspects. And the Kaaba is the name of my own heart. Prayer is the name of my forehead. When the forehead bows, the man prostrates in worship. There is joy in the act of this restless forehead touching the ground.

You need a human voice to recite the words of Allah. You need human ears to hear them. You must possess a human heart to feel the awe of God. There is no place where I am not present. The journey is the result of my exertion. The stopover is the result of my exertion. Hajj is the result of my exertion. Man must raise his hands in prayer. Allah knows man. And man is in need of Allah.

All the noise, beauty, sequences, crowds, joys and sorrows of life—are for me alone. Let me tell you: it is early morning, and what a journey the world has made to bring a colorful, adorned newspaper to my table. Truth and falsehood mingle to reach me, devising a way to keep me engaged. Calls are made and received. Then a bill arrives—addressed to me. My savings are depleted and replenished. And gradually, both I and all that I had acquired begin to vanish.

But no—I rise from within myself and find a place in the hearts of my friends. They live in my heart, and I in theirs. And thus, I endure. My friends endure, so I endure. My books endure, so I endure. As long as I am remembered, I live on. And people continue to speak of me. Strange, isn't it? That in a timeless book, those are mentioned who did not live forever. But how can that be? As long as the book exists, so do they. But an immortal book lives forever. He who kills ensured that those he killed would be remembered as living. And He who kills said: Do not think of those who are slain in God's cause as dead—they are alive. But this is beyond human comprehension.

These martyrs are provided for by Allah. All glory belongs to the Glorious. He does as He wills. He is the Master. In short, it is by the radiance of this star that the world is bathed in light.

It was necessary for man to exist. Even more necessary was for him to set foot on what was to be his homeland. Cities were built. The task of beautifying the garden of Earth continued for centuries. And it was essential that we come into the garden of existence. Because of us, the flowers—soothing to the eyes—were granted a welcome purpose. Remarkable: flowers in a garden, and a garden amidst flowers.

Manifestations in eyes, and eyes in manifestations. Color in fragrance, and fragrance in color. Everything immersed in the thoughts of another. The mesmerizer and the mesmerized—both are absorbed in the same trance. I receive and transmit everything myself. The faces are mine; the eyes are mine. All distances lie within the reach of my imagination. All distances are near—you only need to look for them. If your eyes should rise, time will change. A revolution will unfold. What does not exist will come into being. What exists will vanish. The visible will become invisible—and the invisible, visible.

The eyes that turn impossibility into possibility may see at any moment. What is hidden will be revealed. Silence will discover a voice. Centuries will shrink, and moments will stretch. The journey from the core of being to the world outside takes but a glance. The journey from darkness into light takes but a glance. A stranger becomes a companion in a single glance. One who came to kill you becomes willing to die for your sake. This is the miracle of a glance. It is that one glance we seek to change our destiny—otherwise, we have nothing but inaction to show.

The eyes open the vistas of blessings for me. They become worship for me. The gates of repentance remain open for me. The heart, yearning for Him, was created for me. There is a charisma that captivates others—and that is what the heart seeks. A heart that claims to know the art of attraction, even when it fails to function, supports us in adversity. It is the place where the vast stretches of time narrow. From it, distant realities are seen up close.

The heart has been called the heaven of heavens. It is with the heart's help that we journey onward. It is the heart that earns us acceptance at the Eternal Court. You prostrate yourself here on earth—but it is the heart that ensures your prostration is accepted above. All beauty and grace belong to the heart—and all melody and prelude as well. All charisma too. The cries for justice and the acceptance of prayers—these are all acts of the heart. If the heart is sound, everything is sound. Otherwise, all is futile.

How long have I been in this foreign world? Why am I here—and for how long? What am I waiting for? Did I play any role before I was born? Are all these cries about separation from the Beloved?

Can this be the tale of parting from the Beloved? Will we meet our true self after changing our garments? Does the Beloved

await us? Is this all one-sided? No, it cannot be. It is a profound mystery. My joy lies in the joy of others. It befits me to grieve when something ends. Someone dies, and I mourn. He falls ill, and I worry. He becomes poor, and I turn generous. He marries, and I become his wedding procession. He sets off, and I bid him farewell. When he departs forever, I grieve and mourn.

I kept changing—but I remained. Is my only role to keep changing? Am I my own destiny? Am I fortunate? Am I not? No matter—I am content with my portion and satisfied with my state. My future will be comforting. One who is fortunate now will remain fortunate. If companionship lasts, no harm will come. If life on Earth is good, so too will be the afterlife.

It is better for things to be. In times of sorrow, take delight in your sorrow. In times of blessing, do not let your eyes run dry. Eyes that shed tears ensure salvation. If there are pearls in your eyes, a jewel to match your desire will fall into your lap. If your eyes stay dry, you will receive nothing.

This is the only secret shared by me and my world—that my eyes remain tearful. And these tears keep me connected to myself, to my world, to my past, my future, my essence, my Beloved, my station, and my Lord and Creator.

O God, may what I wish come to pass. Do not let my tears dry. Do not let them go to waste. There are oceans hidden in these drops. These tears can redeem the past and bless the future—for all of us, righteous and wicked alike.

O God, I wish to be safe—and I wish the same for others. For my existence is tied to those connected to me. If I am destined for paradise, let everyone go with me. Paradise is a place where no bad news is heard. No one should tell me, once I arrive there, that one of my loved ones has been condemned to hell.

O God, forgive all who believe in You, who love Your Beloved ﷺ. Forgive them all. Have mercy, Lord, on the nation of the Prophet ﷺ. May we all be safe, here and in the hereafter. This life belongs to everyone. Paradise belongs to everyone. This was the message I received in that moment. And as soon as I received it, time changed. If everyone is safe and well—so are we.



Vastnesses

Although we are surrounded by a tumultuous sea of human beings, in truth—if we reflect carefully—we connect with only a few individuals in our lifetime. Some of these are our near and dear ones, others are strangers. These relationships form our entire universe. These few people are our total asset. When we look around, we see a massive crowd, yet if we ponder it, our circle of social interaction is remarkably small. A tiny circle within an innumerable multitude—this is something we must reflect upon seriously.

Were we all born to live in isolation? Is this compulsion, this estrangement, our destiny? Does it represent a failure on our part? What does it all mean? How many people, over the course of our lives, can we call by name? And how many can call us by ours? If our relationships are so limited, then why does this boundless alienation exist? What purpose does this strange scene serve in relation to me? These newspapers, these news items—what do they mean to us? Who are these people we are told about? Those who are in the news—what relevance do they hold for me? They bear no relation to me. They are merely names in the headlines. Not every piece of news resonates with my emotions. These incidents have nothing to do with me. Matters of great importance may carry no importance for me. I am confined within a narrow circle of those I know, while right before me, the grand show goes on without pause.

My responsibility is to fulfill the duties that my loved ones and those connected to me expect of me. The rest is just a spectacle. Every person moves within his own orbit. He is powerless, confined to his particular magnetic field. Perhaps this helplessness is the very foundation of life. We act in haste

when we attempt to analyze our days and nights and pass sweeping judgments on them. Our observations and judgments are shaped by our limitations—and thus, in the midst of this struggle, life quietly comes to its end.

We are not accountable for the vast crowd. We are responsible only for the circle that is ours. We are responsible only for our own lives. We are accountable only for the actions for which we have been granted time. Our share of this boundless span came in the form of a few fleeting hours in which we held control. We are tethered to those hours—and once they are over, so is our life. The caravan of time moves on. It is we who fall out of step with it. These vastnesses make our solitude feel even more solitary.

Our lives are tied to our sun and our moon. And yet we are eager to discover what great distances lie beyond the sun. It is difficult even to estimate the measure of these vastnesses. If a person were to travel from one star to another at the speed of two hundred thousand miles per second, even then, at times, such distances could not be covered in millions of years. The expanse continues to expand. Space grows ever deeper. The distance man seeks to cross belongs, perhaps, to some other realm altogether. The brief span of our lives expires as we drift through the vastness of space—until finally, our dust returns to the very soil from which it once arose. These immensities do not end. It is life that meets its conclusion.

The Creator has spread before us an endless panorama. Not everyone is capable of beholding these manifestations—and even those who do glimpse them see only a fragment. Human beings are limited. They can only see what lies within the reach of their vision—and even then, there is no guarantee they see it correctly. The reality behind what is visible may be entirely different. The tiny stars we see appear like small, flickering lamps—so many glowing points in the sky, adorning our roof with a masterly display of craftsmanship.

But uncovering the truth of these stars requires a knowledge in comparison to which this elegant display is insignificant. If we were to gather all the Earth-like planets—as many as there are stars—they would scarcely compare to the true mass of even a single star. Any calculation of the vastness is overwhelming.

Not only that—some stars may be blazing hot, while others are ice-cold. It is His prerogative, for He is the One who is absolutely omnipotent. But what does this vastness have to do with us? We can neither traverse it nor take comfort in fully comprehending it. What message can these indifferent expanses and dispassionate distances convey to human beings? What do we, the inhabitants of Earth, stand to gain from these celestial immensities? We can remain safe only by recognizing our limits. What problems have we solved by planting flags on distant worlds? Life here on Earth is growing bleaker by the day. We have been deceived by a distant glitter. The life that groans beside us has lost its value in our eyes. Our vision has become an obstacle to our own progress. Our obsession with gazing into the farthest reaches of space has become an escape from our responsibilities. It is all too easy to vanish within the vastness of the universe. What sort of journey are they truly on—those who drop bombs and annihilate fellow human beings? Which vastness is it that they seek to understand?

These vastnesses and distances are beyond measure. The scenes laid before us are infinite, while life itself is fleeting. Whatever talents we may possess often vanish before our life ends. Just when we prepare ourselves to behold these marvels, we find our eyesight no longer cooperating. We hoard excessive amounts of knowledge—every kind of science and learning—within our minds. We become known as intellectuals, scholars, researchers. And then, all of a sudden,

our memory begins to disintegrate. May God protect us from such a calamity.

These vastnesses further diminish the stature of man. Libraries ought to inspire love for knowledge—but instead, they make knowledge appear daunting and unreachable. What can we truly learn from this ocean of books? Where should we begin—and where will this endless tale conclude? To gain even a modest understanding of life, we must turn to books—and yet, all these countless books offer such contradictory interpretations that the very meaning of life escapes us. This contradiction itself is a kind of vastness. We lose ourselves in books, and life quietly departs from us. Even those we once considered our own are no longer by our side.

Eventually, after parting from the immense vastness known as life, we step into death—which is an even more staggering vastness. We arrived here without a say in the matter. We shall leave in the same manner. And yet we convince ourselves that we are beings of free will. What will happen after death? But more importantly, who will remain after death? In truth, why should anything remain once death has come? It is religion that offers an answer to this question. Religion is another vastness—a cosmos without bounds. After death, Allah—the One, the Almighty—will reign supreme. Then, the era of mercy and forbearance will have passed. What will remain is anarchic selfishness. And a terrible dread: that we failed to do what we were meant to do—and instead lost ourselves in the tangled webs of vastnesses.

You will be called to account. Did you fulfill your responsibilities toward your fellow human beings? Did you fulfill your responsibilities toward Allah?

In fact, you must reflect on why the Creator of the cosmos brought into existence such vast distances, such immense expanses. There are other vastnesses too. There are so many

forms of life that no one can even begin to estimate them. Consider the languages spoken across the world—to learn about them is itself a vast, staggering endeavor. There are mountains, seas, and deserts—each a boundless vastness. Then there are the charismatic wonders hidden within an atom—a vastness that leaves us awestruck. A countless number of trees reside in a single seed, and a countless number of seeds dwell within a single tree. Simply astonishing! Vastness upon vastness. The act of bringing forth death from life—and life from death. The mystery of how a pearl is created in the depths of an oyster. How a seed is nurtured in the darkness of the soil. All these are dimensions of vastness.

But the greatest marvel of all—the grandest vastness—is the creation of man. He is the noblest of God’s creations. He is the ruler of vastnesses. There is no other creature in the universe that can lay claim to such an honor.

All vastnesses exist for man. The sun blazes and burns to light his day. The moon, lending serenity to his night, shines with a borrowed glow. The stars, despite their own vastness, transform man’s sky into a spectacle of beauty and elegance. Provisions have been made for man’s nourishment—plants, vegetables, and fruits sprout from the earth to grace his dining table. Herds graze the pastures, birds fly through the sky, and fish swim in the seas—all to provide man with milk, meat, ghee, butter, cheese, and more. There is food for the body and wool for clothing.

Each man is an unfathomable, boundless vastness. There exists within him a vastness of thought, of emotion, of consciousness, of perception. All these vastnesses are meant for man. The Creator manifests Himself through man’s speech. When it came to love, it was man’s heart alone that was chosen to carry it.

This selection itself signifies both greatness and vastness. No other creation or vastness was deemed worthy of this trust. Man alone was considered trustworthy. You may call it recklessness, or regard it as placing one's soul on trial, but the trust itself is immense—a vastness in its own right. It reveals that the Greatest Creator, the Maker of Vastness, chose man's heart as His place of descent. He expresses Himself through man's words. Man is heir to the universe, heir to divine love. He alone is capable of passion and compassion. Angels and jinn may know how to worship, but only man is endowed with the ecstasy of devotion and the thrill of love.

Instead of measuring the orbits of stars, we should reflect on the generosity that has been bestowed upon us. We should strive to feel the vastness granted to us. We must give thanks for the relationship we are fortunate to have—a unique, wondrous, and immense relationship.

Vastness, in its truest sense, is to understand your own being and what it signifies—to recognize your Creator, to be mindful of your Sustainer, to comprehend your existence, and to foresee the moment when you shall no longer be. All other vastnesses are veils. The only vastness worth discovering, the only one worth revering, is the vastness of man. The vastness of his heart.

No doubt the earth and heavens are expansive—but they pale in comparison to the human heart, which can embrace the grand manifestation of the Creator of all things—He to whom belong the vast Throne and the vast heavens, which themselves create vastness. All these expanses and distances may well be sacrificed at the altar of the visionary heart. This alone is the fruit of life—and the ultimate purpose of existence.



Great People

When we study world history and human civilization closely, we find two kinds of people: the unknown and the well-known.

The unknown live humbly and simply, content in their obscurity. They form communities, races, nations, and civilizations. It is from among them that famous individuals emerge—yet these ordinary souls remain untouched by any desire for fame. They live peacefully in their own world, finding joy in observing greatness. They delight in reading the biographies and stories of renowned figures. They become the followers of great men. They live without commotion and quietly depart from the world. It does not trouble them if their passing is not marked by a grand funeral procession.

We don't know when they came into this world, nor when they left it. They spent their lives confined within the hard boundaries of their environment. They lived in their homes, caught up in the monotony of daily life—isolated in their poverty and displacement, closed off within their limited circles. Unconcerned with fame or greatness, indifferent to the desire of being remembered by history, unbothered by the ambition of renown—they came into this world tossed by life's trials, and they left it just as quietly. They had no understanding of when or why they were enslaved, nor how or when they were freed. They did what was required and vanished when no longer needed. They left behind no grand monuments, performed no heroic feats. Yet this multitude—the common people—remains a mystery unto itself, possessing a significance of its own. The Creator gave them life for a different purpose.

The other group is that of the famous. By achieving recognition and stepping into the limelight, they have engraved their names on the face of time. These great individuals, who rose to prominence in literature and the sciences, philosophy, history, culture, sociology, mysticism, mathematics, and economics, lived in an entirely different way. They passed through deserts of suffering and brought tidings of hope to the world. They turned their tears into radiant beacons. Their thirst became life-giving water for others. They quenched the world's thirst and left—just as parched as they arrived, without fanfare.

The path to greatness is one of hardship. While others sleep, great people remain awake. Their ways of thinking are different, their emotions take on another tone. Their beginnings and their endings—each of them—is unique.

Nature ensures that everyone is born in the same manner and also sees to it that all are endowed with similar basic traits. Every newborn, so to speak, is merely a child—and every dead person merely a corpse. Yet it must be noted that some children are different from the very beginning. Some are born with beauty, and their charm only deepens with time. A person with a radiant face stands out in a crowd. He is marked with special qualities and destined for achievements beyond the reach of ordinary men. Beauty marches forward and draws people toward greatness.

Some are born with a moth-like nature—drawn irresistibly to the flame of love. Within them resides a new kind of yearning. Without learning or study, they triumph over the mysteries of love. A heart filled with longing is a blessing, a divine gift. And from this very yearning begins a man's journey toward greatness. No one should begrudge it.

To understand all this, observe a man of distinction who has attained greatness. He was born like everyone else, but along

with other qualities, he possessed one defining trait that compelled him to take action. Quicksilver is inherently restless, fire must burn, and a river continues to flow.

Notice how daily practice yields remarkable results over time. Yet, we are left speechless when someone, without exerting any visible effort, achieves the same outcome we attained through intense labor. You may work tirelessly, hire the finest teachers or mentors, but you still won't be able to compose even a single line of poetry unless the essence of poetic expression or musicality exists deep within you. How such qualities develop—this, we do not know. It is what we call a blessing from Allah.

Greatness is assured from the cradle; it is not the product of formal education. It springs from a knowledge imparted by nature itself. We seek benefit in reading great authors—reading Ghazali is essential—but it is equally important to reflect on who or what made Ghazali what he became. Great men exist even before the roads that lead to greatness are built. It is nature that bestows honor upon them. If we observe the world with attention, we will see that while all human beings possess similar attributes, their temperaments are strikingly different. There are people who offer prayers in the same mosque for years, yet their natures remain vastly dissimilar.

Nature has devised a system whereby even someone who appears wholly unremarkable still finds admirers—some even idolize him. A person travels from one country to another and encounters someone likable, and together they rise to prominence. Laila was an ordinary girl, and Majnun merely a man—but love bound them so deeply that their story became legendary, inspiring countless poets to immortalize their love in verse. The result was poetry of exceptional beauty. True, Majnun and Laila were a man and a woman, and their love may appear worldly—but those who know more than we do—

like Hazrat Maulana Jami (R.A.) and Amir Khusro (R.A.)—consider their tale an expression of divine, transcendental love.

What a mystery it is that one person gains fame in the desert and another in the mountains. Some attain renown through victory, and others through defeat. The Romans conquered Greece, but were so awestruck by Greek excellence that—despite being the victors—they became their students. The conquerors became the humbled. Yazid won a battle, but earned eternal disgrace.

In any case, there are three types of great men. First, those who are born great. Nature marks their arrival with unmistakable signs. Even birds and beasts seem to sense that the one destined to wear the crown of greatness has come into the world. Narrow-minded people should not envy them. It is a great blessing for a society to be graced by such noble and sacred individuals. A petty man argues and complains, convinced that greatness should have belonged to him. He wishes to fly without wings, yearns for status without merit, and demands a share in something to which he has no claim. For such a man, only frustration awaits.

Look at nature's artistry: it created both the crow and the peacock. They are clearly different from each other, yet both are part of the same grand manifestation. Night is part of day, day part of night; life is a part of death, and death is part of life. There is no reason to quibble.

The second type of great people are those who, through sheer hard work, achieve miraculous results. They cling steadfastly to their task, never swerving from their heartfelt goal, and with unwavering determination, move step by step until they finally conquer the summits of time. This is not something within everyone's capacity. If people with limited potential resolve to count every leaf on a tree, they usually end up saying

halfway through, *“Forget it! What’s the use? Let’s do something more meaningful.”* And so, they keep changing their objectives and, having reached the threshold of obscurity, disappear into the alleys of anonymity.

The third type consists of those touched by a moment—by a fortunate instant, a lucky person, an event, or a congenial encounter—which elevates them to greatness. How many people have gone to sleep unknown and woken up to find themselves in the spotlight? It is not uncommon. A poet who lives in isolation remains unnoticed while his work remains unpublished, but the moment his verses are printed, he becomes a celebrated name. Someone lives an ordinary life, his days and nights blending into one another—until a challenge arises. He accepts it, and thus he becomes Ilmuddin, the great martyr. There are countless examples of individuals achieving fame through unexpected events.

Thus, it becomes evident that great people keep emerging—and often make their eminence beneficial, at times transforming their greatness into a banner that they plant in some realm of life. Generations to come pray that such greatness may be crowned with glory. However, we must reflect on a critical point: a great person’s association with religion can become perilous if he does not live in accordance with religious values. If we revere a great individual and accept him as an authority, then—should he be a supreme leader—he must demonstrate submission to Allah and His Prophet (SAW). If he does not, we must neither obey him nor follow him, but rather wage a spiritual struggle against such misguidance. Our minds may resist this, yet it is necessary. Often, we follow someone merely because of the trait that made him famous—and this can become a serious danger.

It is not necessary that a great lawyer should also be a great *Imam* (the one who leads prayers). A great person should be

seen as great only within the domain in which he attained his greatness. It is valid to follow him in that specific discipline. For instance, the philosophy of Lord Bertrand Russell is profound and captivating, but it would not be appropriate for us to adopt his lifestyle. His philosophy may be sound, but his way of living holds no relevance for a believer.

There are great people among us as well. We must study them carefully. We should honor them for the discipline and the field in which their greatness is manifest, and avoid those aspects of their lives for which they offer feeble excuses. Our dilemma is this: our religious scholars remain unaware of the pressing demands of the present age, while the so-called great individuals remain heedless of the principles of *Shariah*. This is why, when the nation pledges allegiance to a hero, it strays from the path of religion—and when it adheres strictly to religion, it becomes somewhat oblivious to the necessities of the age.

We are so biased that we cannot tolerate hearing that a great person was found lacking—even slightly—in religious matters. We idolize his excellence and, in revering his greatness, we begin to imitate even those aspects of his life where he displayed negligence. For instance, when a great thinker, who awakens a nation to the meaning of glory, turns out to be somewhat careless in fulfilling a religious obligation, no one dares to say whether he is right or wrong in that matter.

Our nation is in search of an ideal greatness and a great person—and this is a matter of deep regret. We fail to recognize that the great individuals of the world derive their greatness from only one or a few specific qualities. The only truly great man is the Holy Prophet (SAW). Every aspect of his life is a model of perfection, each of his actions peerless. His every attribute—his manner of joining and leaving a gathering, his wakefulness and his sleep, his speech and his

listening—is worthy of emulation. To walk in his footsteps is to walk the path of true well-being.

All other great individuals should be regarded only in the light of the specific quality that makes them great. No matter how eminent a person may be, he is not necessarily worthy of being followed in all aspects. If we begin to imitate everyone indiscriminately, the nation will lose its way and drift toward confusion and disorientation. The great figures within the nation should be viewed as reflections—beams of light—from the sun of Prophethood. The brilliance and radiance belong to him alone. The greatness of others is only to be observed, not followed. We must follow only the one whom Allah Himself has declared to be worthy of following.



The Rich and the Poor

In truth, no one in this world is inherently rich or poor. These are labels shaped by our imagination. If a person thinks in limited terms, he becomes poor. If his thoughts are expansive, he is rich. As the saying goes, "Don't call someone an orphan because he lost his father—the real orphan is one who is ignorant of learning and wisdom."

In the same way, a man is not poor simply because his pockets are empty; he is poor because his mind is barren. That said, these words—rich and poor—do carry meaning. They occupy a certain range, though it's difficult to define the boundaries of that range.

We might call someone well-off if he has, at the very least, access to the basic necessities of life. If a man has more money than he needs to live comfortably, he may be called rich. And if he has so little that even basic comfort is out of reach, we might label him poor. But all of this hinges on how we define "necessity."

Some people see luxury and indulgence as essential. Others are simply trying to hold on to the bare thread of survival. This disparity is hard to explain. Man is often greedy, ungrateful, and self-deceiving. He wishes to live forever in what are clearly temporary dwellings. He stands in the middle of a graveyard and still insists on the illusion of permanence. He knows well that every person who arrives in this world must eventually leave it—so why pretend otherwise?

If our stay in this world is essential, why speak of departure? And if we must eventually depart, then why make elaborate plans to stay? Even if a man manages to maintain his external

status, he may begin to fall apart from within. No visible calamity strikes him, yet his inner being begins to corrode.

Man collapses under the weight of his own ambitions. He builds his prison stone by stone with the bricks of desire. And when the final stone is laid, cutting off the last breath of freedom, he cries out: "O people of the world! Stay away from excessive desire. Don't chase comfort blindly. Don't fall in love with wealth. For wealth, when it becomes excessive, will make you forget God's commands. One day, you will end up in your grave—and you won't get another chance to live your life all over again."

The desire to hoard wealth and count every coin is the beginning of ruin. It is a fire that consumes from within. But this doesn't mean a man should give up his legitimate and necessary needs. We use the terms "rich" and "poor" often and casually, but we have never truly understood why someone becomes either.

In fact, most of the time, we are preoccupied with searching for formulas to become rich—but even when those formulas are followed, the results are unpredictable. For instance, we often say that hard work leads to success. Yet time and again, we see hard labor leading to exhaustion and misery. Work becomes a grinding mill that crushes countless lives—and still, no flour comes out for them. Every rule seems to fail when it meets reality.

Perhaps we can say this: *Despite the existence of rules to become wealthy, in truth, there are no rules at all.* And no matter how many precautions you take to avoid poverty, none of them are guaranteed to work. A man may be well-off one day, and without squandering his wealth or undergoing any major change, suddenly find himself poor.

Consider this: if the people around you seem to have less than you, you feel wealthy. But the moment you are among those

who have more, you instantly feel poor. This perception breeds inferiority and self-doubt.

So man must ask: *What unseen forces determine who becomes rich and who becomes poor?*

Who nurtures pearls inside lifeless oysters? Who brings forth treasures hidden beneath the earth?

Who sends down sustenance from the sky? What unseen force grants us joy, and what destiny dooms us to worldly suffering?

If those we hold dear are no longer with us, our hoarded wealth becomes meaningless. In such moments, what real purpose does our money serve?

The truth is: if we exist, our existence must have a purpose. Merely being alive is not enough. A person who spends his life amassing wealth that serves neither himself nor others is no more than a custodian of riches that aren't truly his. He's like a mythical dragon, guarding someone else's treasure—never using it, only watching over it.

If we collect wealth with the intention of sharing it, then naturally that wealth would spread among others. Over time, people would become more equal—either all rich or all poor. And if all are equal, there would be nothing left to envy or resent.

But that's not how life works.

Even if everyone carried the same amount of money, their minds wouldn't be the same. Their imaginations would differ. Beauty and charm wouldn't suddenly be distributed evenly. A poor man can be admired, respected, and loved. And a rich man, despite his abundance, can be disliked or even despised.

It's a strange contradiction: most people wish to become rich, yet they harbor resentment toward the wealthy. Just like they

long to become rulers but criticize those who rule over them. How ironic that we want to become exactly what we disdain.

And still, the rich remain poor—spiritually and emotionally. If you receive less than what you desire, you're poor. If you desire less than what you receive—or receive more than you expected—you're rich.

Observe the joy of Eid: it radiates from people of all walks of life. The smile on the face of a poor man, despite his hardships, is often just as bright and heartfelt as that of a wealthy man. In fact, the rich man's smile might be hollow—a performance, a show. The poor man's joy, on the other hand, springs from the depths of his soul.

Eid is not about wealth. It is a celebration for those who have fasted through Ramadan. For someone who has not fasted, the joy of Eid is hollow—just a social or ceremonial obligation. He knows, deep down, that he hasn't earned this particular kind of happiness. The true joy of Eid comes from spiritual fulfillment, from closeness to the Divine. And if we define true wealth as nearness to the Ultimate Truth, then it has nothing to do with material wealth. Nothing at all.

Nations that rule through wealth and opulence eventually face disgrace and downfall. Wealth doesn't bring you honor—it breeds fear. And fear does not command respect. Just as poverty is marked by deprivation, it also brings the poor closer to Divine Truth, by humbling them and making them bow in surrender. In this sense, poverty becomes a pathway to spiritual awakening.

But this does not mean that one should fall into despair or accept destitution as fate. However, when the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen, corruption multiplies in equal measure. A society that neglects its poor is on the road to collapse.

The poor are a test for the rich. They are supplicants—and if the wealthy fail to give, they will be held accountable for their stinginess. If the poor are denied their rightful share, then those who take more than their due will face consequences. The worst form of this punishment is spiritual: the loss of inner peace.

A rich man may possess vast wealth and still live in torment. The fear that haunts a wealthy person can be far greater than the fear experienced by the poor. The poor can still hope that better days may come. But the rich are constantly haunted by the dread of losing what they have. That fear—like the sword of Damocles—hangs over their head at all times.

We often see that a man who has more than enough still complains of hard times. The desire to possess more blinds him to what he already has. Instead of finding contentment in his wealth, his longing for more leaves him gloomy. And this gloom is nothing but the result of his thinking.

Man wants to become extravagantly rich. He wants his wealth to multiply endlessly, his power to grow boundlessly. But a person who fails to grasp the true purpose of wealth and authority—and who remains ignorant of how such pursuits ultimately lead to ruin—never bothers to look at history.

The Pharaoh, despite his immense wealth and absolute rule, was brought to ruin. His beliefs were erased from the world. On the other hand, Moses, though lacking in wealth and worldly power, was drawn close to God. So who is truly richer—Moses or Pharaoh? This question has been answered time and again. The life of Pharaoh has its own legacy, but if we desire the noble end of Moses, we must not live like Pharaoh. The life of Pharaoh ends as it must, and so does the life of Moses. There is no exaggeration here—no exception.

We see clearly that wealth cannot protect us from disgrace, defamation, enemies, or death. So what is its purpose? It may

delight the eyes, but that very delight numbs the heart. A man with great wealth often suffers from narrow-mindedness—and in the end, finds himself in pain.

Still, the debate about poverty and wealth continues. Why do these two classes exist? Is it exploitation? Is it oppression? Is it fate? Is it a test for those in power? Does poverty lead the poor to rebellion? Is the rich man, though surrounded by worldly limits and divine reminders, free to do as he pleases? Are the poor destined only to groan and weep?

It is a worthwhile discussion—but we've seen what became of every worldly attempt to solve this issue. Socialism has failed. Communism has collapsed. And even capitalism is on its way down. The only lasting solution to this question comes from religion.

Religion teaches: when the poor, driven by hopelessness, rebel—they are struck by a two-fold suffering. One is the torment of this world; the other is being cut off from the rewards of the hereafter. Likewise, a rich man who uses his wealth to oppress and hurt others will suffer for his cruelty—because his abuse of wealth leads to a terrible punishment.

Even so, the question of what poverty and wealth truly mean remains difficult to grasp. As mentioned earlier, it is all a matter of perspective. Two different mindsets. A person may have no wealth at all and still be considered well-off. Another may have riches and still be miserable. It is the command of the Creator who gave us life and who governs all things—life and death included. He has fixed every person's destiny. That is why we see people starving despite working hard, while others are born into abundance without lifting a finger.

Only if we remove God from the equation can we claim that the rich exploit the poor and deny them their share. Some argue that if wealth were distributed equally, the gap between

rich and poor would vanish. But even if every person received an equal share of wealth, the problem wouldn't go away. People would still find something to complain about. Rebellion would still arise. No one would say, "He has more money than I do," because everyone would have the same. Instead, they'd say, "He's wiser than I am. I'm foolish." Then there would be demands that wisdom and intelligence also be shared equally.

Now imagine a world where everyone has the same level of intelligence and wealth. But the complaints still wouldn't stop. Someone would say, "He's more handsome than I am. I'm not good-looking." So beauty would also have to be shared equally. Let's suppose—though it's impossible—that everyone becomes equally attractive. Then someone would say, "His voice is beautiful, and he sings so well." Those without musical talent would resent it. Fine—assume everyone is given the same sweet voice. Or let's assume all are deprived of it. The result is easy to predict—an age of destruction dressed as equality.

The richness, diversity, and beauty of the world exist because of contrast. Some places shine with light; others are cloaked in darkness. The sun glows in one part of the sky, while stars twinkle in another. Somewhere a lion roars. Somewhere else, a fawn trembles. A falcon feeds on a pigeon—not out of cruelty, but by nature. There's no oppression here, no injustice. Still, the poor must be given their right to live—like two travelers agreeing on the terms of a shared journey.

No mortal has the right to consider himself superior to another mortal. The rich must help the poor. They must introduce them to the ways of life, give them access to opportunities. What the rich must never do is rob the poor of their ability to live with dignity. If you see the poor dying of hunger, rest assured: the rich will soon perish from their excess—and die of overindulgence.

So in essence, the rich and the poor are not rigid economic categories but rather two styles of living, two temperaments, two distinct forms of blessing, two expressions of life in different shades. You cannot reduce humanity to a binary of rich and poor. The real understanding of this contrast lies elsewhere.

Among the rich, there are those who are good and those who are bad—just as among the poor, some are noble while others are not.

A good rich person can be truly exceptional. He is a protector of the poor, someone willing to risk his own life for their safety, someone who serves, gives generously, defends their rights, and shares his wealth. He leads the thirsty to the springs of relief, satisfies their hunger, and considers himself at their service.

In contrast, a bad rich man can be extraordinarily harmful. Despite his riches, he spreads fear—and those who instill fear often live in fear themselves. He uses his wealth to buy and sell sin, employing it in ways that inevitably lead to destruction. His eyes open only when they are about to close forever. Love for wealth has dragged countless people to ruin. Such a man becomes a cautionary tale—not just for himself, but for his nation and society. He is the modern-day Korah, a repeat of Pharaoh's fate, another tragic Shaddad. For him, no prayer seems to bear fruit.

Likewise, the poor too fall into two categories—the good poor and the bad poor.

A good poor person is one who allows his poverty to bring him closer to faith. His hardship leads him to the door of divine mercy. He grows nearer to the One who lifts the poor due to their patience and humility. The kind of spiritual status that grateful and content poor individuals reach is something

even prolonged worship may not achieve. The good poor are close to the Beloved Prophet ﷺ.

But the bad poor—he is morally bankrupt. Like a starving dog that turns on its own, he harms his fellow sufferers. He is destructive, bitter, and full of despair. He denies divine wisdom, curses his destiny, and spends his days in conflict and complaint, completely forgetting the purpose of his life in this fleeting world.

May God protect us from becoming either a bad rich man or a bad poor man.

That said, it is the responsibility of any government in power to ensure that no class accumulates wealth that serves no greater good, and no segment of society is left crushed or deprived. If this balance is not preserved, we may one day face a reckoning we cannot control. May God protect us from the moment when a voiceless and suppressed danger rises up and triggers chaos we never imagined. Such danger could send tremors through the very foundations of the ruling elite.

It is time to eliminate poverty before the poor become uncontrollable. Remember the poor. Instead of constantly serving the privileged, meet the basic needs of everyday people. Let the smoke and aroma of food rise again from their kitchens. Let them have the chance to thank God over a warm meal. For heaven's sake, don't preach to the poor. Don't merely ask them to recite the Kalima. Sit with them. Feel their pain. Share their sorrow.

If the poor don't receive free medicine, your grand hospitals will become lifeless and empty. Your treasuries will rot away, eaten from within by decay. There is still time. Time to reflect, to understand, and to wake up. The poor are a treasure—if only they are not left to drown in poverty.



Of All Hues

If we examine the circumstances of those who have lived in this world and reflect deeply on their experiences, we find that each person had entirely different impressions. Each one encountered something that felt unique to them—yet the conclusion they reached was the same. In essence, they all realized that it is beyond human capacity to fully comprehend the Divine Being. Those who claimed to have any awareness of the Divine all declared, in similar words, that no one can truly grasp the reality of the Divine. Although each individual's method differed, it is remarkable that they all arrived at the same understanding.

It is said that there was a pious man who stood for many years in a river, constantly reciting the Quran. One day, overcome with spiritual joy, he stepped out of the water and declared to his admirers: *"Had I known that recognizing Allah was so simple, I would not have spent all those years standing in the river."*

One of his bold disciples stepped forward and said, *"O Shaykh, what you say is indeed the truth. But now, please share with us the secret—so we may be spared the hardship of standing in the river."* The Shaykh smiled and replied, *"How can I hand over in a moment what took me years of devotion to understand?"*

The matter becomes clear: whatever he attained was the result of perseverance. And if it was earned through perseverance, then why did he say that had he known earlier, he wouldn't have wasted so many years? This is the subtle secret: what is received may indeed be simple, but realizing what is truly simple is the most difficult part.

Acts of worship and their sanctity carry great value, but winning over the human heart surpasses even that. Some people have nothing to their name, have done nothing outwardly remarkable—but carry the blessings of their mother’s sincere prayers. As a result, they come to know the Ultimate Truth. Why this happens is entirely up to their Creator.

Some find gnosis through their wealth, while others attain closeness to God through their endurance of poverty. Some travel far and wide, witnessing the tragic ends of deceitful people, and the fear awakened by these ruins leads them to the Divine. There are those who may never have performed a good deed, yet they earn martyrdom while fighting in the path of Islam. And the status of a martyr is nothing less than deliverance from death and eternal proximity to Allah. Allah commands: *“Do not say of those who are slain in the path of Allah that they are dead—they live on.”*

Some people remain in a state of spiritual ecstasy and in that very trance are shown the ultimate reality. Others find the secret in solitude; still others discover it in the company of fellow seekers. Some encounter it while listening to qawwali, others in a gathering where the name of Allah is remembered. Some are given the strength for prayer, others are lifted by longing, reflection, or struggle.

In short, the manifestation of Divine Truth appears in every shade and every form. And the consistency with which these manifestations are perceived is just as diverse. If a person sincerely and mindfully sets out to fulfill the responsibilities given to him by his faith, and embarks on the journey toward the Divine, then in one form or another, in one way or another, he will witness the manifestation of the One who has no form.

According to Hazrat Ali (R.A.), even contemplating the life of a bat can awaken a deep awareness of Divine Reality.

Our status, pride, greed, malice, hatred, anger, lust, pretentiousness, and corruption—all these are obstacles in the path of spiritual growth.

This world has a vital bearing on the hereafter. We will be held accountable only for what we experienced here. We will never be questioned about the movement of the stars. We will be held responsible solely for our own actions. We will be interrogated only about those matters that directly concerned us. We will be asked to account for the trusts that were placed in our care, for the rights we were supposed to uphold, and for the duties we were expected to fulfill.

We shall be questioned only within the limits of what was expected from us. A person who is physically disabled will not be asked how fast he could run. Matters of the heart will be brought before those who were attuned to the heart's mysteries. Thinkers will be cross-examined about their thoughts. The person who was given the power of the pen will be asked what purpose he served through his writing. The exact wording and structure may not matter as much—the implications and deeper meanings behind the words matter more. Just like speech, the ability to write is a great gift of nature, and every writer will be held accountable for what he wrote.

Those authors who incited base desires through their books will be taken to task. They will regret having violated the sanctity of words and having failed to uphold the chastity of the written word. Those who misled others with corrupt writing will be rightly punished. Those who found delight in their rhetoric and led masses astray are certainly calling destruction upon themselves. Similarly, capitalists who spent their lives hoarding wealth and counting it, wasting their time in vain, are securing their own downfall—and they will clearly witness its consequences in the life to come.

Those who usurped the rights of others and felt secure because no one on earth bore witness against them will find themselves fully exposed in the hereafter. The Day of Judgment is the day when everything concealed will be revealed—and that day is not far.

It is not necessary for a friend of God to be acquainted with other friends of God. Those close to Allah do not have to be in contact with one another. It is not essential for those who have been granted knowledge of divine mysteries to know others who are similarly gifted. Why? Because the manifestations of the Divine encompass every hue. The entire enchantment of this reality is expressed through the diversity of His colors—and even the colorless manifestations reflect the full brilliance of the rainbow. Though they may be entirely unaware of one another, these individuals are united in their inner knowledge. It's something difficult to grasp rationally.

If we study history, we see that the lives of prophets differed greatly from one another. One was a blacksmith by profession, another a shepherd. One was granted medical knowledge and wisdom, while another endured chronic illness. One spoke only a few words in his entire life, while another embodied eloquence.

Hazrat Yusuf (A.S.) was offered the opportunity to sin—but he said, *"I seek refuge in Allah."* It was the fear of Allah that saved him. Resisting temptation in such utter secrecy is not easy, but he relied upon Allah—the One who sees what is most hidden, who hears even what is left unspoken, who is infinitely near despite appearing far, closer than our jugular vein while still beyond comprehension.

This is the majesty of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), and this is how he brings transformation.

What we must now reflect upon is this: Why was each individual who shared a connection with God given a life so unlike the others? The reason is that the Sustainer of all ordained different paths and professions for people so they might earn their livelihoods accordingly. In cases where wealth could potentially lead to corruption, the rich were commanded not to accumulate more than what was necessary for a decent life.

Prophets were sent to guide nations that were prone to straying in their pursuit of sustenance. Their mission was to discipline these people and bring them closer to submission and obedience. After the arrival of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), the various stages of spiritual and societal development were made easier for the Muslim Ummah. They were shown the path of the Shariah, encouraged to rectify their personal affairs, inspired to govern their states through comprehensive organization, and urged to keep the spirit of Jihad alive in all its forms.

As for rulers, governance is a sacred trust, not a license for personal power or self-indulgence. To govern means to ease the burdens of the poor, to ensure they receive their due, and to safeguard their rights. A ruler is merely a trustee, and the people under his care are bound to obey him only as long as justice and sincerity prevail. Both can earn closeness to God—if they remain true to Him.

If poverty fails to offer peace of heart, and a poor person remains bereft of the spiritual richness of faith, then that poverty is nothing short of a torment. Such a person is denied not only worldly wealth but also the comfort of inner contentment. If he places his trust in God yet sees no hope on the horizon, his suffering doubles. A poor man who rebels carries within him two afflictions.

Similarly, a rich man who sees his wealth as a sign of greatness is walking the path of Pharaoh—one who stands condemned in divine history. To behave with arrogance and tyranny is to adopt a Pharaonic disposition. And those who masquerade as well-wishers of the people, while leading them away from religion and inciting rebellion, have nothing but misfortune awaiting them.

What truly matters is not wealth or power, not caste or clan, not education in English or Urdu, not skin color or appearance, not whether one is black or white. The only true value lies in *taqwa*—chastity and God-consciousness. One who draws near to God through piety remains close to Him under all circumstances—whether rich or poor, ruler or subject. The key is sincerity.

That is why, throughout history, we find men who were ascetics yet wore crowns. We read of those who shared divine secrets while suffering from hunger, their tongues busy only with the remembrance of Allah. There were those who gave away everything they owned simply to gain the pleasure of Allah. They paid their debts in full—not just materially, but spiritually. These are the people of true stature.

They drenched the soil of martyrdom with their own blood and continued to send salutations upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) even in states of utter destitution. Their form of salutation was noble and heartfelt, as in the words: *“Blow gracefully, O gentle breeze, and carry my greetings to the sacred land; convey the salutations of Zainul Abideen (may Allah be pleased with him) to the blessed resting place of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him).”*

This is the kind of salutation that befits such souls—those who lived lives of submission and compliance, remained steadfast in obedience, and departed this world in the same spirit of humility and surrender.

It is beyond human estimation to understand how truth makes its way through the world. But one must be careful—not to clothe truth in the garments of falsehood. And when it becomes necessary to speak the truth, say it plainly. Do not withhold it.

What you covet and desire may be exactly what your brother needs. Let him have it. Reflect on the foolishness of one who lives in luxury while leaving his brother in distress—who, having consigned his brother to hell, dreams of celebrating in paradise. Wouldn't it have been better to stay alongside your brother, or to invite him to join you?

Allah will not inflict severe punishment upon the Ummah of His beloved Prophet (peace be upon him), but if anyone seeks an elevated status for himself, he must take care that no member of the Prophet's Ummah suffers in hardship. Strive to please your Lord, not people. If you wish to walk the right path, let your thoughts remain rooted in truth. If every person becomes truthful within the bounds of his own circumstances, the manifestations of truth will begin to appear everywhere—not disguised, but clearly visible.

The fault, then, lies within us—not in the world—because this manifestation is present and evident at every turn.

Stop hurting others. Forgive everyone. Seek forgiveness for yourself. The religion offers thousands of ways to seek pardon. Civility is essential. A better time can still unfold—if you sincerely repent. You've spent a lifetime asleep—at least now, resolve to awaken for whatever time remains.

If a man performs ablution before sleep, his very sleep is counted as an act of worship. When one begins to seek the Divine, the very first step becomes the last, for it leads directly to Him.

One of the names of the Kaaba is the "forehead of man," and one of the names of God is "the tear of the humble." A tear shed by a helpless soul carries more weight than countless acts of worship. Approach God with your truthfulness, with your own striving. Find Him in your heart—through sincerity. He has declared: *"I am closer to you than your own breath."* Wherever you are, He is there with you.

Look into the mirror—your heart. You will find Him there. Just as when we stand before a mirror: if we lean forward, the reflection leans forward. If we step back, the reflection steps back. And when we turn away, the reflection disappears. So the point to ponder is this: as we draw near to Him, He draws even nearer to us. Why shouldn't we take the first step?

At this level of intimacy, the one who remembers His name and the One whose name is remembered—both become one within the remembrance itself. They are simultaneously near and far; and this is the very place to find Him.

Forget yourself in your remembrance of Him. Detach yourself from your surroundings. As you set out to seek Him, regard no obstacle as insurmountable. He is far, yet close—like the sun, distant in the sky, but its light is right here with us. What you truly desire is to witness His manifestation. But no one can become one with another being—that is beyond human capacity.

Yet a seeker can become a manifestation of the search itself. Let your search consume you. Let the final outcome of your journey take the shape of His unveiling.



Justice

If someone has a rightful claim to something and he receives it, we can say that justice has been served. If a criminal is punished in proportion to the crime committed, that too is justice. If you observe someone weighing out goods, you'll notice the balance of both scales—that balance is what we call justice. To weigh dishonestly, to use false or diminished weights, or to defraud in any form is not justice; it is wrongdoing. Even if the final weight appears correct, mixing or adulterating the product is also an act of injustice.

The domain of justice is vast. It begins with a person's solitude and extends to the vastness of the Day of Judgment. If a person cannot be just in his loneliness, how can he ever be just in public? If his thoughts are not rooted in justice, his actions cannot be either. A person whose private life contradicts his public persona is corrupt. He who leads multiple lives cannot be just. A truly just person is just under all circumstances—his words are a court of justice, and so is his silence; his testimony is a court of justice, and so are his decisions. His life itself is a court of justice, and even his death bears witness to justice.

We have been commanded not to defraud by under-weighing. We are warned not to disguise falsehood as truth. One must never shy away from stating the truth plainly. Truth is, after all, truth—and it must be said. How can those who seek to hide the truth ever succeed? In the end, the sun will shine. The secrets buried in the earth will rise to the surface. Whatever wrong you have swallowed, you will be forced to cough it up. The world has been entrusted to us, and we are allowed to live in it only by practicing justice. Call truth what it is. Call falsehood what it is. Distinguish between them clearly. If it is

day, say it is day. If it is night, say it is night. Those who mix truth with falsehood live lives of torment—perhaps behind grand gates and in lavish homes. The world may think they are happy, but they know deep within that true happiness eludes them. And still, they deceive themselves by masking their sorrow and calling it joy.

True justice is only possible through the fear of God—or through His mercy. Otherwise, it is a very difficult path. To live justly is like walking on the edge of a razor. The most fundamental requirement for justice is that a person should determine which religion creates the most suitable environment for justice and equality. This question must be answered sincerely before entering the realm of justice. One who answers it wrongly can never be truly just.

If you encounter a disbeliever who conducts his business honestly, think twice before calling him a just man. When examined carefully, you'll see that his justice may be superficial. If a person's thoughts are not rooted in justice, his actions—no matter how fair they appear—lack authority. A person who thinks justly but acts otherwise cannot be called just. A truly just person is just in both thought and deed.

Justice must be present at every stage of life. It is essential. In all our roles and identities, justice should govern our actions. If one part of the self keeps devouring the others, it is injustice. Whatever exists should endure—but with justice.

Every person must reflect on their thoughts. How much of our thinking is truly grounded in justice? Our actions are born from our intentions. But only the doer knows what his true intention was. If we believe we can understand someone's intentions merely by observing their actions, we will always remain in doubt. Some people claim they can deduce intentions from actions—this claim is baseless. As the Holy Prophet (SAW) said, "Actions are judged by intentions."

He alone can truly understand what a thought is—the One who gave us the ability to think. The Being who created man is also the One who creates thoughts. Thoughts come into existence just like human beings do. Some are good, others bad. Yet, through fortune and proper guidance, it is possible to grasp good thoughts, to nurture them through our actions, and to do justice to both the thought and to ourselves. To do justice, it is essential to examine our thoughts. One must stand guard at the doorway of the heart, staying alert to how thoughts enter and exit. This is what justice demands.

It is an act of justice not to place a tainted book on the shelves of an otherwise unblemished library. One should not maintain a friendship with anyone who, in any way, could become an obstacle to justice. Your thoughts can only be just if your perception of the world is just. A person who understands both rights and boundaries will have a just perspective. He must recognize what belongs to him and what belongs to others. He must know whether the items he uses at home are actually the property of his workplace. He must ask himself whether the money he spends was obtained truthfully, or through a dishonest claim. To perceive things justly is no easy feat. A truly just person sees someone else's daughter as if she were his own, and remembers the sons of others—those who've been denied their due—before giving his own son more than his fair share. Justice through vision is difficult, but if one's vision is infused with justice, success is inevitable.

Justice must also guide what we say. We must know what we're saying, why we're saying it, what it concerns, and whom we're addressing. Behind every spoken word stands the speaker's character. What Allah says is supreme—because the Speaker is supreme. Similarly, the words of the Holy Prophet (SAW) must be viewed as a Prophet among words. Justice demands that we recognize the greatness of the speaker by understanding the weight of his words. Otherwise, it often

happens that eloquent words spoken in sweet tones inject venom into the social bloodstream. It's a tragedy that some people cite the Quran and Hadith, and quote Iqbal and Rumi, merely to gain some small status in politics.

The eloquence of a man driven by ambition is not true eloquence. It is not justice. A person who memorizes and repeats the thoughts and writings of others, passing them off as his own, acts unjustly. What could be more unjust than claiming someone else's words in your books, plays, or speeches—as if they were yours by birthright? And worse still, to claim that you are honoring the original author rather than committing plagiarism. It may be excusable if the author being quoted is a close companion—things borrowed from loved ones carry no blame. But that's rare.

Ultimately, a person who is truthful will speak the truth even in hardship. Those who are just in their words will certainly be just in their verdicts. For a judge, justice isn't just what is written in a judgment—it is a way of life. He who speaks justly, whether in court or at home, is the one who truly lives by justice.

If there had been fairness in politics, this country would have progressed by leaps and bounds. But the political elite are not guardians of justice. We must model our justice system on God's framework of justice—not manipulate God's system to suit our own interests.

The true arena of justice, where every deed will be credited or debited, is the vast expanse of the Day of Judgment. But even before entering that realm, there is something important to consider: the Being who commands us to uphold respect and dignity also proposes a solution to our problems that transcends mere civility. Justice is commendable, yes. But to show favor is far more exalted. Allah Himself declares: "My mercy outweighs My wrath."

What is wrath? It is to punish a person for the wrong he has done, and such punishment becomes a stern warning to others. But mercy says: forgive the man. Mercy shields him from becoming a cautionary tale. If every action were met with strict justice, what room would there be for mercy?

Justice dictates that when a society becomes rebellious and criminal, it deserves to be wiped out. This is how many ancient nations were destroyed—some by a terrible sound, others by hurricanes, thunderbolts, or being swallowed by the earth. Yet the pre-Islamic Arabian society, despite its many flaws, was spared such annihilation. Why? Because Allah, the Lord of both justice and mercy, chose instead to extend grace. He said: *Let Me show mercy to this people*. And in doing so, He sent to them the Holy Prophet (SAW)—a mercy to all the worlds. Thus, a society on the brink of condemnation became, in time, the most exalted society on earth.

Our laws prescribe punishment for criminals—that is justice. Yet religion offers sinners the possibility of redemption. One can turn back through sincere repentance. If fortune smiles upon him, he can begin anew. This is a clear sign of divine favor, a testament to mercy, and a glimpse of the hidden potential for goodness in man.

Not every threat leads to destruction. Not every snake strikes. Despite the dangers in life, He who made peace possible continues to shower His boundless mercy and generosity upon creation. One should not become proud of their piety, but instead plead for His favor—not His justice.

As the poet Mian Muhammad Bakhsh beautifully said:

Should He resort to justice,
The nobles would tremble with fear;
But should He show mercy,

Even sinners like me
Would be granted forgiveness.

That is, if Allah were to deal only in justice, even the most powerful and pious would shrink in dread. But if He bestows mercy, even the wrongdoers—like the poet himself—would find infinite forgiveness.

We, too, must strive to be just. We must learn to forgive. Let go of anger. Pardon those who wrong you. For ultimately, life is lived among people. All good and all evil manifest through our relationships with others. Our dealings with people reflect our relationship with Allah.

If we are just in this world, we will receive justice in the next. If we are merciful to others, we will be shown mercy in the hereafter. To forgive is to be forgiven. To be merciful is to be treated with mercy. Mercy should prevail over justice—not as something to regret, but as something to be cherished.



Rights

How much a person owes to others—whether to individuals, society, the country, or the nation—in terms of rights can be roughly estimated, even in the absence of a formal law. The value of anything is often determined by the rights attached to it and its utility.

To define, respect, and fulfill rights is to maintain balance. Protecting rights is an act of social equilibrium. A society that respects and safeguards rights is considered balanced and welfare-oriented.

When life, detached from an awareness of rights, strays from its proper course, it becomes rebellious and defiant. All values are shattered, and its grace disappears. A life devoid of the recognition of rights becomes helpless and subjugated.

Only that society can be deemed truly successful where duties are fulfilled and rights are granted quietly, without fanfare. An era in which a man must struggle to attain his rights is an era of oppression. If supplication is the only hope for justice, then you are living in an age of tyranny. And when some people are deprived of their due while others receive more than what is rightfully theirs, such times are marked by unrest and turmoil. A place where everything and everyone is valued at the same rate becomes a symbol of complete disorder.

Societies progress step by step only when rights are acknowledged and honored. When mutual rights are respected, a system gains stability. If people ignore one another's rights and instead seek to impose their own will, the time will come when they will be stripped of their authority. Granting rights fosters love; denying them breeds hatred. Love begets loyalty; hatred incites rebellion. If the powerful ensure

that others receive their rightful dues, they will remain powerful. Those who deny others their rights are tyrants—and tyranny, by the law of nature, is doomed to end.

A person is bound by many rights—too many to list in detail. However, three primary categories stand out: the rights of society, the rights related to one's own self, and the rights owed to the Creator. The rights of society encompass the rights of the nation, the state, the government, neighbors, and those influenced by one's actions or position.

Among these, the most significant national right is this: we must strive to earn a place of dignity among the nations of the world. Nations rise only when their people are willing to work hard. When we begin to sacrifice our personal interests for the collective benefit of the nation, true progress begins. But if individuals continue to prioritize personal gain over national welfare, the outcome will be disastrous.

We became a nation by casting aside tribal, caste-based, sectarian, provincial, and religious prejudices. If we now revive these old divisions, we might as well bid farewell to our national unity. If we are Pakistanis, what meaning do petty caste distinctions hold? What does it mean to call oneself a Sindhi, Balochi, Pathan, or Punjabi? Our identity is rooted in Pakistan. We are, and must remain, Pakistanis. The nation demands from us a collective identity—not a fragmented, individualistic one.

Our country makes many demands upon us. We must be patriotic and safeguard the interests of our nation. We must ensure that our country's honor remains untarnished. National integrity and security are our collective responsibility. We alone are the wealth and strength of our homeland. It is our country that shaped us into a nation and gave us unity. Many lives were sacrificed to gain a country of our own. Our caravan has passed through many difficult and testing phases. As a

nation, we have endured numerous hardships. Our country has weathered countless storms. In this relatively short journey, we have already encountered major catastrophes.

It must be acknowledged that we have not cared for our country's rights as sincerely as we should have. A paradise is only truly valued once it is lost. May God forbid, but the country might abandon us if we continue on this path. There is still time. We must fulfill what our country demands from us. Whatever internal issues we may face, the outside world should never be allowed a glimpse of them. This country has been entrusted to us. If the nation remains safe, we are safe. If it ceases to exist, what will become of us?

Everyone must have a role in national life, and the country should be a meaningful part of each individual's existence. Only then will everyone receive their due. Our personal differences harm the country; they do not serve the national interest.

While the government bears the responsibility of looking after the state, without its people, a country is nothing more than a piece of land. If both the government and the people work hand in hand to develop the homeland, progress becomes inevitable.

The people have the right to live a peaceful life. They should sleep without fear or worry. Their days and nights should be tranquil, the borders secure, and their lives, property, present, and future protected. Life should be a secure and fulfilling experience. And if ever, God forbid, the country faces danger, every citizen should be willing to lay down their life for the sake of freedom.

As for the individual, he bears many rights upon himself—both external and internal. Outwardly, he must strive to become a respectable citizen. It is our duty to attain the

education relevant to our time. We are responsible for being aware of our environment and keeping others informed of what we learn and observe. Each lamp should light another, and in this way, we will dispel ignorance and superstition. We are obligated to assert our identity and substantiate our individuality. We must be mindful of how we dress, the language we speak, our accent, and the conduct of our private and public lives. This much we owe to ourselves.

The greatest of the inward rights is to keep alive within us a world of feeling. Transform your heart into something sentient and alive. Blessed are those who possess both a thoughtful mind and a feeling heart. If we remain aware of our religion—both in understanding and in practice—we will fulfill our personal rights. Religion is not just academic knowledge or a set of mechanical actions. It must be honored with awareness and reverence. We must aim to harmonize our religious and worldly affairs. A revolution in our society would begin if our mosques became true welfare centers.

A society that respects both its rights and its duties is a welfare society. What religion can be better than Islam? What laws can be more beneficial than those prescribed by it? An Islamic welfare state is bound to be superior to all other social systems. But such a state cannot be built through mere ordinances or a few familiar faces. It can only be realized through love and sincerity. We must care for one another. A true society will emerge from this spirit. Until a man awakens his soul, he cannot accomplish anything that could be called true welfare.

We are duty-bound to lead an enlightened spiritual life. We have the right to experience spiritual awakening—and if that remains beyond our reach, we must at least seek the guidance of a spiritual mentor. If the soul is alive, the person is truly alive. Otherwise, he is nothing.

To think is to act. To feel is also a form of action. We call a person “busy” when he is engaged in work—be it on a farm, in a barn, a factory, or an office. He is said to be gainfully employed. But someone sitting in a chair, eyes closed, lost in deep thought, is often assumed to be idle. In reality, he is engaged in something far more profound. Those who dive into the depths of thought and surface with pearls of wisdom are benefactors of humanity. Their thinking is action. It is essential for us to reflect and meditate. Our foremost task is to become thoughtful human beings—people who ponder deeply. We must honor those who awaken the nation to new horizons. They deserve our respect and protection. They must be cared for.

Above all, the most important duty of a human being is what he owes to God. He who has gifted us life wants us to live in accordance with His guidance. He desires that the path chosen by His beloved—the Holy Prophet (SAW)—become the dearest path to all. Allah, the Most Merciful, wants humanity to journey towards Him. Our lives should move in His direction. A life devoid of God’s remembrance becomes lost in distractions. A person who forgets his Creator and becomes engrossed only in creation ends up a failure—both spiritually and materially.

Allah invites us to everlasting ecstasy. He calls us to live this temporary life in such a way that it leads us to an eternal one. He teaches us the way to a victorious existence. We are duty-bound to obey Him. This is the greatest right of all, and we must fulfill it. No excuse, hardship, or limitation can justify neglecting it. It is our foremost responsibility, and we cannot find any valid reason to avoid it.

Allah the Exalted has commanded us to fulfill the rights of His creation. For example, He has decreed obedience to one’s parents. We are not even permitted to speak a word of

annoyance in their presence. If they reach old age, we must support them with compassion and pray, “O Allah, have mercy on my parents as they showed mercy to me when I was a child.” Obedience to parents is a fundamental human right. And since human rights have been established by Allah Himself, honoring them is part of our duty to Him.

Allah has also made it mandatory to obey His beloved Prophet (SAW). We must never raise our voices above his. His word is the most trustworthy. The path he showed is the only path worthy of being followed. No other way is deserving of our pursuit.

Whoever fulfills the rights prescribed by Allah will inevitably find improvement in his life. As for what human beings consider their God-given rights—those begin at birth. Even before a child is born, his sustenance is arranged. Parents are prepared to raise him. The entire world awaits to welcome him. He is given eyes, and a beautiful cosmos to behold. A mosque is already there for him to offer his prayers. Yet despite all of this, Allah still says, “My obedient servant, ask Me for what you desire.” He listens to our prayers and responds to them. He has commanded the seasons to provide us with sustenance and fresh air.

Allah has elevated His obedient servant to the noblest of all creation. The human being who subdues the earth and the sky has only one true obligation: to bow down before his Lord. He has been given the right to make everything else submit to him. But he who compels all creation to serve him must himself submit to his Creator. This is the truth—and our essential duty toward Allah.

May Allah, in His grace, grant us the strength to fulfill all our obligations.



Purpose

At some point, we set a goal for ourselves—an objective we hope to achieve in the coming days—so that we might live comfortably in the future. But when the time finally arrives for which we had planned, we often realize that the future we had envisioned is nowhere to be found. Something entirely different has taken its place. Perhaps the days in which we were planning for the future were not appropriate to envision the new era with the same mindset we had in the past. Thus, the pursuit of our objective turns into a meaningless amusement. There is no doubt about it.

Consider this: when we are very young, we secure a government job that appears to be the safest way to ensure comfort in old age. But often, when we reach that age, we don't receive the treatment we had expected or looked forward to during our youth. The period of retirement, in every sense, is a process of being cast aside. We are evicted from our government residence as though it was never ours. The bureaucratic system, built on rigid discipline, ensures that we are completely worn out. Our limbs weaken. Our strength and zest for life vanish. Our pension proves insufficient, and after navigating a narrow alley of hardship, we hit a dead end.

We cannot afford to build a new house, and the old one—being government property—cannot be occupied any longer. Our children's problems remain unresolved, and we are left to reflect on the objectives we once had, the thoughts we carried through the years, and what ultimately became our fate. What once looked enchanting from afar appears dreadful up close. Just like the moon: from a distance, it glows with beauty, but up close, it is barren and desolate. How strange. It's as if the trees that once cast shadows invited us to journey toward

them, but when we approach in the blazing sun, they turn away, withholding their shade. We can neither move forward nor retreat. There are no second chances to redefine our goals or carve a new path. Our hopes dissolve into deep regret. The official titles we once held become hollow and meaningless. Our ego remains bureaucratic, while our condition is in tatters. We continue to believe we hold status, yet the rank we once held has long perished.

We place great emphasis on having an objective. We say that life must have purpose and direction, and that it should steadily move toward a meaningful target. But to actually reach that target and attain the peace of mind we once longed for is, more often than not, beyond our control. The result is inner turmoil and confusion.

We pursue education. We insist on being educated. We dream of becoming engineers or doctors. We desire expertise in various fields. After completing an MBBS, our ambitions multiply. But the road ahead is blocked by limitations. It is a bitter reality that doctors—like engineers—roam from door to door in search of employment. Those familiar with the system say that earning a degree is far easier than securing a job. Some even claim that a bribe is required to get hired. In other words, to make money, one must first grease someone's palm. And those who can't afford to do that, don't have the "right" to earn. In this way, many doctors fall into psychological distress.

Those in the know also say that personal references or recommendations are needed to get a job. The poor doctor—whose parents took on heavy debts to educate their child and secure an MBBS degree—finds himself in an unthinkable bind, a helplessness beyond words. After completing an MBBS, one still has to appear for another exam—the Public Services Commission. Eventually, the futility of the entire

objective becomes clearer and clearer. You find yourself confused and disillusioned, and your hard-earned MBBS degree begins to feel absurd. And so it goes, profession after profession, each with its own share of irony and disillusionment.

However, there are a few fortunate ones—or perhaps those with strong connections—who never seem to retire. Each time, some valid excuse or necessity compels them to remain in service. Retirement never comes their way. Allah wills it so. What can we do?

In reality, seeking an objective is, in a sense, a declaration of our free will. It implies that we believe we can become whoever we choose, do whatever we want, and follow any path we desire. We assume we are free to move in any direction. But the very people who have designed these paths have structured them so that all the highways eventually lead to predetermined destinations. Man believes he is free, but this belief is merely an illusion—a self-deception. We labor hard, but there's always something beyond our control. We can build magnificent cities, smooth highways, bustling factories, and whirring mills—yet even in the most advanced of cities, we allocate space for graveyards. And that's where we all eventually go.

We have no idea who will be called next. Thus, an objective freely chosen must ultimately surrender to an end not freely chosen. A stroll through a cemetery reveals a strange truth. One gravestone reads: *Here lies the venerable Chaudhary Falak Sher, a skillful physician whose hands brought healing.* Yet next to it lie rows upon rows of nameless graves, resting in quiet peace. What meaning remains in an "objective" when both the healer and the healed meet the same end? The hand that cured, the hand that gave, and the hand that pleaded—none endure.

So what is the point of all this fuss about having an objective or choosing a path for yourself? This system belongs to someone else. The program has been written by someone else. And yet we live under the illusion that we are the ones writing it. We wish to be happy, and yet we find our laughter dissolving into tears. Nothing may have happened directly to us—perhaps a loved one passed away—and we are drowned in grief. We are punished without having committed any fault.

So what is an objective? What is happiness? What does it mean to gain? What is deprivation? What is all of this? These are the questions we must contemplate.

Before determining our objective, we must first ask: to what extent does our life even belong to us? It is shared with society—and we are not the whole society. Our religion is part of our life, and we did not create it. It was bestowed upon us by a Higher Being. Our life is made up of certain capacities and faculties, all of which are limited—and to a great extent, restrained. There are boundaries we cannot cross. We are overtaken by sleep. We are gripped by hunger. We are consumed with addressing one set of compulsions, only to be met with new ones. Life is not a mathematical problem that can be solved; it is a riddle that defies any formula.

We wish to earn a respected place in society, only to discover that the moral character of those at the top is often deeply flawed. The political arena operates by one logic. Academia has a different temperament. Business follows an entirely separate code. What should we aim for?

When we finally achieve what we set out to achieve, we are often left baffled. That shimmering goal we saw from a distance turns out to be an illusion. We may hear that engineers are doing well financially, but upon closer examination, we see they receive modest salaries. So what enables them to maintain such lavish lifestyles? What hidden

source of income are they drawing from? How are they making ends meet in ways that seem so disconnected from their reported income?

Some people bluntly say they take bribes. Others adamantly deny it, refusing to believe that engineers and professionals are thriving through corruption.

Bribery is forbidden in Islam, and most of Pakistan's population consists of Muslims. Then who could possibly be offering or accepting bribes? We refuse to believe such a thing. But the reality is that those who offer bribes are seemingly eager to do so—they place the money on the table without hesitation. After that, it becomes almost inevitable for the recipient to accept. Perhaps this is one of the key reasons bribery continues to exist.

In any case, if all that matters is making money, then any kind of education will suffice. Why, then, is there so much fuss about getting a particular kind of degree? This also leads us to question: does education really pay off? We see uneducated individuals—like shopkeepers or vegetable vendors—earning a great deal of money. In contrast, look at the politicians—may Allah have mercy on them—who, if they attempt to deal honestly, end up facing difficulty.

If your sole objective is to accumulate wealth, there are countless ways to do it—and that's precisely where many people go astray. They resort to theft and other crimes that we cannot even imagine. When getting rich becomes the end goal, all ethical boundaries are seen as irrelevant. At this point, even educated individuals who spent years earning their degrees begin to feel deeply disillusioned.

If we agree that the primary goal is to acquire wealth, then the West—and Western civilization as a whole—far surpasses us. They possess immense resources and have mastered the

knowledge and power to create wealth. What they lack is religion. On the other hand, we have little to no resources. We talk a lot about religion and wish to live luxuriously, but fear constantly lingers in our hearts, and we endlessly roam from one place to another seeking a livelihood.

It is time we rethink and reevaluate what it truly means to have an objective. What should be the goal of an individual? And what should be the collective aim on a national level?

A person's objective should be aligned with the objective laid out by Allah. Allah says, *"I have created jinn and mankind solely to worship Me."* But if all we did was worship all day, we would not even be resourceful enough to continue praying. If we chase resources, that too becomes an overwhelming task. Let's pause to consider how we actually spend our day from morning to night.

For most people, the day begins by reading the newspaper—something entirely unrelated to religion. The days when mornings began with the recitation of the Quran are long gone. Then comes work, and we turn to different means to earn a living—means that often have no religious connection.

For instance, if someone's car breaks down, he doesn't turn to a religious scholar—he seeks out a mechanic. That mechanic may know nothing about Islam. In fact, the manufacturers of the car may be non-believers, even Jews. And yet, we begin our drive with *"Bismillah"* as though that alone fulfills our religious obligation. We rarely stop to reflect on what this really means.

Some people even argue that since we are armed with weapons made by Jews, how can we expect to succeed in an Islamic or global jihad? If attaining power is the ultimate objective, then we must admit that power lies with others. It becomes clear that religion, on its own, may not deliver the worldly success

that man desires—unless one reevaluates what success actually means.

Young preachers, after completing their education from religious seminaries, are appointed as imams in various mosques. Meanwhile, those who graduate from elite institutions like Aitchison College are often designated as heads of administrative services. Such a disparity in this country—how absurd! Why shouldn't the imam of the Shahi Mosque also be the governor of the province? Or why can't the governor himself lead the prayers at the Shahi Mosque? Imagine a person whom we obey in both state and religious matters—a leader who acts as both imam and governor. He should be equally competent as an Islamic jurist and a top-level administrator. Now that would make the system function properly. In other words, the person who leads the people should excel both in religious jurisprudence and worldly governance. Such a model would make the objective behind the creation of Pakistan crystal clear.

Our personal goal may simply be to lead a comfortable life. But a national objective—far beyond individual career achievements—is what we recognize as a collective journey. If your personal aim is in conflict with the national aim, it is meaningless. If it is inconsistent with the religious aim, it is directionless. Therefore, those who define national objectives must do so with foresight and wisdom. Their vision should allow students not only to succeed in their careers but also to contribute to the emergence of a triumphant nation. Otherwise, individual success can result in collective failure. If a personal goal is merely to exploit the country for selfish gain, where will we find those willing to work for the greater good?

Professionalism, when reduced to self-interest, becomes a social epidemic—damaging to the country. Everyone seems

focused solely on their own success, busy accumulating wealth, obsessed with counting it. Allah has made it clear where such people will ultimately end up—in a scalding inferno. If the country is like a tree, it seems each individual, armed with their personal objectives, is cutting off a branch for their own convenience. And so, no one remains willing to serve or sacrifice for the tree as a whole. It is not possible for someone obsessed with money to ever experience inner peace. Nations are built through sacrifice. No country can become strong through the efforts of those who seek only comfort. National progress requires character, vision, and passion—passion to fulfill Allah’s command while meeting the world’s evolving standards. We still have time. We must not devolve into a nation addicted to argument and blame.

We hear about countless evils afflicting society, yet no one steps forward—even with a sincere wish—to challenge or eradicate them. No one is ready to give up their wealth for the sake of a struggling brother. No one has publicly declared that they will neither give nor accept a bribe. You cannot serve a country simply through political rallies or protest marches. True service lies in constant awareness, deep contemplation, and uniting the nation’s spirit. Until we achieve unity of character, we cannot achieve a unified purpose.

Empty progress is like a ship that stays afloat but has no compass. It moves but has no destination. Progress without direction is meaningless. When choosing our goals, we should not focus solely on wealth accumulation. We must also ask: how can we best serve our country and bring joy and purpose to this brief life? In short, we must live in a way that brings us genuine happiness, elevates our nation, and earns the pleasure of Allah. That is the only objective truly worth striving for.



Destination

Life can begin anywhere, at any time, and can end anywhere, at any time. What is strange is that there was life before this life, and life will continue even after this one ends. For nearly sixty years—from the moment of our birth until our death—we speak of destinations, define them, and set out in pursuit of them, believing that this search and its result are all that life encompasses. We overlook the fact that long before we were born, countless others had already reached their destinations. Through hard work, effort, and perseverance, they tasted the fruits of success. The stations they reached are now beyond our grasp, no matter what price we may be willing to pay.

Even so, we continue to search for destinations, fully aware that those who come after us will do the same. The caravans and the destinations will remain. Yet we, entirely consumed by this pursuit—heedless of the past, unaware of the future, and even oblivious to the present—keep moving forward, considering our goal to be the destination. And if we achieve that goal, we are regarded as those who have arrived. If we fail, we are still seen as the fortunate ones—favored by fate.

Even those who die en route to their destination are often described as having reached it. The journey—from the setting of goals to their realization, with all its moods, comforts, and tribulations—is, in its entirety, considered a destination. In this sense, the very act of resolve is a destination. The decision to embark on the journey is a destination. The travel itself becomes a destination. A fellow traveler is a destination. A guide, too, is a destination. Drawing near to your goal is a destination. And attaining it is simply another destination. In other words, beyond every destination lies yet another. Just as beyond the East lies more East, and beyond the West, more

West. On the road to your destination, every footprint is a destination. Even a sign pointing toward the destination is itself a destination.

There is no fixed formula that guarantees the arrival at a destination. The wonder of the destination is that it calls out to its seekers. It awakens in them the longing to travel, arranges the journey, fulfills the role of a companion, and at a certain moment, welcomes the seeker—only to vanish soon after.

The idea of a destination is an extraordinary enchantment. A man may live on earth, yet feel he resides in heaven. He finds no kinship with the world around him. While others sleep, he remains awake. As people celebrate, he stares at the bitter truths of life like a visionary. Where others revel in the intoxication of beginnings, he stands face-to-face with the sorrow of endings. One who seeks a destination does not merely arrive at a place—he gains insight into reality. What is granted at the end is at the discretion of the Giver. The first mercy of the destination is to awaken a man in a life otherwise lost in oblivion.

It is through someone's grace that one reaches the destination. There is no formula for it. We see examples of those who reached their destination even at the gallows. They witnessed the splendor of arrival and tasted the ecstasy of union with their heart's desire. You may reach your goal and lose your life—what a paradox. Perhaps the condition is that the destination is only reached by giving up one's life. In some cases, the path of estrangement becomes the bridge to union. The days spent yearning for the beloved are the very days in which love matures. It is worth reflecting upon: someone who never met the beloved still reached the destination, while he believed union was the destination itself.

It is beyond human understanding how a person may lose his life and yet achieve his objective. There are many who, despite

being apparent losers, still reached their destination. We observe that at the field of Karbala, the battle was lost, but the objective was fulfilled. The Imam laid down his life, and Islam witnessed a powerful resurgence. It is a profound mystery—to die for a cause—and one that demands deep reflection and contemplation. There is no similarity between sacrifice and suicide. Those who take their own lives descend into ruin, while those who sacrifice themselves for a cause arrive at a destination fragrant with the freshness of spring. The goals reached through sacrifice are imbued with a unique and stirring joy.

Those who reach their goal do not engage in elaborate preparations. They journey because they are compelled by a powerful feeling—one that overwhelms and consumes them. Seekers and attainers of true destinations possess this feeling in abundance. They are people of unshakable conviction. Even if they die along the way, they cling tightly to their beloved with devotion.

One such seeker made his way toward the abode of his beloved, staying afloat only by means of an unbaked clay waterpot. It was a fragile vessel and eventually sank. Yet as it did, it left behind such a lasting impression that even today the waves of the Chenab river seem to recall that moment. And those with feeling hearts consider him a trailblazer. Perhaps, the journey toward one's goal is another name for taking that first step. That initial stride, taken in complete faith toward your purpose, is itself a form of destination.

A destination is not defined by geography. It is not about covering a specific distance. It is not a picturesque location. It is a perspective—a point of view that has sometimes been described as *enlightened vision*. It lies deep within a person's being. To attain it, to draw close to it, to know it in a spiritual sense—that is what it means to reach one's destination. There

is no merit in merely arriving at a beautiful place; what one must seek is a personal perspective. If fortune smiles upon you and you connect with this inner vision, you will see that every particle contains within it countless suns. Every drop of water will hold the potential for infinite oceans. And man will recognize himself as the final verse of an epic past—and the Adam of an unfolding future.

A person, in isolation, is just a unit. But together, people form a community of nations. Again—a matter of perspective. I am the outcome of countless causes, and I, in turn, become the cause of many effects. I exist, and my existence sets many things into motion. And yet, my being is rooted in nothingness. I am nothing. If I did not exist, nothing would have existed; now that I do exist, I remain nothing. It is this paradox that compels me to set out in search of my destination. I am the masterstroke of a supreme artist, wandering place to place in search of the One who created me. This is my only objective—this, my only destination. And there is but one way to find Him: know thyself. Traverse the inner expanse of your own soul. In doing so, you will draw near to His eternal and boundless Being. He is everywhere. He is in everything. He is the force behind all action, the reason behind absence, the source of creation, the giver of life, the bringer of death. What other method is there to seek this Absolute Being?

This is why some perceive Him through the physical retina, while others through an inner eye beyond it. Some discover Him in the wilderness. Others reach Him after incurring loss in the alleyways of a city. Some lose their lives in the pursuit; others take lives in the name of that pursuit. The Divine chooses different stages to honor His lovers. Some found Him on the gallows; others, on the cold stone threshold of the beloved. Each one believed that he had reached his destination. Some remained silent and ascended to higher spiritual stations. Others kindled the lamp of discourse and

were transformed into radiant expressions of speech. Some became the beloved; others, the lovers—yet both reached their destinations. It is a miracle of the Benefactor, who creates both the heart and the ravisher of the heart, and also the art of allurements. He alone grants the vision to perceive divine manifestations. He gave the moth its burning heart. He taught us sorrow-laden songs, then listened to those very songs Himself—and, as an act of grace, allowed people to attain their destinies. Everything we receive from Him is the miracle called “destination.”

At times, He makes those journeying toward Him into confidants of His secrets. And at other times, He walks beside them all the way, yet gives no indication of His presence. People reach their destinations, and still go on seeking other destinations—just like a fish swimming in the sea, searching for water. It yearns to see water from a distance. The paradox is this: as long as it remains in water, it cannot see it. And once it is removed from the water, it cannot survive. The seekers are in the same state. They may have already reached their destination, yet continue to look for it. They travel endlessly, unaware that destinations themselves are their fellow travelers.

In truth, the journey to Allah is a journey alongside Allah. Destination is not the name of any specific place or point. The moment you realize this, you have already arrived.

Even those whom we consider deprived of their destination are not truly deprived—it is only our limited perception. Sometimes, truth is revealed to us; other times, it remains veiled. This entire play has been orchestrated by the Creator Himself. Everything exists, and shall continue to exist. Only he who bears witness to the absolute reality of existence will cease to exist himself. If this is the case, then the quest, the journey, and even the destination dissolve into insignificance.

It is His will that truly matters. Our awareness of the destination is simply another name for His intent. Whatever He chooses to reveal to us becomes our reality. Beyond that, we may not even know what else exists in abundance. There are countless destinations, endless treasures, boundless heights prepared for mankind. But here lies the limitation: man does not have endless time. There is no limit to the riches, nor to the destinations. How can a mortal being, during such a fleeting existence, fix his gaze upon a singular destination? What journey should he undertake? Where should it begin—and where should it end?

These few days are all we possess. Our very existence is a result of His mercy. If we spend our lives in constant remembrance of the Benefactor and His benevolence, we shall surely arrive at our destination. Otherwise, nothing is guaranteed. If His grace embraces our lives, it can elevate even those who slumber in heedlessness. He can shower them with blessings beyond measure. And if He so wills, He can deprive even those fully awake. They will gain nothing in this world or the next.

We assume that some people have reached their destination. But that is not the case. Everything that happens is His doing. The travelers belong to Him, as do the objectives, the paths, the destinations, the exaltation, and the generosity. There is only one thing required of us: to remain in perpetual gratitude to the One who gave us all this. Destination or no destination, it makes no difference. To bow in humble thanks before Him—for everything He bestows. If He calls back the life He once granted us, how can we refuse?

This is the real destination: the destination of surrender, of consent, of gratitude. Gratitude for what we were given—and acceptance that what we were not given was never truly ours.

It is perfectly valid, in a sense, to have objectives, make plans, define our destination, and strive toward it. But before all else, we must recognize that we ourselves are part of someone else's program—someone else's objective. Why not try to discover who that someone is? In other words, to seek our objective is, in itself, an objective. Our only real desire is to discover what His will is. He exists—of that, there is no doubt. But where is He?

Those who have uncovered this mystery have only said: we have come to know that Divinity cannot be fully grasped. The final understanding is this: we cannot reach Him, nor can we truly see Him. The only path left to us is to look toward someone who has seen Him. This is our signpost—our heartfelt longing to journey in that direction, and the sole objective worthy of pursuit.

May He bless us with a heavenly destination. We are on our way. And if we fail to find this destination, then every journey—no matter how grand—is futile and devoid of sacred purpose. This is the one destination that existed before us and will endure long after we are gone.



Justification of Existence

If a man finds that none of his desires are fulfilled—indeed, everything he longed for has ended in failure, and even the very heart that gave rise to those desires is now shattered—then what justification remains for his existence?

If a man's life begins to resemble a night so dark that not a single star is visible, where neither the moon rises nor even the faint glow of a firefly appears—what reason does he have to go on living?

When the path he follows abruptly changes direction, and he realizes he has covered only half the journey—and now finds it equally difficult to proceed as it is to turn back—when he is unable to advance and incapable of retreating, then what justification does he have to continue living?

When he can no longer tell friend from foe, when the line between the living and the dead becomes blurred—when there is no longer any distinction between family and strangers, and one's own blood relations become the source of misery rather than joy—how can he still find meaning in existence?

When, despite the vastness and freedom of the universe, a man feels imprisoned and impoverished, when he sees no refuge in a world full of abundance—when the sky seems about to collapse upon him and the ground slips away beneath his feet—when he is utterly helpless, caught between life and death with no justification for either, what remains?

When a man spends his entire life on a journey that spans centuries and ages, only to find that it has not brought him to his destination—when time passes and the distance he set out

to cover still lies ahead—what reason is there left to live or to die?

When, after acquiring so much knowledge, a man discovers he has merely arrived at a deeper ignorance—what justification is there to feel pride in his effort? He is compelled to view the privilege of being alive as a cruel joke. If knowledge is ultimately unattainable and death inevitable, what has his struggle amounted to?

Man, driven by a desire to succeed, chases what cannot be caught. He becomes like a child, playing outside the home, trying to catch butterflies—yet he captures none and forgets the way back. What is the end of such longing? What justification is there for such a life?

If the moment comes when he can glimpse the elixir of life yet cannot reach it—when he remains as parched as ever—what right has he to keep breathing? He sees that everything exists, yet none of it belongs to him. If that is the case, why torment himself with the meaningless effort of staying alive?

When a man's life resembles that of the old woman who, after laboring to spin her thread with care, ends up tangling it into a ruin—should such a person still cling to life? When everything earned over a lifetime vanishes in an instant, what remains? He cannot take his earnings with him, nor does he have anything left to pass on. In such circumstances, to continue living seems entirely without purpose.

When a man's limbs and organs no longer obey him—when what once belonged to him now seems alien—and when his own companions testify against him, he is left stunned and speechless. When he realizes that his entire being served no meaningful purpose, what can he possibly feel? If he comes to understand that he failed to do what he should have done, and instead did what he ought never to have done, how can he still

cling to the hope of living? All that he has acquired stands as evidence against him. And now, he cannot rid himself of what he has gathered. He cannot flee, nor can he stand his ground.

He is like a man with a time bomb strapped to his body—fully aware of the danger, yet running in desperation. But the very threat he is trying to escape is tied to him. If the danger lies within, what good can running outside possibly do? The only salvation lies in running *within*. But what does it mean to run inward? If one cannot grasp the meaning of this, what justification remains for living?

If a man amasses great wealth—whether through noble means or through plunder—and yet cannot bring himself to perform a single act of goodness, then even the sight of his own wealth will fill him with despair. For such a man, the future will be more terrifying than the past. His nights will plunge into pitch-black darkness. How then can he consider himself truly alive?

When a person reaches such a state—when both his circumstances and his thoughts grow dim—when all he sees around him is darkness, and he finds no reason to go on living, even then he must not lose heart. We try to find reasons to justify our existence—but we must remember: there are other reasons too. He who gifted us life had His own reasons for doing so. Whatever He does has meaning. None of His creation is without purpose. Nothing He does is meaningless.

Even in the deepest gloom of a man's despair, a lamp still shines—a lamp that has never gone out. This lamp rests in our foreheads and is seen most clearly when we prostrate before our Creator. *Sajdah* is the cure for the helplessness of the hopeless. It is a sun found in the heart of darkness. It is a signpost of the destination—and a companion on the way.

Allah says: *“Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder.”* And then He adds: *“Yet*

even from stones, rivers gush forth.” That is to say: if a stream bursts forth from a rock, the rock ceases to be just a rock.

All around us, we find people with hearts of stone, with gazes that are cold and expressions that are lifeless. But if we observe them with insight, we will notice that even within those stones, water flows. Even those who appear carefree are burdened with silent sorrows. Awaken your heart—and you will see life shining everywhere.

Don’t seek justification from life. Just live. In living, you will find the reason. If no one shows you love, do not despair—you should love someone. If you can’t find someone faithful, love even the unfaithful. The one who loves gives life its meaning.

It is not life’s duty to justify itself to you. Rather, it is your responsibility to give life a purpose. If you can’t find a person to love, love a plant. Care for it. Protect it from storms and floods, from animals and birds, from burning heat and pouring rain. Nurture it. Help it grow. Others may enjoy its fruit, but even if they don’t, that tree will still provide shade to a tired traveler. Or it may become firewood for a poor man to warm his winter nights. Your effort will never go to waste. In that, you will find your reason to live—and you will receive divine grace.

And if nothing else seems possible, then pick up a stone and polish it—shine it with dedication. In time, that stone will become a mirror. And in its reflection, you will find the answer: the justification for your existence.

If you are unable to look upwards, then look down—at your own feet. You will always find something that deserves your attention. If nothing else, even a dog longing for affection can offer you a reason to live.

The universe is constantly calling for your attention. It is not necessary for the universe to take notice of you—it is far more important that you take notice of it. *This* is the true justification for being. The world, disheartened in its search for meaning, tirelessly seeks a reason to exist. But what the world truly asks is your attention. Your surroundings are calling on you to be aware.

People are never entirely shut out from the path. Remember, in every wall, there is a door—one through which travelers move back and forth. His mercy continuously opens doors of hope within the walls of despair. Keep waiting—don't give up. Blessings are already on their way. The lamp of hope will soon be lit. The moment we await is not far off; in fact, it has already arrived.

The clouds of despair will clear. A festival of light will follow. People will draw closer to one another. What was once stone will soften like wax. Love will overflow in human hearts. Foreheads will find honor in prostration. And life will earn the dignity of existence.

So do not lose hope. When the boats are burned, victory is near. Success lies in making life worthy of trust. If your desires remain unfulfilled, let a new desire arise within you—the desire to desire nothing. That, too, is a great triumph.

Triumph is not defined by reaching a specific point—it is another word for disposition. There have been great conquerors who, despite losing battles, remained remembered as victorious. We already have before us a clear example—one that Allah Himself described as an open victory. The apparent defeat at Karbala was in fact the harbinger of divine glad tidings.

What we mistake for darkness is merely the shadow of dawn's light. We must keep moving forward. The destinations will welcome us, will stand to salute us.

Do not complain that the world is unjust. Instead, live in such a way that no one should ever have reason to complain about you. Make others happy, and your own happiness will follow naturally. And in *that*—in spreading joy and becoming a source of ease for others—lies the deepest and truest justification for existence.



While Thinking

I think—and as I contemplate and reflect, I also consider the very subject of my thinking. I ask myself: how vast are a man's thoughts, and how he seems capable of thinking about almost everything. Yet I feel humbled when I realize how limited our reach truly is. Even our thoughts are restricted. In fact, the clearest evidence of our limited thinking is our assumption that it is boundless.

We cannot even understand who we truly are, nor what our thinking actually means. What is a thought? From where does an idea arise? Can thought transcend existing things—or is there another world, insubstantial and hidden, beyond the tangible one? If such a world exists, why is it invisible? Are there separate realms of reality—for each era, for each individual?

Is the scene we witness merely a reflection of our ability to perceive? Is knowledge simply a name for our aptitude? Can imagination ever surpass the confines of our present and our surroundings? Are we more than who we believe we are? Is something concealed behind this veil? And if so, is the veil itself real—or merely an illusion?

Do we truly take birth? Do we genuinely die? Do we completely cease to exist when we pass away? Are we something beyond our own self? Will we live on in another form after death? Are there things we will only see once we die? Is the afterlife real? Will we still feel the same pain, the same moods, the same sensations, after death? Will our joys and sorrows continue to be our own beyond the grave?

Do we continue to suffer? Do things keep happening to us even after death? If they do—then who is the one that dies?

Who is the one that remains? Who is it that is buried? Are there extraordinary sights within the grave? Is it dark? Is there light? Do we retain eyes? Can we still see after death? Does our journey truly end with our death—or do we set out on another journey after completing the first?

Does every journey's end lead to the beginning of another? Is what we call "destination" merely the start of a new path? Was there truly a need to write a book titled "*What Happens to Us After We Die*"?

Is being a Muslim a punishment that warrants such fearful curiosity? Do those who cremate their dead not have graves? Are the torments of the grave reserved only for believers? Do only the faithful continue to die even after death? Can we not die once and for all? Are we just illusions? Have we wandered into some enchanted dreamscape?

Have we, while living in a visible world, been compelled to ponder an invisible one? Have our thoughts become paralyzed? Are our preachers capable only of scaring us with terrifying tales of an ominous end and a dreadful future? Were these people created solely to make us despair of God's mercy?

Will these preachers never die? And if they will—when? Can they not die now?

Were they not blessed with compassion? Can one person truly master every branch of knowledge? Does compulsion exist as a force? Can someone enrich himself through bribery and still claim to be blessed? Can a person perform Hajj using wealth gained through corruption? Will Hajj be accepted if it's funded by money stolen from an orphan?

Is Allah confined to one place alone? And if so, to whom does the realm "beyond" belong? Who is behind the veil, and who is in front of it? Is every action in the world the work of a

single Being? Is He the same who grants birth and ordains death? If He must take our lives, then why did He create us? And if He did create us, why is there a need to kill us?

Astounding indeed are the circumstances—astounding the glory, and astounding the manner in which it all unfolds. He Himself declares it. And every one of His commands is fitting. Everything He says is true. Every gesture of His is worth laying down one's life for.

Man, in his humility, thinks. And when he doesn't know how to stop thinking, he is overtaken by compulsion. Allah says: *"I am the Lord of all kings. To Me belongs the Kingdom. I enthrone whom I will, and I depose whom I will. I can elevate a man to great fortune, and I can render a man destitute—should I so desire."*

He is the Sovereign. He creates light at will, and darkness as He wishes. He brings forth day from night and night from day—and He does this without fail. He bestows honor on whomever He wills, and He humiliates whomever He wills. He is the sole owner of all the treasures of the heavens and the earth. He enriches whom He pleases. And—astonishingly—He sometimes asks man for a loan.

How can this be? He is capable of making a child an orphan by taking the father away, and yet He commands humanity to care for the orphan. He shows immense concern for the orphan and warns against consuming their property unjustly: *"Do not fill your bellies with fire."*

Could He not, if He wished, prevent anyone from becoming an orphan in the first place? Must He follow our bidding? No—He is the Lord. He acts according to His own will. His power is absolute. Is there anything beyond His capability? The question does not even arise.

It is our thinking that goes astray. We become entangled in our own thoughts. We attempt to measure His grandeur using our own limited scale. But He is immeasurable. He is beyond comprehension. His exalted status lies far outside the scope of our understanding. His majesty transcends any notion of rank or degree. He is the Creator—how, then, can the created comprehend Him?

How can we, who are overwhelmed by confusion, shackled by anxiety, and trapped within the boundaries of time and fate—how can we ever hope to know Him?

There is no contradiction in Him. He is pure manifestation. He can create or annihilate—and it makes no difference to Him. He knows the meaning of this universe. He knows why man was created, how long man has existed, and how long he will remain. He knows the stages man must pass through.

Sometimes He places a crown on a man's head; at other times, He places a begging bowl in his hands. These are His ways, His heart-ravishing displays. Even His majesty is heart-ravishing.

He is beyond all need. He requires no one's praise—and yet, He constantly praises His beloved Prophet ﷺ and will never cease to do so. He bestows honor upon honor on His beloved ﷺ. But He also made him endure poverty, exile, and hardship. This too is part of His divine grandeur. These are His ways, His divine gestures of affection.

He wills that all of us obey the commandments of His beloved ﷺ. We are to send blessings and salutations upon the one He Himself loves most. His will is resolute. There are no inconsistencies in Him.

He is the Compeller and the Wrathful, the Compassionate and the Merciful. All of these are expressions of the same divine

light. It is unity expressed through multiplicity, and multiplicity united through Oneness.

To know Him is not difficult. But don't try to comprehend Him with the intellect. Simply **believe** in Him. He is gentle and generous, merciful and kind. And He has declared: "*My mercy encompasses all things and is greater than My wrath.*"

He brings us into light out of darkness. He forgives our sins—all of them. And such is His kindness that He not only pardons our misdeeds but transforms them into virtues. He calls to account those who were themselves occupied with holding others accountable. Not a single speck, not the smallest trace, escapes His notice.

Those who rely excessively on intellect and are devoid of faith—He hands such individuals over to the consequences of their own actions. And this is indeed a real torment: to become a terrifying example as a result of one's deeds. He has commanded us to repent of our actions. If we wish to draw near to Him, we must first draw near to the one He chose—His beloved ﷺ. And He has clearly shown us how that nearness is to be attained.

Would He punish the people among whom this blessed being ﷺ once walked? The one who is forever deserving of our praise and salutation? Let people stop speculating. He is beyond our thoughts and conjectures. It is not our place to ask why He does what He does. Rather, we must prepare ourselves, for we will be asked why we acted as we did.

The only path that ensures our salvation is to vigilantly examine our deeds and our final end. Whatever He grants us, we should receive it with contentment. The grief we feel is from Him; our joy is also His gift. He gave us the power to think, and He also created those luminous souls who taught us

how to think rightly. May those who guided our thoughts remain forever in peace.

If our actions are flawed, their defects should be corrected through sincere repentance. The distance from Him should be closed through prostration before Him. *O my Creator, this humble servant of Yours is content with whatever You decree. Keep us near to You. Show us the path that leads to Your beloved ﷻ. That, in itself, is more than enough for us.*

As for Your essence and Your majesty, You are loftier than the loftiest heights, more exalted than all exaltation. Our minds cannot encompass You. But yes—enter our hearts. Hearts that, freed from every desire, long for none but You.

It is wondrous indeed that it is Your love that leads us to the doorstep of Your beloved ﷻ. What can we—helpless, impoverished beings—know of You through mere research or reasoning? We recognize You only through Your grace. Make us Yours. Have mercy on us. Guide our thoughts toward wholeness and truth.



Where I am

Where am I, I wonder? In one sense, I am fully in my senses, in my own home, face to face with my circumstances and affairs, immersed in thought, remembering the One who created me, trying to come to terms with my joys and sorrows. And yet, I feel that perhaps I am nowhere at all. I am a secret concealed behind the veil of my name—perhaps a very old, even ancient, secret. I existed within the intention of my Lord. I carry out His commands and await the moment to be in His presence.

I am so deeply absorbed in my affairs that I tend to forget I am a secret—though not entirely hidden. I go on expressing myself and still remain a mystery. A secret disclosed, and yet a secret nonetheless. And this makes me reflect: who conceived this secret? And who was revealed through it? This is where my contemplation begins.

I was created, but I had no part in my creation. It all occurred according to His will, His intention, and His command. My existence is not truly my own. In other words, I exist and yet I don't. I am merely the unfolding of someone else's will. How can I have a will of my own? I just continue moving forward, seeking Him who is already beside me. And this search is an endless journey. If life were merely a matter of being born and dying, it would not trouble me. But another journey begins where this one ends. Something else lies ahead. In other words, we do not die when we die. And if that is true, what does it really mean to live?

As long as I exist, I reflect. I also think about the moment when this "I" turns into "we." Am I an individual, or am I the sum of a continuum of countless individuals? This is a serious

question for me—because while I am here, I also sense that I am elsewhere. Sometimes I am merely a *remembrance*—that is, an expression or a statement. At other times, I am the *one who remembers*. And occasionally, I am *the one remembered*. In truth, remembrance, the one who remembers, and the one remembered form a unity.

I speak of that remembrance which is supreme. I speak of a thought—meaning that I exist wherever I am mentioned. How can I exist in a place where no one knows me? And I realize that I know nothing of myself. My sorrows are fleeting, and so are my joys. My surroundings are temporary. My love and hate are short-lived. My health and illness are transitory. And yet, despite knowing all this, I refuse to believe I am impermanent.

This vast and beautiful universe—where I witness the signs of the mastery of the All-Powerful—does not permit me to consider myself insignificant. I am a scene—or perhaps, a collection of scenes—of my own choosing. I am within these scenes that have neither beginning nor end. How can someone be momentary if he is in love with eternity?

In one sense, I am just an individual. But I am that grain of sand lying in the desert. I am the drop nestled in the sea. I am a human being present within all human beings. Outwardly, a man dies, but he never truly dies. Man has always existed and will continue to exist. This is a matter between the Creator and His creation. To be among humankind, to be an individual—these are just different stages of being.

Why are my thoughts not my own? I long to unlock this secret. I exist in the present, but my knowledge, my religious understanding, my affections—all are rooted in the past. My spiritual allegiance, too, is tied to history. If the past were suddenly erased, I would be left with nothing—not even my religion. My history would dissolve into nothingness. My very

body would feel paralyzed. It would be as though a wall had risen before me, cutting me off from a vast and meaningful backdrop.

I live in the past. I dwell in the memory of people I have never seen, never met—those who are not my contemporaries. Yet I revere them. I see each mausoleum as a mystery, a veil behind which countless divine manifestations remain hidden. I live thinking about them. They live within my thoughts. In this sense, I exist in a place where I am not. I behold scenic vistas not present before my eyes.

And I ask myself: how did this come to pass—that while I was walking through one world, I arrived in another? My physical residence is here, yet I inhabit somewhere else.

I think of mausoleums. I think of monasteries. O Allah! Who were these people that even in death, there is celebration around them? They turned death into a festival—while we, the living, experience life with the silence of the grave.

I wonder how long I will go on thinking, questioning the meaning of it all.

Could life not be simpler than this? That when I feel hungry, I eat; when I'm tired, I sleep. That I live for myself, think only of what benefits me, and die for myself alone?

But this is not possible—because I am no longer a singular self. I am dispersed among my relations. My desires scatter me. I am as vast as the horizon of my own imagination. I am a continuity—both the final point of what came before and the starting point of what is to come. With me, some stories end; with me, new ones begin.

I remember: not long ago, I was not even a thing worth mentioning. And now I exist—somewhere. Yet this brief

existence is fleeting, a spark that flares for a moment and then vanishes.

Even now, across vast stretches of existence, we remain unaccounted for, unnoticed. The ultimate truth is the same: my existence is merely a shadow of non-existence. I drink one mouthful from the fountain of eternity, and the next from the ocean of annihilation. And in this rhythm, I keep on living and dying.

At times, I become love—I live as someone’s heartbeat. At times, I become fire—I rage in someone’s chest. I walk, then I pause. I pause, and then I walk again. Sometimes I stray from the path. At other times, I become a signpost that leads to the wrong direction. There are moments I become dear in someone’s eyes—and then I learn how those same eyes can begin to look down on me.

I realize I keep moving only because something within me remains in motion. Some emotion is alive—perhaps benevolence. Yet I never mention my misdeeds before it. I am, in fact, nothing more than wrongdoing—and He is pure beneficence.

But what is this secret? I reflect on it deeply. I wonder what this ache within my chest is—this secret that struggles to be born, to reveal itself. What truly is this secret? Is it a private burden meant to remain hidden? Or is it something that must one day be disclosed—something the world itself is waiting to witness?

It is a strange thing—that a restless heart should compose a *ghazal*, and that same *ghazal* should bring peace to thousands of other hearts. Writers, even after their death, remain preserved—in the form of books—safely placed in the libraries of their admirers. Is man merely a living being, or is

he a name? Behind the veil of a name lies a secret—and it is this secret I find myself contemplating.

We continue to live in the affections we inspire. Life itself is our beloved. We are alive because our beloved is alive. And we die when the beloved dies. But no—the beloved never truly dies. He becomes part of our memory, and lives on in the heart of the seeker. In other words, we live because our beloved lives, and he lives because we remember him. He is as we describe him, a part of our perception, enshrined in our memory. He is near.

And so I reflect: all the saintly elders who have left this world still exist in our memory and in our spiritual awareness. In this way, they are still alive—because they remain present in the stream of life. We ourselves are life, and they dwell within us. Our love for them grants them life within us. And I think, the greater the love a being receives, the more deeply they live on.

The greatest love of all is the love for the Beloved ﷺ of Allah. The one who is filled with this love becomes a traveler through realms beyond existence and nonexistence. Such a person becomes a guide—leading others to the valleys of divine illumination.

Yet it is a strange secret—that all of this remains a secret, and I myself remain hidden behind its veil. I do not possess the power to lift that veil. I believe that everything my eyes perceive becomes my knowledge, becomes my memory, becomes my hatred and my love. In that sense, I am a vast unfolding—I am a culmination, a fulfillment, no longer held back by frustration. But what, then, is the key to this secret?

Why is it that we meet someone for the first time and feel as though we've known them forever? A sensation of *déjà vu*. And how strange it is that some people are physically near,

within our sight—yet we feel nothing. We see them, yet do not sense them.

The existence of so many people around me holds no meaning. I browse through countless pages of daily newspapers—and not a single piece of news speaks to me. I long to hear someone's voice, and he remains silent. I yearn to see someone, but cannot see him.

I believe in One whose existence cannot be proven. I am passionately in love with someone I have never seen. How many places have I visited? Into how many forms have I been shaped?

At times, someone else's performance becomes my insight, and someone else's insight becomes my own action. Another's face becomes the object of my love; someone else's visage awakens my hatred. I am often punished for no fault of mine; and often, it is my own wrongdoing that brings me humbled to the doorstep of divine mercy.

It is a strange kind of secret—the more you attempt to describe it, the more it eludes you. It remains unattainable to those who pursue it, because the secret itself is the pursuit. The one who stumbles upon it is never explicitly told that what he has discovered *is* the secret. The secret wears many guises.

A beggar comes to your door, knocks, and asks for alms. When you turn him away, he says, “Look closely at me. I am your secret. I am the formula that transforms a miser into a generous soul. I pray for your well-being from the depths of my heart—prayers that can take you to places where even worship cannot. I wish you well. Accept my sincere blessing—it will be a righteous deed.”

Every human being is a marvel of the Creator. Honor him. For you are that very being. You are your own brother, just as your hand belongs to you, and your eyes are part of you—or rather,

part of divine manifestations. Your eyes are the means through which these manifestations reach you. In truth, this act of reaching *is* the ultimate purpose. You belong to the manifestations; in fact, you are *within* them—and therefore, you *are* a manifestation.

The key to these countless scenes lies within your eyes. Your eyes are not separate from the scene—they *are* a part of it. Without eyes, the beauty of the scene would lose all meaning. It is your eyes that allow the vision to exist. But what the eyes see—and what that seeing implies—remains a mystery. Vision and the visible stand side by side, and yet they fail to perceive each other in full.

Man himself is someone's secret. How, then, can he possibly unlock the secret by his own means? And still, the secret awaits revelation. For centuries, we have been trying to grasp it. Glad tidings were once given to Allama Iqbal by saintly men, telling him that the time had come: "*The secret will be revealed.*"

The secret of the secret is this: the one who sets out to uncover it eventually becomes *part* of it. It is through the glance of the friend that man becomes aware of the secret. But once he discovers it, he does not speak it—he becomes immersed in the beauty of that beloved glance. His earth and his heavens are transformed. He continues to live in this world, while simultaneously residing in another.

He speaks—but those who hear him dismiss his words as madness. That is because he knows the secret, and they do not. And those who *do* know, do not listen. Thus, the matter becomes like a dream dreamt by a mute—he has seen it, but cannot tell it. There is nothing he can say.

And so, within this one secret lie countless other secrets—each one sealed within the next.

Perhaps the secret carries within it the power to contract the vastness of time. It is possible that someone living in the present world might also somehow exist in a world long gone. But how could that be, when the past no longer exists? To exist in the past seems illogical—just as if a seeker of today were to claim presence in a gathering that took place centuries ago.

And yet, it is equally possible that today's seeker may one day stand at the door of tomorrow's beloved. Within this secret, the noun—the named, the defined—can take the form of an embodiment. Those who are familiar with this secret perceive eternity—both without beginning and without end—as nothing more than a fleeting moment. A single instant. But if this instant were to expand, it could contain centuries.

To uncover that moment is to uncover the secret. And the revelation of the secret remains, for now, a sealed mystery—an event that exists, yet is not made manifest. It is like the radiant sun that is always *about* to rise, and yet never fully rises. The ones who discovered the secret were the very ones who never revealed it.

This secret, though ancient, resists modern exposure. It is a profound and shadowy depth, and those who descend into it continue descending. The seekers of the secret never return from that journey.

But one must also ask: when He granted mankind the gift of expression, what justification remains for keeping anything secret? Perhaps it is better to reveal it. Yet, if we leave it unspoken, it might become even more eloquent in its silence.

Silence itself is a great secret. It is a mystery that can *be heard*. What the tongue cannot express, silence can. That is all there is when “I am.” It is everything—and nothing. It is the state where to be is not to be, where the scenes continuously shift, where life exists and escapes death.

Still, let this secret remain veiled. For if it were to be disclosed, it could mark the beginning of a strange and unfamiliar upheaval.

To keep living is to live in hope. I dwell in the middle of life. Therefore, life is found wherever *I happen to be*—where there is existence, and where there remains a waiting—for the revelation of the secret.



What are we Doing

We are a strange people. We let go of opportunities—and then begin to search for them. No one returns once they have gone. The chances we missed never come back. He who departs does not return; and if someone does return, he is no longer the person who once left. He has become someone entirely different. A thread, once broken, can be tied again—but the knot always remains.

We live with constant regret because we lag behind time, and at times we lose ourselves in dreams because we have gone far ahead of it. Why don't we walk in step with time? What exactly are we doing?

We remember only what has been taken from us. Once, we possessed a bliss that was freely given, without us ever having asked for it. I am referring to paradise. We did not value that blessing, and as a result, we now long for it more than anything else. We wish to reclaim what was once ours. We ask for what had already been granted. What are we doing?

Perhaps paradise is the name of that very blessing which, once lost, we now strive to find again. Having been deprived of our personal paradises, we wander in search of them. Are we looking for something we once had and then lost? Are we travelers who have veered off course from our true destination? Are we caught up in the memories of times gone by? Are we still waiting for the fulfillment of dreams left incomplete? Are we sorrowful over priceless possessions that were taken from us? Whatever we manage to gain, we continue to lament. What are we really doing?

Perhaps we are riding the dead horse of our ego. We cover great distances, yet the journey never ends. We endure the

hardships of life's long journey, only to realize in the end that our path led from home to the grave. We die a hundred deaths before breathing our last. Why can't we die in peace? Is it so difficult for us to accept reality? Does it wound our pride? The storm of sorrow may uproot the tree, but its shadow clings to its ego, refusing to fall. We tell it, again and again, that the tree whose shadow it is has already fallen. Still, it does not listen. It ought to feel shame, but it does not. The kingdom has been lost, yet the desire to act like royalty remains.

When we say something—even if it is wrong—we never want to take it back. We may let go of a friend, but we will not let go of our argument. In our desire to win a debate, we lose our relationships. The caravan may disband, but our sense of leadership stays intact. We refuse to accept anything. We are utterly unwilling, at any cost, to recognize the truth in others.

Even if our father were to die not once but ten times, we would still refuse to admit that we are orphans. We continue strutting and stammering like a rooster—crying out a cock-a-doodle-doo at least once before our throat is slit. While we go on repeating, again and again, that we are alive, we fall prey to some unexpected misfortune. An unknown fear overtakes us, and still, we do not stop threatening others. In truth, when we try to intimidate others, we ourselves feel afraid. We use force to draw people near, but they never truly become ours.

We care only for our own interests. We no longer know how to love other human beings—we don't love them at all. We love just one person: ourselves. We worship ourselves. We are enchanted by our own appearance. We listen to praise and convince ourselves that others are telling the truth. We live in delusions and thrive on misunderstandings. We believe that Allah has appointed us to rule and that the people are nothing more than our subjects. We crown ourselves kings for life. We boast that we are Syeds, Mughals, Ghaznavids, Suris,

Ghoris—even Rajputs and Marathas—and elevate ourselves with the claim, “My father was a king.”

In our eyes, being simply human carries no honor. Even if we lack integrity or noble sentiments, the only thing that seems respectable to us is high birth. We take pride in our tribes and clans. The dignity of humanity itself means nothing to us. We value wealth—provided it belongs to us. If someone else possesses it, we declare that it belongs to the poor or to the workers, or that it was gained unjustly. We call it unlawful. Those people, we say, are corrupt, dishonorable, and mean. Only we are truly respectable. Is our role in this world limited to nitpicking and passing judgment? What are we doing?

The moment we rise in the morning, we begin to complain. Backbiting has become our favorite activity. We cannot go a day without mocking someone. Allah has said that backbiting is like eating the flesh of your dead brother. We know this well—but we cannot help ourselves. Backbiting is our addiction, and we are unable to abandon it. We have mastered the art of complaint, gossip, blame, and fault-finding. And we have learned this craft from the daily newspapers—it has been passed down to us from the theatre of politics.

We complain about the weather. We grumble about God. We criticize the government in power. We voice dissatisfaction with our leaders. We complain about our bosses. The bosses complain about their subordinates. Children complain about their parents. Parents complain about their sons and daughters. Is there anyone who does not complain? If we were to give up this endless whining and backbiting, we might actually enter a constructive era.

Once, someone asked the Holy Prophet (SAW), “What is backbiting, O Prophet of Allah?” The Prophet (SAW) replied, “To say something about someone that you would not say in his presence.” The questioner then asked, “And if it is said to

his face, what then?" The Prophet (SAW) answered, "Then it is nothing but shamelessness."

In any case, we are afflicted by this torment of complaining—whether we are voicing our grievances or listening to the grievances of others. All we do is chatter. We do not work. What are we really up to?

Throughout our lives, we remain fixated on learning the formula for staying alive. And when life within us finally ceases, we find ourselves helpless—because we never learned the formula for death. And so, we die without ever knowing how. Islam has taught us both the formula for purposeful living and the formula for purposeful dying. The Qur'an says that those who die in the way of Allah should not be considered dead; they are alive, though we lack the vision to perceive their life. This death—described by the Creator of life and death as life itself—is no longer remembered by us. We no longer die—we are merely killed.

A death filled with moaning and sobbing is a hellish end. We no longer seek the blessed ability to endure pain with grace. We do not possess the heart of Murtaza or the passion of Siddique. If you spend your entire life just yearning to stay alive, death will arrive as a catastrophe. But if your life has a purpose, death will come bearing a certificate of divine acceptance. That kind of death brings with it eternal life. Yet we never pause to consider this. What are we really up to?

We keep running all the time. We live in the midst of chaos. We have to reach our offices, we have to leave our offices. Out of the fifty years we spend working, only thirty make up our official tenure—yet we forcibly seize the remaining years. We keep seeking extensions just to stay employed. And during these fifty years of service, we travel so much to and fro that even Ibn Battuta and Marco Polo would be forgotten. Yet, like

the bull circling the oil-mill or the frog confined to a well, we remain stuck in the same place.

We tear down one wall that blocks our way, only to run into another the very next day. And so we continue, always on the move. The game goes on. We neither leave our nests nor are blessed with the desire to soar. We have become so accustomed to our slavery—our programmed slavery—that we now view freedom with fear. Having lived a life in darkness, even the radiance of truth now frightens us.

Still, we keep running. We are incredibly busy. Perhaps we are chasing after some glittering illusion. This shiny thing is the fairy of greed, and the giant guarding her is right behind us. We don't want the fairy to slip away, and the giant won't leave us alone. Who will tell us that a greedy person is always afraid? The one who turns away from greed reaches a stage where neither fear nor regret remains. Can we not take pity on ourselves? What are we up to?

The multitude of our goals has left us with little space for peace. We live too many lives and suffer too many deaths. By finding a singular purpose, we can escape this endless dying. Those who truly gained something from life—or left something behind for it—had only one objective. No one could scare them or buy them. And for this reason, they live on forever. In fact, they alone are truly alive. The rest die even while still breathing, while these few live on even after death. Can we not reflect on this? What are we up to?



Disorder

When we speak of life, we mean order — or rather, a refined and elegant order. But there are moments when this order loses its coherence, much like a river that usually flows calmly between its banks but, at times, overflows, becomes uncontainable, and turns life into a chaotic mess.

Disorder is a phenomenon that signals the disintegration of elements. It serves as a warning: even a close-knit group of friends can lose its unity. Even a band of enemies cannot maintain its structure. A person may feel transformed — there were once matters that moved him to remorse, yet now he feels completely indifferent. This shift occurs because he realizes that the grace of order is fleeting. What once held things together has lost its hold. The beads of the rosary lie scattered, and one is left bewildered — how could something once so controlled fall into disarray? Caution has become its own contradiction. The force that once aligned circumstances and ideas has gone dormant.

Man attempts to gather the fallen beads and reorder the rosary of his thoughts — but it is too late. Confusion overtakes him; he bursts into laughter while weeping, and weeps while laughing. He begins to avoid the familiar places, beloved people, and cherished moods.

When thoughts are no longer united by an inner cohesion, actions too become disordered. At one moment, constancy seems like success; at another, inconstancy appears charming.

When your thinking loses structure and clarity, your expression, your storytelling, and your writing also become disjointed. Nothing aligns with anything else. The threads are severed. The bricks that once built a beautiful house collapse,

leaving only debris. What was once distinct becomes vague. It was in this very mood that I resolved to write a column — only to later decide not to write one. So now, I shall speak about things as they come.

I reflected on the fact that our acts of worship, our devotions and prayers, are no longer as spiritually potent as those of our predecessors. In earlier times, people did not enjoy the luxuries we do today. Now, even a modest factory owner possesses such wealth that Mughal emperors could scarcely have imagined it. Though they lived comfortably, they had neither air-conditioners nor telephones. They had no motor vehicles, airplanes, or helicopters. Their roads were barely worthy of the name. They traveled in horse-drawn carriages or atop elephants. They urged their horses into brisk motion and took joy in it.

Today, even an ordinary person lives in comfort, with every convenience at hand — yet his heart remains heavy with sorrow. The modern man is crushed under the weight of excessive ambitions and goals.

There was a time when a single cry of distress could stir the hearts of people across the world. Today, even as homes are swept away by floods and families are left homeless, it seems to matter little to those lost in celebration and indulgence. Perhaps we are deliberately tearing down all the barriers that preserve order.

In earlier times, when a daughter left her home as a bride, it was a moment of deep emotion. When the mother and daughter embraced, it was said even the skies above trembled. But such feelings seem lost now. Today's bride suppresses her tears, aware they would ruin the makeup worth hundreds of rupees. Genuine sorrow is masked by an artificial facade, and the emotional aura of the moment has been reduced to mere

formality. It seems the modern age is dismantling our inner harmony.

Sincerity, loyalty, perseverance, friendships, and even enmities — all are in disarray. The number of mosques continues to increase, while the number of worshippers declines. The domes and minarets of these mosques, too, seem to be drifting away from their original, simple essence.

The loudspeaker has become a frenzy. Muslims now preach to Muslims about becoming Muslim. Anyone who wishes to speak simply stands up and delivers a sermon memorized beforehand. This is helplessness at its peak. The time during which we should be standing in prayer is often spent in prostration. Life flows in one direction, and our preaching in another.

We say that the Holy Prophet ﷺ led a life of simplicity. His bedding was a mat made from palm leaves. His blessed clothes bore patches. He was honored as the greatest among all humanity — and yet, those who claim to follow his path lead lives in stark contrast to his.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ instructed that marriage ceremonies should be kept simple. Yet, those who believe in him spend hundreds of thousands on weddings. The bride's family often goes beyond its means to welcome and host the wedding procession. And that's not all — even before the wedding procession, another ceremony takes place: the henna night. People from the groom's side travel to the bride's house, singing and dancing openly. Video recordings are made. Muslims shamelessly turn themselves into a spectacle.

Wedding feasts are hosted in five-star hotels, turning the entire event into something resembling a grand political rally. What will be the outcome of all this? The wealthy, by flaunting their riches, deepen the wounds of the poor — and for many poor

girls, this extravagant culture means they may remain daughters forever, never brides, simply because their families lack the means.

These are strange times. It seems that every branch of life has become something other than what it once was. Every order has been dismantled. There was a time when teachers were the builders of character. They helped children understand the meaning of moral greatness. They imparted lessons on spirituality and made them aware of life's deeper truths. But now, a different atmosphere has taken over. Educational institutions are producing people of an entirely different disposition.

We wish for Islam to spread across the world. But the Islamic society we ourselves have built is nothing but a state of confusion. We enroll our children in English-medium schools and then expect the emergence of an Islamic spiritual environment. What do we sow, and what do we hope to reap?

We are a strange nation. We offer our prayers in Arabic. In our offices, we write and speak in English. In general conversation, we use Urdu, and at home or among close circles, we speak in our regional mother tongues. We revere the poetry of Iqbal, yet we do not hesitate to criticize his personal life. We recognize Quaid-e-Azam as the founder of our nation, but we fail to honor the Pakistan he founded.

We lecture others on the virtues of mercy and speak eloquently of its blessings, yet we do not feel pity for anyone. There are people in our midst with unimaginable wealth—and alongside them, the poor continue to multiply. What kind of order is this? What kind of mercy? What kind of brotherhood? If you manage to reach the shore, relief camps will be there to receive you—but no one dives in to rescue the drowning man. This is not a question of resources; it is a question of compassion.

What can those who spend their time watching wrestling matches on TV possibly learn? Cruelty—and the consumption of cruelty—has become our favorite form of entertainment. We are obsessed with exposing everything. Modesty and shame no longer hold any value. New, vulgar expressions have crept into our everyday language. The phrase “gang rape” is now uttered casually.

What kind of education are newspapers offering when they sensationalize every crime and act of wickedness? Sensationalism has become essential to doing business. Films and videos are poisoning the nation day and night. Our children are rapidly becoming something else altogether. And tomorrow—who knows—perhaps the entire structure of order will collapse into chaos. We should fear the day when all order is undone. Perhaps that will be the Day of Judgment.

There is now a shameless ease between father and son, between mother and daughter. What, then, is left to say about etiquette and respect?

We should be willing to give up much before everything is taken from us—and strive to establish a new order. People must learn to feel the pain of others; indeed, they must come to understand that other human beings are no different from themselves. The world is a place of annihilation. It is where time constantly teaches us hard lessons. Pharaohs who once ruled in grandeur were eventually cursed and cast into oblivion. Nothing here is permanent, and nothing can be taken with us.

A man may spend his life pursuing property transfers in his name, only to be transferred himself—to the next world. We guard the wealth of others jealously, while the next generation watches our possessions closely, silently wishing for our demise so they may inherit.

Why can it not be that what is happening today might cease, and what is not happening might begin? Can we not regain unity? Why can't all our religious scholars and thinkers come together in harmony? Can the nation be awakened to those blessed hours we have long prayed for? Should the sacrifices of our martyrs be allowed to go in vain—or can we ensure they do not?

In this country, there are people who feel like outsiders. Why?

Will the nation remain divided between rulers and institutions? Must it always be split between rich and poor? Can those who live in comfort not become a support for those who suffer? Can today's disarray not be transformed into order?

This is not just a matter for reflection—it is the hour to seek God's mercy. Though we hurt one another with our actions, in truth, we wound the nation itself. The country is like a mother: to her, all her children are equal. She grieves whenever even one of her sons dies.

The opposition should serve with loyalty. The government should lead with sincerity. The nation and its people can no longer endure more shocks. We must show compassion for the entire country. We must serve it and uplift its people. Only then can true order emerge from all its parts.



Contact

To disclose your postbox number does not constitute contact. Real contact is what arises in a reader's mind concerning an author. A thought that takes shape in the heart is, in itself, a contact. Whether expressed or not, it remains what it is—a contact.

If someone passes by, looks at you, and silently prays for your life and safety, you come into contact with that person's heart. There are thousands of contacts that exist in silence. Only a few become observable. A mother is in contact with her child even before it is born. She sleeps thinking of the child; she wakes thinking of the child. It is with reference to that unborn child that her dreams, her waking moments, her plans, and her thoughts take form. Those who leave for foreign shores remain in contact with their homeland. Though they spend their lives abroad, they stay connected to their motherland. A mother's prayers are also a form of contact.

Sometimes, we are unable to identify when, how, or where contact was made. You remain in contact with your teacher as long as you remember his words and carry the knowledge he gave you. Even if the teacher passes away, the contact endures. That is why we are commanded to honor the teacher. The connection to the one who teaches you ethics can never end.

Contacts are nurtured in the heart. Love is simply another name for contact. Someone is drawn to another. The eyes see the face, the heart approves, the soul embraces—and the contact becomes eternal. It is in the glow of this contact that our sorrows and joys evolve and find nourishment. The birds that migrate from cold to warm regions remain in contact with

the eggs they leave behind in the snow; and it is even believed that they keep them warm or in a state of incubation with the warmth of their hearts and the intensity of their gaze.

The motion you see in the world is a manifestation of countless contacts. A human being in contact with God stands on a permanent foundation, whether that contact is expressed or not. As the Lord of all creation, He has granted us life—and He can take it back. In every case, we remain connected to Him. Whatever the situation, He is present in every breath. He is closer to us than our jugular vein. His connections, like His Being, remain mysterious and ever-effective.

There is a contact we have with God—and there is another contact that God has with us. This life is a saga of connections: contact upon contact, joy upon joy, revelry upon revelry. Those who do not believe in these connections may fail to understand this reality. But the truth is, we are alive in the past, alive in the present, and alive in the future. Thousands of libraries tell the beautiful story of our connection with authors who lived long ago.

You might say, “The author was a mortal man and has passed away, so there’s no need to mention him.” But then, what do the books he wrote mean? They allow us to come into contact with him. They help us glimpse his heart, engage with his thoughts, and through this connection, we enrich ourselves.

If someone were to say, “I don’t believe that someone wrote *Kimiyā-e-Sa’ādat*,” or “I don’t believe *Nahj al-Balāgha* or *Kashf al-Mahjūb* were written by anyone—those authors are long dead and gone,” one could gently respond, “Then how do you believe that the Qur’an is a living book? And how do you regard the Hadith as a living discourse?”

The fact is that everything—even that which seems no longer to exist—is alive in ways we cannot comprehend. If

someone's father dies and is buried, and he truly no longer exists, then what is the purpose of the grave? Why is it even there? If a grave bears the name of someone who has passed on, then that grave itself becomes a means of contact with the person buried beneath it.

It is through such contacts that we are nourished. We live and move in accordance with these connections. They validate us. They are the very streets upon which our thoughts travel. They are the highways upon which the caravans of time proceed. These caravans have not disappeared, nor have they become rarities. They have not gone extinct. They have left their imprints on the face of every era.

History is a contact with the past—but what is religion? Religion is nothing but another name for contact. We recite the *Kalima* and give thanks that Allah has made us among those who recite it, granted us faith, and blessed us with belief in a noble Prophet (SAW) who came into this world long ago. If we were to say that the Holy Prophet (SAW) lived in a past era and (God forbid) is no longer present with us, we would be forced to conclude that the *Kalima* recited by his compassionate companions and the one we recite today are essentially different.

Having faith in the Prophet (SAW) while he was physically present was an act rooted in direct experience. Now that his physical presence is no longer with us, how can we recite the *Kalima* with the same conviction—with the same certainty his contemporaries possessed? The reality is that the *Kalima* we recite is the same as the one recited by his companions. Why? Because this contact is not bound by geography, history, or material existence—it is spiritual. And this spiritual contact is just as strong and incomparable today as it was then. That is why those who recite the *Kalima* today are equal in rank to those who recited it in times past.

In the days when the Qur'an was being revealed, the people witnessing its descent had firsthand knowledge of the process and the profound effect it had. All of this did not unfold before our eyes, and yet our faith remains unwavering. We are absolutely certain that these revelations were delivered by Jibreel (AS), the trustworthy angel. The revelation is eternal, as spoken by the Holy Prophet (SAW). And that revelation will always remain secure and sacred with all its divine sanctity. There is no doubt whatsoever that the pure and noble Prophet (SAW) is the Messenger of Allah—and he is the Messenger for all time. Therefore, we cannot refer to him in the past tense.

The truth is that the person to whom the exalted Qur'an was revealed is not merely a man; he is inseparably linked to the holy scripture itself. We must understand the nature of the contact that the Prophet (SAW) had. The *Kalima* is that contact—and the contact is the *Kalima*.

Every noun is connected to the name by which it is called, and this contact is never severed. Whenever we call upon a name, our call reaches the entity associated with it, and we receive a response. Indeed, the spiritual transformation of a person and his mystical insight are both indebted to such contacts. One spirit can guide another. Even the modern Western world, steeped in science, has come to accept the possibility of spiritual connections.

Each person lives within an environment, and it is entirely possible that the source of his contact lies elsewhere. Only those who possess illuminated hearts can understand matters of the heart. Only those who are spiritually aware can recognize the spiritual realm. The world of secrets is revealed only to those who are themselves entrusted with secrets. If we sever our contact with the past, we will lose the capacity to place faith in the future.

We notice that the nation celebrates the days associated with notable personalities. On such occasions, the saints—despite their temporary absence—heartily enjoy these celebrations. Visiting the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam in person is a way of saluting his spirit and conveying a message of contentment to him. In the same way, we visit the shrines of other saints.

It is essential that a person, after deep reflection and with due care, discovers their spiritual contacts, safeguards them, and—if possible—informs the nation of these connections. Iqbal established a spiritual connection with the wise elder Rumi, even though Rumi was no longer alive. The bountiful spirit of Rumi found expression in Iqbal's poetry. The nation recognized it, contemplated it, and made decisions in its light. These decisions were crowned with success. Today, those very decisions justify our existence.

There is a lesson here that deserves reflection. If you say something meaningful—if you write with grace—thousands of people will raise their hands in prayer for your health and long life. You may not know any of their names, nor have seen their faces, yet you are in contact with them, and they are in contact with you. These unseen connections give you strength—and through this strength, your journey continues, unceasingly.

May God protect our spiritual contacts. May they be divinely guided and pray on our behalf; and may we, in turn, be guided to offer our gratitude to them. We pray for the wellbeing of our mentors and elders. May our history remain peaceful and safe from harm. And lastly, a prostration of gratitude to those who enriched us with the treasure of true faith.



Relationships

There are two types of relationships. Upon our birth, we inherit one type as a legacy; the other is formed through our own efforts. The familial relationship is known as a blood tie, encompassing our parents, siblings, and relatives. These connections come into existence independently; no matter how hard we try, we cannot join them, nor can we sever them. There is a permanence to these ties; they are enduring commitments. We must fulfill our obligations to respect our elders and love the younger generations.

The relationships we cultivate ourselves include friends, classmates, those who share our religion, fellow professionals, constant companions, and those for whom we feel affection. This category encompasses various people—our allies, adversaries, superiors, subordinates, teachers, and students. In essence, our lives are divided into these relationships, and we spend our time nurturing them until we ultimately reach our end. We participate in matrimonial celebrations and funerals, eventually taking our leave. How can a transient life bear the weight of these numerous relationships? Ultimately, it comes to a conclusion. We drift into slumber while listening to the tales of others. The narrative continues, but those who listened will be gone forever.

From our elders, we hear their life stories. We share our own experiences with our children, yet by the time our progeny recount their lives, we often find our ability to listen has waned. Our time here is fleeting, while worldly pursuits can feel interminable. Consequently, we vanish while traversing our paths. No one can fully narrate their story; sometimes, the beginning becomes lost, and at other times, we find ourselves without an ending. Only complaints, grievances, annoyance,

and scattered memories—both fresh and faded—remain. Nothing else survives.

The allure of relationships stirs a strange sensation within people. Each individual is moved by a profound sense of collectiveness; we feel connected to everything around us. A tremendous sense of union nurtures us in its embrace.

The doors to time's blessings open before us, illuminating possibilities. Our presence, emotions, and consciousness echo throughout our surroundings. We are not alone in our joy and sorrow; others accompany us, doubling our happiness and lessening our grief. We feel cared for, thought of, and felt by those around us. We have become an intrinsic part of a vast and immense life. Life was incomplete without us. All things began to unfold once we entered the scene. People were waiting for us; life itself was ready to welcome us with open arms. We see ourselves as incredibly significant—believing that if we were not present, perhaps nothing would have come to pass.

But... and this “but” carries a heavy sorrow. Over time, everything begins to change. The clouds that once showered us with love may be swept away by a gale of indifference. The veil of affection that once sheltered us is lifted. Our close intimacy with loved ones transforms into a disheartening separation. Those who were once ours no longer seem connected to us. Our worldly existence gradually shifts toward nonexistence. No one speaks of us, and our memory fades from the hearts of others. We find ourselves entering a wasteland of solitude.

Those who were once closely tied to us seem to lack the time to think of us. Our love becomes an ordeal, and relationships begin to fracture. Some relatives sever their ties with us, while others we choose to break away from. We forget some, and some forget us. There was a time when living apart from

certain individuals felt unimaginable, yet now we find it difficult to endure their presence.

We are content as long as we reside in our parents' home. Yet, when misfortune leads our father and mother to live with us, we often feel disturbed. Our parents provided us with everything we needed, but when they mention their own needs, we complain that relationships are a burden. We conveniently forget the kindness with which they nurtured us in our childhood.

Over time, these relationships fade away. Gradually, we distance ourselves from relatives and drift toward total strangers. Once, we traveled with a caravan, surrounded by people we regarded as kin. As we moved on, however, the crowd transformed. Though still present, the individuals seem different—a testament to our past misdeeds. They are all strangers now, and everyone remains oblivious to one another. There is no one left in our caravan whom we consider our own. Relationships have dissolved; hearts have turned to stone. No memories trouble us, and no grief brings us to tears. To be and not to be feels like the same existence.

These relationships consume our time, money, peace of mind, and sometimes even our faith. This is the reality of our society and the standard by which we live. Relationships ensnare us in temptations and shame us for poverty, forcing us, by our sense of honor, to betray our faith for trivial gains. We deem poverty unlawful and justify bribery as acceptable. The demands of relationships often clash with the needs of our faith, leading us, in a state of helplessness, to commit acts we should have avoided.

The most significant relationship is that between husband and wife. This bond is formed by our own efforts, and we are duty-bound to nurture it. The two wheels of this carriage tend to engage in a perpetual blame game. Sometimes, this

relationship breeds conflict. The first couplet of this ghazal remains no different from its concluding verse; we can never predict what will happen next. There is tranquility present, as well as turmoil.

The early days of marriage are enchanting—a tale of love and euphoria, wherein passion blooms, and emotions brim with respect and reverence. This relationship rests on a shared understanding that we are participants in the grand act of life's evolution and preservation.

But does this relationship truly matter? How can one place their trust in a fleeting bond? Initially respectful, love often shifts to intimacy and then to possession. The painful realities of what once was a peaceful connection emerge when one who cherishes these aspects shows little tolerance for them. Despite infusing life into our beings, what began melodiously often culminates in a note of discord.

This saga of relationships has evolved from the very beginning. Relationships are formed, nourished, and ultimately torn apart. These connections dictate how we are rewarded or punished.

The utility of these relationships shifts as we grow and evolve mentally. In today's civilized and urban society, machines have diminished the sensitivity of relationships. Every person has become an island; love is no longer a necessity. Services are merely bought, and that is all. Families are disintegrating; the sense of kinship is fading. There is little difference now between a circle of friends and a band of enemies. Blood relations are increasingly filled with strife. Words such as sincerity, kindness, faithfulness, and love have lost their meaning.

Man is on the road to progress, but he has little time to consider affection and magnanimity. He knocks on the gates

of heaven, yet why should he seek entry at the door of the heart? He has charted ways to traverse vast distances but has forgotten the path that leads him home. He pursues the orbits of stars while remaining oblivious to the journey of sensibility. Though he possesses countless material things, what he lacks is a loving heart. Words like love and affection hold no meaning for him.

He has become enamored with inanimate objects: machines, factories, cars, banks, and fast airplanes. Amidst this chaos, man cannot spare a moment to seek out familiar faces. He wields atomic power, controlling mountains of dynamite, capable of annihilating humanity and reducing the world to desolation. This man, devoid of emotions, has bid farewell to meaningful relationships, turning his back on a world that nurtured reverence and devotion. The consequence of severing all ties is that man himself has become a fragmented being.

Mutual respect has deteriorated, replaced by tension. The plague of depression infiltrates every corner of society. Clinics have sprouted everywhere, a clear sign that man's inner self is unwell. Love is essential for the heart's well-being, and a lack of magnanimity is an affliction. Burdened by the shackles of relationships, man has become a servant of doctors and hospitals.

Today's man resides in a house, yet the concept of home eludes him. The days of caring for one another have faded. We now meet only out of necessity, where relationships serve a utilitarian purpose. Perhaps man is unaware that he suffers from a spiritual thirst, feeling isolated within this grand caravan of humanity. He does not belong to anyone, nor does anyone belong to him. He gazes upon things but cannot truly feel them. This alienation can prove perilous.

Yet, there is still time to revitalize the sanctity of relationships and protect them from being trampled. We should call for the revival of old gatherings. Let us sing old songs once more, seek familiar faces, find kindred eyes, revisit old sanctuaries, and rediscover the sights of our past.

The fear persists that as mankind modernizes, it may lose all sense of humanity. However, this need not be the case. Our hearts should remain filled with cherished memories, and may our foreheads be blessed through prostration before Allah. Let us recite the old declaration of faith again, holding our traditional mosques in high regard. We should not introduce new names into old sermons; those old allegiances possess true religious significance. We must hope that our newfound freedom from relationships does not erode our faith. We should not embrace impudence by discarding love and reverence; such thoughts must perish.

Let us pray that our selfishness and audacity do not invoke divine wrath. A punishment that ensures no heart will feel troubled for our sake, no eyes will look forward to seeing us, is indeed the most terrible fate: the absence of anyone left to pray for us or bless us. When we depart from this world, may people weep for us; so let us allow them to experience joy while we are still alive. It is not merely death when we cease to breathe; true death occurs when there is no one left to remember us. Those who hold us in their thoughts deserve our attention, and we should honor them. If there is no one we can call our own, we become inconsequential. Our existence itself is rendered purposeless.



Advice

The easiest thing in the world is to advise others on what is good for them, while the most challenging task is to act upon what you know is good for yourself. I have chosen the easy path for myself; as for you, the choice is yours to make. It is up to you to determine whether you wish to complicate your life or simply stay out of the way.

Telling others what they should do is as ancient as life itself. Such advice may have existed even before mankind. This guidance was often imposed like a decree: Do it this way. Don't do it that way. Go here. Don't go there. Prostrate yourself before this entity. Don't kneel before anyone else. Obey your parents. Do not heed the devil. In short, listen to what you are told and comply without question. During your time on earth, heed what the heavens instruct you to do, and have the courage to act accordingly.

When we glance through the pages of history, we sometimes see a figure, someone who is just like us, stand upon a high ground and begin to command us imperiously, "Do not believe in multiple gods. Do not walk with arrogance," and so on.

Who permitted a man like him to address the public, declaring, "Listen closely, people; a significant day is approaching when you will be questioned about your actions. Matters that are hidden today will be revealed, and each individual will receive their due in the hereafter according to their deeds."

Nonetheless, such advice seems never-ending. The sermons persist, and the ability to listen grows dull. Those who instruct others call out, "Honorable blind men, do not take another step. There is a disused well right in front of you." But those

whose senses are dulled pay no attention to the warnings and stumble forward, crashing down. Then, one might hear them lament, "I wish someone had struck me with a baton and made me aware of the disused well ahead." Such individuals hear but remain unmoved. They observe yet fail to see. They are lamentable philosophers lacking understanding. They possess hearts but feel nothing. They exhibit arrogance, yet their lives are fleeting. They seek to rule through power, oblivious to how to truly serve the masses. Thus, the cycle continues perpetually. Voices can be heard urging, "Heedless folk, listen attentively. The bells are ringing. Pay attention. Seek the meaning of the bells that signal the caravan's impending departure. Look for an interpretation of 'Bang-e-Dara.' Try to grasp the essence of 'Baal-e-Jibrael.'" But all is in vain. It is as if molten lead has been poured into the ears of the listeners. There is a revelry of greed underway. How can the voice of wise counsel be heeded when faced with such distractions?

People find comfort in the absence of Socrates. They feel relieved that Saadi has passed away. They are content that Iqbal is no longer among us. Some take satisfaction in the belief that the new generation has shed the shackles of the old religion. These individuals are pleased that Allah has ceased sending further prophets.

They believe they have perhaps attained salvation. They no longer feel bound by religious allegiances and doctrines. They have rid themselves of those who once directed their actions, instilled fear in them, and unveiled hidden truths. For these people, only the present moment exists; there is neither tomorrow nor yesterday. Only this epoch and these times matter. There will be no reckoning in the days to come. Allah resides peacefully in His realm, and we reside peacefully in ours.

But...no, it cannot be like this. He who brought us into existence also created life, and the purpose was to discern who offers pertinent advice and who acts upon it. Who is the blessed individual who learns from the experiences of others? Who is the fortunate person who, through the illumination provided by sound advice, frees himself from the dark tyranny of life? And where is the individual who achieves a lofty status in life, aided by the rewards that life offers?

The term "advice" itself is a magical word, capable of revealing its enchantment at any moment along life's journey. However, there is one stipulation: the advisor should not gain any benefit from the act of advising. Otherwise, it amounts to nothing. There is only one definition of a sincere person: one who is kinder to you than you are to yourself, who forgets himself and remembers you—one who desires only your prosperity and seeks no remuneration in return. An advisor lacking sincerity is merely a professional; the advice given by such professionals cannot be classified as truly pertinent.

In short, what is implied here is that giving advice is an age-old, simple act that we have selected for ourselves. However, there is no need to dispense every type of advice to someone at all times. This approach simply will not suffice. The first rule of providing relevant advice is that the advisor must somehow relate to the person receiving the advice. Advising or proselytizing someone you do not know is akin to speaking in a foreign language.

The most appropriate advice is thus: the person who accepts advice must have some inclination toward it. Otherwise, it will be the same story repeated. Once, there was a monkey who lived alongside a weaver bird; they were, in a sense, neighbors. The weaver bird spent the entire year building a lovely nest for itself and enjoyed a comfortable life when winter arrived. In contrast, the monkey did nothing in keeping

with its nature. When winter came, the monkey found itself shivering in the cold, while the weaver bird was snug in its cozy nest. Somehow inspired, the weaver bird said to the monkey, “Oh, brother monkey, I’ve told you repeatedly that winter is approaching. Build a roost for yourself, but my plea has fallen on deaf ears.” The monkey grew annoyed upon hearing these words. “You’re just a small bird. How dare you speak such words in the presence of a mighty monkey like me! Who gave you the right to make suggestions? Come, I will show you how to build a nest.” The monkey did what creatures of its kind typically do—the weaver bird’s nest was smashed to pieces. The monkey did not construct a roost for itself; instead, it destroyed the advisor’s nest.

This is how those who are offended by good advice often treat their advisors. Sometimes, they crucify or hang him; at other times, they impose upon him hardships equaling the tragic events of Karbala. They may make him traverse the valley of Taif, facing ordeal after ordeal. Yet, we extend our salutation and praise to those who give advice, whose spirits remain high, and whose determination is unwavering—those who pray for the well-being of those who wronged them, who lift the veil of forgetfulness from the oblivious, and refuse to allow them to remain senselessly asleep. We too, in humility, aspire to play the role of an advisor, paying tribute to these spiritually gifted individuals.

Before offering advice, it is important to acknowledge that no guidance has not already existed in the world. Libraries and books are filled to the brim with advice. Is there truly enough to read? No, there is something more—indeed, much more. The world is a place rich with admonition. We should navigate it with our eyes wide open, avoiding the behavior of a despot who acts according to his whims. Where have those individuals gone who lived according to their own desires? Why did places of luxury transform into places of warning?

The palaces were left in ruins. What legacy did those who lied throughout the world leave behind? They left desolation as their token.

The most significant advice is that one must be prepared to listen to what is said and what is in one's best interest. Keep your ears open. Your eyes must not grow weary from waiting. The heart should be devoid of emotions. The intellect should be allowed to mature into something wholesome, free from restrictions. When a person is willing to listen to good advice, he can see books reflected in the running brooks—advice upon advice.

The brook is a mystery, a profound mystery. It bears a message from the mountain, flowing toward the sea for the sake of reaching a destination where its desires will be fulfilled. This is sound advice for those blessed with keen intellect. These insights are not confined to the brook; even the mountains tell tales of pertinent wisdom for the benefit of humanity—a message of determination, strength, and a wise sage. Advice can be drawn from both the underground and above it. Trees possess tongues; they hold the power of speech and can impart wisdom. There are manifestations, and there exists He who brings these revelations to life.

A story about advice received from beneath the earth is charmingly recounted by Mir Taqi Mir in his poetry. While wandering through a graveyard, he accidentally stepped on a skull. The skull fractured, and a voice was heard:

“O witless man, as you walk, take care.
Once, I was also the pride of someone here.”

Even more poignant is the incident described by Baba Fareed in his verses. Here's how the story unfolds:

Once upon a time, while in a wandering mood, Baba Fareed came across a settlement. He witnessed a beautiful lady

thrashing a poor woman. Curious about the situation, Baba Fareed inquired about it. He learned that the wealthy woman owned a luxury parlor while the poor woman was her maid, or rather, her beautician. That day, the maid had applied lampblack to her mistress's eyes, but a grain of sand had irritated her beautiful eyes, prompting the wealthy woman to beat her maid.

Baba Fareed continued on his way. After some time, he returned home and found himself at the same settlement. While in its graveyard, he observed a peculiar sight: a bird was nurturing her chicks within a human skull. The bird would bring food in her beak and feed it to the chicks, which emerged from the eye sockets, took the food, and retreated back inside. The unusual use of the human skull intrigued Baba Fareed. He reflected deeply to discover whose skull it was and realized it belonged to the beautiful woman, who had once faltered under the irritation of a grain of sand in her eyes. And now, chicks had made her eye sockets their home. Baba Fareed penned a few lines about this:

“I saw these eyes which once bewitched the world, But found a grain of sand intolerable. Now chicks have made those eyes their home.”

Anyway, you can perceive advice written everywhere. Every breath you take is a piece of wisdom; every manifestation serves as guidance; loneliness offers its lessons, and every gathering provides insights. Each speck of dust and every drop of water carries a message. If there is anyone willing to receive them, He who can provide what is needed is never far away. If you find joy in bowing down at the threshold of Him who deserves your prostration, remember that threshold is very near. When your eyes look ahead in anticipation of a revelation, the manifestation itself will be eager to reveal itself. He who brings news is somewhere nearby, holding

important updates just for you—news that will benefit you, news that will redeem you. Wait for the bearer of this news. He may be one of your own, someone close to you—a man like you. He could be anyone. Who knows when he will begin to speak? Be attentive. The voice may even emerge from within you.

Those who are eager to point out the shortcomings of others should also reflect on their own qualities, if they possess any. If you claim to love Islam, do not harbor hatred towards Muslims. Those whom you strongly dislike may very well be considered the chosen ones in the eyes of others. Do not let yourself be shaken by advice. The distinction between a man and a monkey must always be upheld.



Voice of the Conscience

The voice of conscience is not linked to apparent utterances, nor can it be heard by our ears. It comes from far away, resonating in a way that feels as though it is spoken within us, as if someone is whispering close by. No one knows what conscience looks like; only its voice has been acknowledged. Perhaps these are words spoken by an unseen speaker from the heavens, intended to liberate us from corruption and negligence. It reaches us through mysterious pathways and echoes in the ears of our hearts, aiming to save us from moral decline. At times, it sounds like the voice of a compassionate friend; at others, it resembles the command of a general, fulfilling its purpose. For us, this voice illuminates paths lost in the oppressive gloom of our lower selves.

We often forget that our stay here is temporary. We cannot exist forever. This very voice is akin to the ringing of bells—the tolling of time that signals the caravan is about to depart. It serves as a warning; if our eyes are not focused on our destination, we risk becoming lost in the dust we encounter along the way. Engrossed in wishful thinking and trivial chatter, we lose sight of the inevitable end. The voice of conscience rouses us from this abysmal slumber, revealing the signs of our destination.

This voice serves as a lamp of guidance, a sincere friend, and a fearless companion. It informs us of our true status and the reality of our flatterers and sycophants. The voice of conscience reminds us that status, pomp, and show are fleeting. We may desire to be the Pharaohs of our times, but this voice starkly illustrates what ultimately becomes of Pharaoh in the hereafter.

Those who ignored the voice of conscience met a grim fate. Although they resided in grand palaces, they left ruins in their wake. Mighty individuals, who considered themselves as God's shadow on earth, ultimately succumbed to mortality. As their end approaches, these individuals who once looked down upon humanity—considering others subhuman, viewing their peers' children as mere worms and vermin—cry out, wishing they were merely heaps of dust, longing to be someone else. They regret their pride in high status, yet these desires remain unfulfilled wishes, unable to rectify past wrongs. Life is singular; there is no coming back.

Throughout various stages of life, the voice of conscience reaches us through different sources, yet we often remain unmoved, stuck in place regardless of circumstances.

For a child, the voice of conscience can be described as belonging to their parents. This kind voice, imbued with the sweetness of love, encourages the child to move forward while informing them of the challenges they will encounter along the way. Parents aspire to guide their children toward knowledge, character-building, and morality. They frequently rouse their children from complacency, ensuring that time—which is life itself—is not squandered.

Gradually, the voice of teachers joins that of parents, refining the message further. The voice of conscience becomes enriched. It feels as though a shadow or nurturing cloud has appeared overhead in the scorching desert of life. This voice provides immense solace. It is through mentors that the voice of God reaches us. After the prophets, parents and teachers occupy the most crucial roles.

It is said that once Hazrat Uwais Qarni decided to journey to behold the radiant face of the Holy Prophet (SAW). He sought his mother's permission to set out on this sacred quest. She replied, “My son, you may go only if you find the Holy Prophet (SAW) in the mosque. If he is there, then you may

behold his radiant glory and be blessed.” Hazrat Uwais Qarni faced a long distance ahead and walked all the way, only to find that the Holy Prophet (SAW) was not in the mosque. Respecting his mother’s wishes, he returned home without meeting him.

However, the urge to see the Holy Prophet’s (SAW) radiant face seized him once more. His mother then advised, “My son, go and feast your eyes on the Holy Prophet’s (SAW) luminous face, provided you can find him at home.” On this occasion, the Holy Prophet (SAW) was present in the mosque. Still, Hazrat Uwais Qarni did not meet him during his lifetime. Yet, due to his obedience to his mother, he was rewarded with an innate vision of the Holy Prophet (SAW)—a perpetual vision. He also received the Blessed Cloak of the Holy Prophet (SAW) as a gift. Obeying one’s parents is aligned with the teachings of both the Holy Prophet (SAW) and Allah.

The voice of conscience must be intertwined with the voice of one’s parents. After heeding the words of your parents, the voice of conscience can sound like the advice of a sincere friend. An honest friend brings our shortcomings to light, steering us away from paths of wrongdoing and preventing us from straying into arrogance. He reminds us that while we gaze at the heavens, we must not forget that our feet remain firmly planted on the ground. Those fortunate enough to have a faithful friend by their side enjoy the protection from the gilded traps set by flatterers, safeguarding them from the misfortunes of pride and hatred. This friend embodies the blessings of Allah—a sincere companion and the very voice of conscience.

If, through sheer misfortune, you lack a sincere friend, you can still listen to the voice of conscience by means of a mirror. When we stand before a mirror, we confront ourselves. The mirror does not lie; it reflects our true visage, devoid of disguise. Sometimes, when engrossed in our reflection, the

image seems to speak, offering wise counsel. It may say that your head is swollen with pride, donning a metaphorical crown, but remember that tomorrow, lamentations will surround it. Do not tread pompously on this earth; your true place is two yards below your feet—in the ground itself. What significance do self-esteem and dignity hold? The mirror's reflection carries a profound secret and serves as a reminder of the voice of conscience.

Recognizing and acting upon the voice of conscience is a matter of great destiny. Those attuned to this inner voice reveal that it alone can mend our actions, guiding us toward success. This voice illuminates the lamp of guidance, dispelling darkness and freeing us from the snares of our lower selves that prompt us to commit misdeeds. It teaches us to distinguish between what is permissible and what is forbidden. We may commit sins while pretending they are beyond our control, yet the voice of conscience helps us evade the shadows of wrongdoing. It instills in our hearts a fear of God and comes forth like the revelation of sacred scripture, saving us from straying into moral decline.

Amidst the turbulence of days and nights, in the chaos of profit and loss, this voice reassures us: "Do not despair," bringing the comforting news that Allah will bless us. Beware! Do not lose sight of your blessings; that is, do not be despondent about your future.

The voice of conscience is an epiphany of our inner selves, the protective voice of our destiny. There are various kinds of consciences—individual, factional, national, collective, and that of communities of believers.

The Mathnawi of Maulana Rumi serves as an elixir, a transformative force for keeping the individual conscience alive. This book infuses passionate love with vitality. When passionate love thrives, the lower self, which has the potential

to mislead, no longer affects us. This reflects the profound charisma of the voice of conscience.

Iqbal stirred and awakened the conscience of the nation, fostering unity, thoughtfulness, and character while illuminating a new destination and the path to attain it. Individuals like Iqbal embody the conscience of their nation. By heeding their call, it becomes possible to reach new horizons. Iqbal prayed, "O Allah, if someone is wise enough to grasp the secret, bless him with a refreshing breeze from Hijaz. Grant him a voice that melts hearts. Divinely guide him to cleanse the conscience of the commonwealths of the faithful. Make him as persuasive as Moses. Bestow upon him his rightful share of wisdom. O Allah, bless my successor, who heralds a new age."

Figures like Iqbal bring messages of fortune to nations. They breathe life into the conscience, encouraging us to look beyond temporary gains and focus on a lasting, meaningful existence.

Yet, in today's world, people are often preoccupied, neglecting what is being said. They chase after wealth, counting and accumulating it without heed. If God were to ask one of them, "Should I send you to hell or heaven?" they would likely respond, "Send me where I can earn a little money." How can the voice of conscience reach such a person?

Despite this, the voice of conscience continues to call out: "Do not take more than is rightfully yours so that those who are deprived can receive their due share. Do you feed your children with what you have unlawfully earned, or offer them a mouthful of fire? Do not oppress the innocent. Do not doom your children by feeding them with money acquired through bribes. Perform your work honestly and fulfill your duty. You speak only of your rights; why not acknowledge your responsibilities?"

Millions sacrificed their lives for this country, striving to help our people experience a life of high standards. Yet, alas, some greedy individuals drain its vitality like leeches. What difference does it make to a poor man whether he is robbed by a Hindu or a Muslim? It is time to reflect on this. Their lamentation demands our serious attention.

If you disregard the voice of conscience... let it remain unmentioned... the moors of Cordova. Releasing such thoughts is vital. If the conscience is alive, the individual is alive. If the individual is alive, the nation thrives. If the nation thrives, the country will be secure.

May God grant us vigilant fortune and an awakened conscience. A defunct conscience has already caused immense harm. Such a conscience focuses solely on profiteering, indifferent to the damage inflicted upon the nation and its people. When people with a vibrant conscience appear, those with lifeless consciences will retreat into obscurity. When truth emerges, falsehood dissipates. The voice of conscience resides ever present in expansive realms. We are victims of having too many aims and desires. We live many lives and will experience more than one death. It is essential to contemplate this. We must strive to keep our conscience alive and remain loyal to our benefactors. The voice of conscience conveys a singular message: all apparent pomp and show is merely an illusion. Beneath the surface, everyone is fundamentally the same.

The day is not far off when the current times will come to an end. Those who rebel against their conscience will be reduced to dust, while those who heed the voice of conscience will triumph and be rewarded with laurels.



Hard Work

The Almighty Allah says, “O men, you were created to work hard. Therefore, embark on the path and work diligently towards your Protector.” It is a well-established fact that man, known for his nobility, was made to be industrious. He will engage in some activity or another, and if he does nothing, he'll err. He will work hard at his tasks and sometimes stay occupied even while idle.

You spend a lot of money doing nothing, and even more when unwell. You could even argue that an idle person works harder than anyone else. Most people know how to work hard to earn a living, but few understand the art of earning by doing nothing. Some survive by begging and pleading, but even that is not easy. Ultimately, man is here to be diligent.

From the beginning of creation to now, we see the effects of man's hard work worldwide. Man has uplifted the world, settling in cities through rigorous effort and back-breaking labor. The path of human life is forged by man's toil.

Man has built settlements on uplands, found places to dwell in deserts, and constructed highways. Evidence of man's labors can be found all around us. Whether in science or the arts, these domains owe their existence to man's diligence. It's as if people have mercury in their veins and cannot remain inactive. They say, “We must work hard. We have vast distances to cover.” Whether those distances are temporal, terrestrial, or celestial, we've negotiated all by employing our diligence.

Perhaps aspiration drives a man to work so hard. It makes him wander; he labors along prescribed lines. Sometimes, he works to understand the essence of things, uncovering secrets hidden in caves and treasures in the seas. A vast world invites

him to discover and claim it, and man has been diligently engaged in this task.

Man achieves his goals through hard work and, at times, wrongly takes the rewards of another's toil. He has an innate inclination to work hard. There is inner discord, and he creates discord around him. Discovering one's essence is challenging, something man embraces. Generations labored for years, unlocking secrets, finding the clues they genuinely sought. Through hard work, many miracles have been realized on earth. But, unfortunately, some labor has proven to be futile.

Before man's creation, Satan, through arrogance, squandered centuries of diligence without remorse or reconciliation, leading to his expulsion from heaven. Allah has shown man how to seek forgiveness. Should a man feel his hard work has been in vain, new paths of diligence can be revealed. Without valuing or safeguarding hard work, it goes to waste. It is said by Allah, "Pitiful indeed is the old woman who spent her life spinning and then ruins it."

Those who walked the paths of falsehood, their diligence led to disgrace.

It is man's nature to work hard. We must consider this: what does he wish to achieve through his efforts? A gambler works hard in a den, striving to regain losses, wasting money, time, and the hereafter.

Similarly, those laboring for politicians waste their lives and resources, returning home after failing, their hard work yielding only shame.

What is worthwhile and what is futile? Only the Creator who made man can decide, saying, "O men, strive towards your Lord." What does this striving entail? It means following the path laid out by the Holy Prophet PBUH, whom Allah sent for guidance. How do those who labor without direction fare? The labor of the sinful culminates in sin; this completion is enough

to render his hereafter hopeless. Looking at such labors, it's clear that the traces of efforts made in rebellion are evident as admonitions in our world. We lament over work that leaves a wasteland behind. Conversely, those who toil mightily towards the Lord are esteemed even posthumously. Their holy sites, writings, and teachings stand as beacons for future generations, illustrating that only effort towards the Almighty truly matters. Although everything in the cosmos nears its end, a man who works hard gains infamy, fails, and ends awfully, serving as a cautionary tale. Those favored by the world labored according to God's commands. Gradually and assuredly, they used their efforts for success that aligned with their faith and worldly existence.

Hard work is a mighty force. Though man lacks wings, through sheer effort, he surpasses even the highest-soaring birds. Indeed, as far as flight goes, he's left such birds behind.

The diligent reach mountain summits by taking one step at a time. Working around the clock reveals hidden truths. Although man is a mystery, he's eager to uncover secrets. Along with knowing the world's inanimate realms, he understands secrets hidden within inanimate objects, fauna, and flora. Splitting open particles' essence, he harnessed atomic power, a testament to his diligence.

No matter how many panegyrics you write lauding man's diligence, they will never seem enough; but labor that serves no purpose is regrettable and warrants condemnation.

Only those labors that aim at man's welfare and serve to bring peace of mind contribute to making human life beautiful and meaningful. In contrast, efforts that lead to the destruction of man's serenity unleash affliction on land and sea—these efforts embody sheer folly and hubris.

Blessed are those labors that are recognized with approval by the Almighty. Such endeavors dignify humanity. But if one

works hard merely for self-glorification, everything ends in remorse. Life provides no second chance, and there is little time to rectify one's mistakes. It's essential to reflect carefully before embarking on any endeavor that demands diligence. To do so requires consulting someone knowledgeable about what true diligence is and how it can effectively lead to meaningful conclusions. Seek guidance on the right orientation for your efforts. If you move in the right direction, then all will be well, whether or not you achieve success. The goal is to find the correct path.

If our efforts are directed towards Allah, even dying in pursuit of that purpose is akin to embracing martyrdom. As we journey along this path, every place becomes a destination, and every destination offers new locales—this is the limitless journey that leads to the Limitless One.

We must recognize the diligence exhibited by those who illuminated the path of righteousness, leaving signs for generations to come. They remained awake while the world was asleep, brightening the nights with their heartfelt prayers at dawn, seeking Allah's grace and praying, "O Allah, keep us from such labors that yield nothing."

Allah revealed secrets to those who journeyed steadfastly in their quest for Him, showering them with blessings and granting them leaders who guided the followers to their destinations. This pattern holds true and shall continue eternally. The miracles performed by these devoted individuals, through their sincere efforts at dawn, are legendary—Attar, Rumi, Ghazali, Jami, Amir Khusro, and Iqbal. To sigh at the blush of dawn is the pinnacle of diligence.

Instead of laboring to seek sin, the hard work aimed at avoiding sin results in a different outcome. It is a blessing to be aware of the diligence that garners divine acceptance and approval. Otherwise, it is inherent in our nature to work hard, but what is the value of mindless labor?

How many individuals toil without understanding why they do so? They resemble machines or robots, oblivious to who set them on their path. Such a mindset inevitably leads to failure and despair. They laugh and sing as they work hard, yet ultimately meet a dire end.

Those who descend into hell work just as hard. The only difference is that their efforts lead them into turmoil. In contrast, those who rejoice in paradise labor with purpose and, in turn, reap their well-deserved rewards.

Those who faithfully remembered Allah and recited His names became embodiments of the divine truth. Those who guided others to the paths leading to God incorporated that truth into their beings. They preached monotheism, prophethood, and truth, becoming part of the very message they conveyed. Their footsteps have been preserved in time, and people visit their tombs in great numbers. Each era has been enriched with their enlightening insights.

Governments may rise and fall, kings may take their thrones only to be replaced, and those who spread light might depart, leaving darkness behind. Many came claiming to be the shadow of God on earth, working hard to impose their will, only to be consumed by oblivion.

The dervishes traveled the path to Allah, lighting lamps along the way. They united people, enabling them to journey together, making the path easier to navigate. These individuals will retain a pious reputation as long as this earth exists.

Times may change, and centuries may pass, but the legacies of the dervishes—their vibrancy and divine blessings—will not fade. It is by Allah's grace that He makes the journey easier for those who follow the paths He has illuminated, rewarding them with manifestations that can only be experienced on those paths. He supports and encourages those who seek Him,

drawing them near, and this proximity becomes the travelers' ultimate goal.

Is it not fitting that man should understand what he labors for, make necessary adjustments, and orient his actions in the right direction? The most commendable diligence belongs to the Holy Prophet (PBUH), the epitome of virtue. His praise has been affirmed not only by his followers but also by those outside his faith. Every effort that brings us closer to him is blessed; all labor distancing us from him is mere obstinacy.

The pathway to piety aligns with the path of diligence. The route that hinders us from being pious is also a pathway of hard work. However, the outcomes differ: we either enter paradise or are cast into hell. Such a stark difference in the results of one's labor warrants our attention.

If someone blindfolds himself and works like a machine, the end will reflect a machine's performance; accumulating wealth, counting money, and hoarding possessions. This relentless pursuit is burdensome and leads to a hellish existence. Only that effort is valid which aligns with the assent of your Lord.

May God enable us to recognize the true nature of our diligence and to understand how it appears in the end. This small effort is essential during our brief time in this world. It is not a great feat if, through hard work, you subjugate the skies. What truly matters is that man should, through his labor, discover the pathway to the heart's world. This realization can only arise from Allah's grace, for the heart itself is Allah's secret. The journey that leads to Allah begins at the gateway of the true believer's heart.



Nature

If someone claims that a mountain has moved from its place, we might believe him. However, if someone suggests that a person's nature has changed, we are less likely to accept it. A person undergoes many transformations that contribute to who he is. He can even alter his appearance, but his nature remains unchanged. A person's nature is established even before birth, compelling him to act in accordance with it, as though he is a pawn in the hands of nature.

Humans are fascinated by change and constantly pursue it. They change their clothes, social ties, ethical standards, and political views. They move from one house to another, relocate to different cities, and switch friends and foes. Yet, despite these changes, they cannot alter their inherent nature. It is said that if a well's water is bitter, no amount of sugar can change its taste. The true flavor of the water reflects its nature. We might try to attribute various characteristics to it, but its essence remains unchanged.

Once, a falcon and a vulture soared high in the sky. To observers, they appeared alike, both excited to find themselves at such heights, unconcerned with the earth below or the sky above, focused solely on their flight. Onlookers were surprised and thought, "They do not share the same nature; how are they flying together?" The falcon remarked to the vulture, "The only thing worth our attention in this world is the passion for flying." Out of politeness, the vulture replied, "Yes, I too love flying. My wings were made for soaring high." But soon, the vulture spotted a horse carcass far below. It told the falcon, "Forget your high-flying notions and lofty vision. My destination calls to me." It then dived towards its goal. Their natures did not align, and they sought different

destinations. If a person traveling with you does not share your nature, he will never reach the destination with you.

By observing someone closely, one can ascertain that their nature invariably reveals itself. A person of humble origins will remain as they are, regardless of the status or position they achieve. Mian Muhammad eloquently captures this in a couplet:

"You never benefit if you befriend someone lowborn.
Make a vine climb a thorny tree; your grapes will end up torn."

Nature is independent of circumstances and education, relating instead to a person's inner self and perspective. Some individuals are inherently religious, while others are drawn away from religion. Religious people build places of worship—mosques, temples, churches, gurdwaras, stupas—and follow guidance from their religious leaders. They strive to enhance their inner selves, though who truly evolves in this pursuit can be debated.

Those who navigate life through a spiritual connection are deemed religiously inclined. Their nature drives them towards elevated thinking and a desire to understand the universe concerning its Creator, leading them towards religious enlightenment. This aligns with their inherent nature. Conversely, some people adhere to their secular identities, denying the existence of a Creator and questioning faith in prophets. Why do some pursue worldly possessions relentlessly, while others seek liberation from worldly ties?

This is the essence of nature. The Supreme Creator's commandment recognizes that among you are those who desire the world and those who aspire for the hereafter. It is the Creator's will that everything returns to its origin, which is nature. This return is what we should seek, as understanding one's nature leads to true knowledge: seeing things as they truly are. The Holy Prophet (SAW) often prayed, "O Allah,

grant me the consciousness to see things as they actually and originally are."

If people understood their nature, there would be less conflict. Modern individuals frequently alter their appearances, attempting to live in ways opposed to their essential selves, yet ultimately, they conform to their nature. Our professions, status, wealth, and possessions cannot alter who we are at our core. Regardless of status, a person of low character will behave coarsely, while a generous soul will remain charitable even in poverty.

In times past, professions aligned with one's temperament. Teachers were aware of their nature, and their writings and interactions were enlightening. Their lives resembled an ever-flowing spring, attracting seekers of knowledge from distant lands. Those were times without exams and degrees; instead, they were the right people doing their rightful tasks. Nowadays, teaching is merely a job, and it's rare for teachers to embody the values of their predecessors. They focus on grades and remain untroubled by students indulging in bad habits. Months might pass without notable student progress, yet teachers remain unaffected, receiving their pay and enjoying holidays. Their nature has changed. Previously, teachers exhibited a different disposition.

Today, every activity seems slightly disconnected from its foundation. Take politics: we notice the types of individuals gaining prominence. What can we anticipate from them? As a nation, we falter because we move in circles. Time progresses, and we find ourselves repetitively confronting each other. Naturally contentious individuals might foster disorder, while the congenial distance themselves from politics, suffering as a consequence. Those with sound and moderate nature should step forward, enabling progress in the right direction.

Conflicts and chaos will vanish if individuals understand their nature. By dividing nature into two primary parts, the bad and

the good, we learn that these groups, through their actions, shape the world. On one side, hospitals are built to alleviate suffering. People of good nature dedicate themselves to serving humanity, tirelessly attending to those in distress. Institutions are ready to care for those burdened by harmful thoughts, striving to create a peaceful world. Conversely, those with malicious intent focus on destruction and turmoil, engaging in war, causing anxiety, and committing the misdeeds of evildoers.

Those who possess a sense of shame avoid evil, while the shameless revel in their acts. Newspapers abound with reports of wickedness. These culprits are the looters, bombers, disruptors of world order, creators of chaos, violators of peaceful surroundings, traitors, bandits who murder travelers, and despoilers of immaculate traditions. Their actions merely showcase their evil nature.

People blessed with good nature establish communities that foster harmony and respect. They refrain from harassing others. This highlights the difference between nature and reality. A person with a malevolent nature cannot remain idle; they feel compelled to engage in mischief. Historically, a king once captured a group of bandits and sentenced them to death. Among them was a boy. The king, feeling compassionate, decided to spare the boy's life, despite his minister's warning about the child's evident malevolent nature. The king chose to ignore the advice and raised the boy. However, as the boy grew, he ultimately ran away with the princess. The minister remarked, "There is no point in lamenting now. His true nature has revealed itself."

Understanding what is real is a unique gift from nature. Not everyone can perceive a tree within a seed. Such blessed insight is a gift from the Merciful, and not everyone possesses it. Those who appear earnest may harbor malice. The outer appearance does not always reveal one's true essence. This awareness is crucial because true nature often emerges when

tested. An anecdote tells of a time when cats elected a king, only for the chosen cat to abandon its speech upon seeing a mouse, exclaiming, "The crown and the election mean nothing; the mouse is the real thing." The cat's nature overpowered its new role, leading to chaos.

Recognizing someone's nature is vital. At times, individuals with noble nature face adverse situations but remain undeterred. True nobility demands respectful treatment of all. On one occasion, enslaved people appeared before the Holy Prophet (SAW), among them the daughter of the generous Hatim Tye. The Prophet (SAW) acknowledged her generous heritage and invited her to sit on his blessed cloak, recognizing her dignity despite her status as a slave girl. His actions, echoing prophetic wisdom, highlight the need to acknowledge true nature regardless of circumstance.

Progress flourishes in societies led by individuals of good nature. It's important to be considerate of those with sensitive dispositions to avoid causing them harm. A tale tells of a condemned man who survived being thrown from a mountain and into a river. The king, perplexed by the man's resilience, questioned him. The man explained, "I am peculiar by nature and will survive unless you scorn me—that alone would kill me."

Forcing actions contradictory to one's nature is oppressive. To protect society from such oppression, we need leaders who understand nature and recognize true merit. Careful consideration is essential when choosing leaders for our institutions. Authority should not be entrusted to those fond of accepting gifts or those of a vulgar nature. Prioritizing dignity in leadership will guide us toward our goals.

Even long-standing collaborations may end when true nature asserts itself. This realization reveals that assumptions can be misleading:

"We thought he was one way
but discovered he was another."

Those whose natures differ cannot travel together for long. Even if they attempt to collaborate, their partnership will inevitably come to an end. The wise Rumi recounts a curious encounter he had on the banks of the Tigris, where he observed a crow and a swan pecking at grains side by side. This incongruous scene astonished him, as it represented two creatures of differing natures in apparent harmony. Upon closer inspection, he discovered that both birds were injured. In times of suffering, disparate natures may form a temporary alliance, but a healthy being is unlikely to join forces with another; it finds contentment in its own nature.

Occasionally, the presence of an unrelated companion may temporarily suppress a person's true nature, but this is usually short-lived. What is hidden will eventually reveal itself. Once, a lion observed a young lion living peacefully among a flock of sheep—a sight that surprised him. He lamented, "What a calamity; a lion has changed its nature." The lion approached the young one, saying, "Come with me; I will show you something." He led the young lion to a pool and said, "Look closely. We are alike; we belong to the same species. Our natures are similar; watch me in action." The lion then seized a sheep by the throat and, in mere moments, tore it to pieces. That was all it took for the young lion to understand its true potential. Its inherent nature was reignited, and it transformed into a true lion.

To awaken one's true nature, one must seek the company of the pious. Valuing devout individuals can yield positive results, as it aligns with the Creator's design. Nature itself does not change, for it has been ordained to remain constant. A mountain may shift from its original position, but a person's nature remains unalterable.



Reality

Reality encompasses everything that exists; it is the essence of all that the Creator has made. In this realm, there is no falsehood. Thus, it follows that both good and evil are real. Each holds its own distinct reality, and both originate from the same Creator, who brought good into existence alongside evil. A person must remain vigilant, observe, reflect, and if possible, consult those knowledgeable about the nature of things and the Ultimate Reality.

Humans often construct a notion of reality. When they embark on life's journey and fail to find this imagined reality, they declare that they have not encountered it. This assertion is flawed; what they discovered was indeed reality, even if it was not what they expected. For instance, while they may not have seen a tiger, they may have encountered an elephant. In this case, the elephant represents the reality of the forest. As they continue their journey, they may eventually encounter tigers, and then the tiger will define their new reality. Therefore, whatever truly exists is reality.

The heart of the matter lies in our often misguided perspective. We perceive an infinite landscape through limited lenses and hastily conclude that we have traversed the earth, explored the depths of the seas, and scoured every corner of vast expanses without finding God. Consequently, we declare that God does not exist. This is where we err. Those who set out to search may traverse immense distances but neglect to journey inward. Without engaging their hearts, they will remain oblivious to God's reality and presence.

Realities cannot be discovered through aimless pursuits. Problems cannot be solved merely by traversing distances or

arguing. Thoughtful contemplation is essential, requiring deep reflection to ultimately uncover the truth.

What constitutes the actual? Is it the seed of a mango tree? The mango tree itself? The fruit of the tree? The stone within the mango? Or the kernel inside that stone? Is there not a command at play governing the creation of fruits? Why should we not accept this reality? Beyond it lies the Being who commands, the essence of all truths, the beginning of every end, and the end of every beginning. He is both the inner core of every exterior and the outer manifestation of every inner being. He transforms nothingness into existence and existence back into nothingness. Is anything outside the reach of His divine power? This question does not even arise. He exists behind every barrier as the absolute Creator of all realities. He manifests in every scene and dwells in the hearts of all, though may be hidden from our sight. To remember and praise this reality is known as 'the Reality.'

People relentlessly strive to discover Him. This search is eternal, seeking one who remains elusive even across infinity. He is the subject of every discussion and is present everywhere; yet, precisely where he is remains unknown. He is not a geographical location that can be pinpointed by latitude and longitude, nor is He a historical event found in books. He is visible, but the challenge lies in our inability to see Him. We struggle to identify where sight resides within the eyes, where the soul is hidden in the body, or even the source of our emotions. Where does joy linger? What causes sorrow? Where do tears originate? Do they come from afar, capable of reaching the heavens? We are largely ignorant about ourselves, which makes knowing God an impossibility unless He chooses to reveal the secret to us. Historically, the process has remained unchanged. At some indeterminate moment, He may call from behind the curtain, saying, "Stand still. I am your Lord. What is it that you hold in your hand? A

mace? Throw it away and look now." He appointed a prophet to convey His message to us, blessing us with the opportunity to know Him well. Man cannot achieve anything on his own. God engages in conversation with us, providing divine visions and insights. He bestows upon us status and the ability to express ourselves, yet at times, when He reveals the truth to us, He may silence our voices. How many seekers of truth walk among us in quietude? They possess knowledge yet do not share it; those who do convey information may miss the essence of what truly matters.

The seeker of reality embodies determination. He understands the challenges of scaling lofty mountains and navigating boundless seas. Only courage, faith, and unwavering optimism are necessary for the journey. The greatest adversary one encounters on this path is despair. Many caravans have been waylaid while traversing this road, losing hope and retreating, believing that reality lacks a foundation.

It is a profound grace that the one who encompasses all realities chooses to unveil the truth. Without this revelation, a veil of ignorance shrouds the intellect and heart of man. Various veils obscure our vision: the veil of the inner self, which entices us to wrongdoing; the veil of arrogance; the veil of greed and self-love; the veil of ego; the veil of wealth; the veil of craving for fame—all layered upon one another. How can we perceive reality through such myriad veils? If your gaze is accustomed to the filthy and forbidden, how can it discern the truth? If you are preoccupied with sensuality, how can you be a seeker of reality? If one desires truth yet does not embody it, their efforts will misfire.

However, if a person becomes a silent, polished mirror, reality will emerge from behind the veil and confront the mirror directly. It is the heart's mirror, refined through the remembrance of God, that eventually enables one to witness a blinding light—a manifestation that is both a reflection and its

own source, culminating in a glorious moment of epiphany. You may black out in this overwhelming revelation, and when awareness returns, the manifestation may have disappeared, leaving only the familiar light and the familiar scene. In that instant, the scene itself has vanished; there is no pulse left within you. After experiencing the manifestation, you begin to search for it everywhere. Initially, God, who loved you first and made you His own, inclined favorably toward you by revealing Himself. Now, He has withdrawn into obscurity, and it is your turn to seek Him.

The seeker then queries every passerby: where can He be found, the one who revealed so many manifestations to us? Where does He dwell? At the Holy Kaaba, only the fabric of the Kaaba remains; it is simply a place. Where is He who inhabits that space? He is near, albeit not immediately visible. You may hear the faint sound of His footsteps; yet, He has not truly arrived. Perhaps He will not come. However, it is not so; He has promised that the one who embarks with resolve will not succumb to despair. It is through this certainty that He reveals Himself, and this hope ultimately grants us a glimmer of His presence.

It is perhaps better to remain silent, yet we should not withhold our thoughts. To behold the beloved Prophet (SAW) is to glimpse Allah; whoever has seen the Holy Prophet (SAW) has witnessed Allah. Interestingly, our quest for reality has led us to the door of a man. First come words of praise for him, followed by salutations, and then layers of reality upon layers of manifestations. One who lacks understanding knows nothing except polytheism, while the enlightened only recognize true faith.

It is worth contemplating that Allah speaks because of human beings. He addresses humanity and nothing else. If a person speaks of and loves other human beings—regardless of the circumstances—does that amount to polytheism? Does Allah

continue to shower words of praise upon the Holy Prophet (SAW)? Whom does Allah praise now that the noble Prophet (SAW) has departed? Is Muhammad (SAW) a being or an attribute? If he is a being, he continues to exist.

Certainly, Allah's words of praise for the Holy Prophet (SAW) serve as evidence of his enduring presence. Allah does not extol the virtues of one who has ceased to exist. He is the God of the here and now. The Quran is relevant to the present moment, the Kalima (declaration of faith) is a declaration for today, and the Holy Prophet (SAW) remains the Holy Prophet (SAW) of our time. He embodies reality and is the pathway for those rewarded by Allah.

Such individuals can still be found among us today. Seek out their path and embark on it. They are the ones through whom truth reveals itself; they illuminate the way. In their presence, you can witness profound blessings. The manifestation you once lost sight of will be permanently revealed to you again.

Avoid polytheism; do not worship anything illusory. Worship Allah alone—the true Allah, our Lord. Allah continually loves you, so cherish the Holy Prophet (SAW), who will be with us eternally. Be obedient to Allah, who has decreed that no voice may take precedence over that of His Holy Prophet (SAW). Otherwise, your actions, including your worship, may come to naught. If you love Allah, then obey His Beloved Prophet (SAW), who is everlasting. Through this obedience, Allah's love will envelop you, making it easier to understand reality.

The Prophet (SAW), who came to us for a time and in whose presence you may have lost your senses, is eternal; and you too shall remain in your senses for all eternity.



Worth Seeing

It is a profound secret that everything is essentially the same. The entire cosmos is one unified creation, and all existence reflects the expression of a single Creator. Things mirror each other; night is merely an aspect of the day. What is distant can only be understood in the context of proximity. The bliss of union and the sorrow of separation both flow from the grace of the same Beloved. If we were to recognize things by acknowledging their true nature, we would see that all things are interconnected. Each person is a reflection of another. Those who wield power do so because the weak allow it. Doctors and patients reflect one another; the patients are a semblance of their doctors. Every abundance arises from an underlying scarcity, while every deprivation stems from an existing possession. We know good because evil exists, and vice versa. When we fail to become what we desire, we settle for becoming someone else. Those who do not achieve a certain status adapt to another role. Every elevation is, in essence, another form of lowness, and the history of defeat often intertwines with the history of triumph.

How could you exist if I did not? If there is no eternity without a beginning, how can there be an eternity without an end? Every beginning must lead to an end; otherwise, it all devolves into nothingness. What does not begin does not end. What occurred before the beginning will also transpire after the end.

The connections between things are strong and interwoven. Love and hate represent two sides of the same emotion. It is inevitable that within our inclination for liking, there must also reside a place for disliking. We often regard the friends of our friends as our own allies and their enemies as ours, even without direct contact.

How strange it is that laughter and tears tell the same story. You see a traveler passing by, laughing all the way, only to witness him weeping bitterly moments later. Within the same household, festive music is played for someone, followed by lamentation for another. Laughter and tears coexist in the same narrative. What one loses becomes another's gain, and even more unusual is this: while you seek something, another might wish to rid themselves of it.

All that exists is a single spectacle, portraying the same pageant. It is nothing but a performance. In this drama, each person navigates various stages of life. Men reach their ends; yet, the play goes on. There is great disorder; everyone appears anxious and, despite their worries, clings tightly to their possessions. People hold on to their belongings, while those belongings ensnare them. The possessions we grasp often end up controlling us. We pause to prevent something from moving. When we engage with something, we are, in essence, engaging with ourselves. We cannot be free unless we release what binds us. Within this dream, the main role is fulfilled by its author, who can conclude the play at will.

Every person feels as though they are a character in the fifth act, believing the show is about to end. The play was destined to conclude the moment it began. From the onset, it feels as if our bodies are racked with pain. The end looms like writing on the wall. We crave durability, yet life proves to be transitory. We cannot remain in any moment for two consecutive seconds. Something begins to happen, only to undergo complete transformation. We attempt to express ourselves in words yet find ourselves rendered speechless. By the time our thoughts rise to our lips, their significance has changed. Days pass, and we fear the night. The night is spent waiting for the dawn. There are nights that conclude without the sun rising, and days when the sun sets yet light remains.

We have companions who stayed close to us, who remained by our side, yet we often failed to feel their presence. The distances that appeared insignificant to our eyes could not be traversed, despite years of travel. Those who accompanied us as fellow travelers often turned into total strangers, straying away from the caravan. As we journeyed forth, those in our company underwent transformations, and as we covered the distance, the roadways altered as well. Sometimes, the sky seemed to fall upon us; at other times, the ground slipped from beneath our feet. There are moments when someone dies for love's sake while others take lives in a frenzy of conflict. If we walk with our eyes open, we are overwhelmed by a desire to close them. Yet, if we shut our eyes, there is a will that insists we keep them wide open. This manifestation cannot be fully seen, nor can it be entirely ignored.

The hawk devours the flesh of the innocent dove, and we are left with feelings of repulsion. Once, someone asked a she-goat, "Why have you become so lean and weak, old mama?" She replied dejectedly, "What can I say? I dreamed of a tiger in all its glory." That was it—whoever sees the tiger's visage in its full splendor falls ill. The beholder is undoubtedly affected. This entire institution belongs to one entity alone. On one hand, He creates stars that boggle the human imagination; on the other, He operates at such subtle and minuscule levels that the divine glories—imminent within an electron—remain beyond man's perception.

This entire formulation is the work of a single being. It is a unified, glorious manifestation evident all around us. No man can be without Him, and He exists independently of all others. Everything springs forth because of Him, but He owes His existence to no one. He is the cause of all things, while no one can lay claim to being the cause of Him. He is the one who apportions; He is not what is apportioned. He is the scribe, not what is recorded. He is the Creator, not merely a creation. He

brings death, yet He Himself does not die. He grants life, but He is not born. He is the Creator of time, existing beyond its confines. Who is He? Only He knows. We can only possess a fragment of knowledge—the amount He has chosen to bestow upon us. In whatever manner He has fashioned us, we remain, and all that He wished to convey has been communicated to us.

All the status we enjoy or the conditions we endure—from the most exquisitely formed beings to the lowest of the low—result from His actions. We are often despotic and ignorant, not even truly "ourselves." We are His masterpiece, and while we may take pride in it, we also do so with regret. We feel simultaneously ashamed and elated. Our achievements often serve as our deprivations. We expand, then shrink; we move forward, then come to a halt; we laugh, then weep; we bid farewell to others, only to depart ourselves. We are strange creatures.

We establish yardsticks but seldom take the time to measure ourselves. Perhaps we lack the courage to do so. We craft mirrors, yet we do not take the time to peer into them. We expect others to meet our expectations and fulfill our demands, while we often fall short of delivering what others expect of us. Sometimes, we label our shortcomings as fate and regard luck as our prerogative. We are indeed peculiar. Nothing can be definitively concluded about us.

We may spend whole nights awake in piety, gathering to praise Allah and His Prophet (SAW). We seek to lose ourselves in meditation and ecstatic revelry. Allah is near us, and we feel close to Him. Yet, there is another night altogether different, where we succumb to worldly indulgences, becoming entranced. Our feet move in unison to the rhythm of the drum, with *dhammal* (an ecstatic folk dance) symbolizing our bond with the fraternity of the *faqees* (dervishes). We are

a blend of contradictions; our inner and outer selves are misaligned. We fail to model our lives on the examples of those we reverently mention. We preach truthfulness, but our actions contradict our words. Perhaps we believe that righteous deeds and Islam are only for the purpose of preaching. While we engage in work—when our actions are visible—we resort to taking and giving bribes. It is true that some black sheep exist among us. He is a black sheep who takes bribes to act and accomplishes nothing. To tell the truth, we have surrendered the dream of becoming an exalted nation. After all, how can we live, relying solely on our dreams? We are becoming realistic now, clearly understanding that this country was created for our sake alone. We are not obliged to do anything for it. We deceive one another by claiming that we are here to serve you. We are con artists, apt to deceive even ourselves. We close our eyes and evade impending dangers in a flash. Perhaps we are counting backward to zero. What are we about to do?

But it is not destined to remain this way. Good people can still be found in the world. There is something that endures within the flickering lamps. Hope has not yet vanished. A voice whispers to us not to despair: the chaos will subside, and this turmoil of longing will dissipate. At present, we are like two armies clashing in the dark. No one knows what is unfolding. Who injects more darkness into this gloom? Who drives people apart? Who places burdens upon us greater than we can bear? Who has made the nation fear poverty more than they fear God? We need only to ponder this. No one dies before their appointed hour, and no one can live beyond the time decreed for their demise. Once you accept that the time of one's death is absolutely certain, why all this commotion? What is amiss with humanity's faith? Where will the nation end up with this incessant yearning for survival devoid of purpose? Without purpose, life is futile. When one realizes

that both honor and disgrace are in Allah's hands, what do all these politics, newspapers, and propaganda matter? What is the significance of these debates, discussions, arguments, and controversies? Allowing anything to survive with dignity ensures your own dignity. What happens to our neighbors does not concern us; thus, who will heed what occurs to us?

When you recognize that your sustenance is guaranteed—Allah has declared it is His duty to provide for every living being—why this restlessness? What drives these anxieties and profits? Allah has clearly decreed His ability to sustain every living creature on earth. And Allah is the Creator of all treasures; the Lord of treasures. All treasures on earth or in heaven belong to Him. He commands the armies of the earth and the skies and can do as He pleases. We and our thoughts testify to our helplessness.

Has mankind ceased to notice that with the passage of time, very little remains? Our understanding of it is brief, and what occupies us now is merely a referral to the past. Our devotion, faith, and acts of worship derive their orientation from the manifesto laid out for us long ago. Our history springs from ancient roots, our knowledge emerges from past teachings. Our present and our past coexist simultaneously. The future, as long as it is labeled "future," is an illusion and a dream. When it arrives, it becomes the present, transforming the future into the now. How strange! The past is the present, the future is the present, and the present is, of course, the present. What, then, does devotion to the past signify, and what plans await in the future? The crux lies in acknowledging that the present can be seen as another name for memories and plans, though this notion warrants close examination.

Indeed, events do occur, but as far as I am concerned, they only happen when I hear about them. My past—and the entire world's past—is my present. What has happened once

continues to unfold endlessly. Even now, we celebrate certain days, considering them to be happening here and now, although they belong to the past. Similarly, we label certain nights as “tonight,” even though they have already become part of history. If a particular day never returns, why do we celebrate it?

Give it some thought. No historical event, no matter what happens, ever repeats itself in the same way. What significance does this fact hold?

In days gone by, some people came to decisions unanimously, and that unity lent importance to their choices. Instead of merely recalling the past, why not strive to reach a unanimous decision ourselves? This could create a new significance. Rather than just remembering history, we should focus on creating it. Islam is not merely a designation for tradition; it is not just a collection of commandments and precepts. The collective actions of Muslims also embody the essence of Islam. Muslims of the past and those living today both share this identity. What was their Kaaba (House of God) remains our Kaaba. The Quran they revered is the same Quran we cherish. The Allah they knew is the Allah we worship. Everything that once existed continues to exist now. If the soul finds stability, our existence will also remain stable. The disintegration of being leads to chaos within the soul.

Secure the present, and the future will follow suit. This continuity forms an everlasting process, laying the foundations for what is to come. This very Islam is bound to evolve in the days ahead. This Kaaba will endure eternally. Why do we not contemplate this?

We preach Islam and take pride in our faith, yet simultaneously, we fear being labeled as fundamentalists. If standing up for Islam is deemed fundamentalism, and if those

who advocate for the truth are seen as fundamentalists, must we necessarily renounce that label?

We have ceased to reflect on where we have come from, where we are going, and what is required of us. We have become a nation that revels in chaos. If we ponder for a moment, we will realize that east and west are not opposing directions; they represent a singular path. Every place can simultaneously be both east and west. Every position is both superior and inferior. The sun neither rises from a specific point nor sets in one; night and day are merely names we assign. Joy and sorrow, too, are constructs of our own making. No one gives us anything, nor do they take anything away. We do not belong to the past or the future; we exist in the present—a vibrant, evergreen present. In this reality, there is life in death and death in life; joy in sorrow and sorrow in joy; remoteness in proximity and proximity in remoteness. The measures of separation within union and unity within separation are our designations. The distance we cover, the center also traverses alongside us.

Consider your thoughts, and they will materialize. One does not reach a destination by running in circles or drafting elaborate programs. It is sufficient to remain still and await dispensation; that dispensation is a certainty. If someone possesses a right, let them have it—that is our duty. Wipe the tears of those who weep, for it brings solace to your own soul. Restrain those who rush ahead, for they are part of your caravan. Lovingly tell them who are ready to forge ahead a little quicker that they are honorable companions. Join forces with the oppressed; we are all interconnected. Every loss one endures is another's gain. Do not question why someone was deprived of what was rightfully theirs; rather, recognize why you received more than you deserved. Reassess and redistribute your gains, making your clarifications abundantly clear. Protect yourself against the moment when you will be

held accountable in front of a higher power and risk becoming nothing from someone. Even if no one has witnessed our faults, we will testify against ourselves. We destroy ourselves, and while we yearn for ascendance, we plunge further into the abyss.

The journey we undertake in this world is, in fact, our last. It is happening for the first time, yet it is also the last time. Let us proceed with caution, fully aware of our objective and aligned with the will of our Creator. Those who came before us left behind important landmarks. These milestones are for us, as the journeys of the past are also our own. If we stumble, the burden of blame will be shared by all. Conversely, if we illuminate the way, the entire Islamic journey and all its travelers will be brightened. Our flaws will bring shame upon us collectively. We exist as one and belong to all. We must secure ourselves and those who are dear to us, ensuring that our loved ones remain alive—not only for their own sake but for the sake of everyone. Indeed, everyone is our own. We should treat all individuals as if they were part of our family.

Those born in our parents' house are our brothers, and those who share the unity of the Kalima (declaration of faith) are also our brothers. We must engage with our brothers as equals. This scripture—Allah's own glorious revelation, bestowed upon a chosen being—belongs to all Muslims: those from the past, the present, and those yet to come. It speaks to everyone across the ages. Any deeds performed in accordance with its teachings hold significance at all times. Our God and our love for God are very much alive.



Disinterest

Man no longer recognizes other human beings as fellow humans. He looks down on others and has lost touch with his own humanity. He thinks only of himself, viewing others as mere bodies. There exists only one reality he is willing to accept—his own being—as if all other creatures are extraneous to Allah. He believes that he alone is reliable. How can you give credence to such a doctrine?

Nowadays, everyone is fed up with everyone else. The inevitable outcome of self-love and egoism is this pervasive discontent. Speak to anyone, and their response will likely be topsy-turvy. Each individual feels wearied by others, while each class grows weary of the others. The government is sick and tired of its subjects, while the subjects find the government tedious. Relationships take on a torturous nature; blood ties often lead to conflict. Elders make the lives of the young miserable, while the young, in turn, create misery for the elders. Faith has lost its meaning for believers, who seem disconnected from their beliefs. Even the sun has grown fed up with its rays, while the rays labor to erase the sun.

How strange it seems. Life comes to an end; the programs seem endless. What should occur does not happen, while the improbable often comes to fruition. If we consider the passage of time, the night should have ended, yet the sun has not yet risen. The journey may have concluded, but there are no signs of a destination. The traveler has given up the ghost, but the journey remains uncompleted. How peculiar this event. Man fades away while moving, but the distance to be traversed remains. Friends part ways, while enemies align with one another. To be faithful is deemed folly, as such faith requires acknowledgment of others' realities.

Today, the term "acquiescence" has become unacceptable. No one in any field is willing to admit their mistakes. It is disheartening to concede someone else's excellence. Consequently, society experiences a breakdown. We preach fervently, yet our willingness to acquiesce diminishes daily. Places of worship are being erected, adorned with grand chandeliers and powerful loudspeakers, while the spirituality within worship becomes feeble—a consequence of these times. Those who worship Allah have grown weary of His creatures. They profess love for Allah but express disdain for His artistry, creativity, and creation. They appear more enamored with their acts of worship than with Allah Himself. Only God knows what is to come.

Satan claimed to love and worship God, yet he refused to obey His commands. He was filled with arrogance, believing himself above the call to serve. He acted in this manner simply because he did not comprehend the significance of humanity. If someone were to say that they love the painter but disdain his paintings, what would you say about them?

The universe and all its harmonies—its moon, stars, sun, mountains, plains, rivers, seas, planets, human beings, animals, birds, visible and invisible creatures, inanimate objects, and flora—all reflect an act of creativity. Every action of the Creator deserves as much honor and respect as the Creator Himself.

Faith and beliefs are meant to humanize us, but first, one must be a true human. This is a prerequisite. Perhaps, despite our humanity, we have grown weary of being human. We feel sick and tired of everything, fed up with each other. We are left with nothing to seek and nothing to gain. This feeling of being fed up has deeply entrenched itself in the human soul and is a major cause of societal ruin. As a result, every individual becomes a victim of profound loneliness, resembling a solitary

traveler on a dark night in a vast desert. We cannot truly understand this plight unless we first accept and respect others, viewing them reverently as beings brought to life by the Creator.

Today, this adverse state of mind is so pervasive that when one person asks another, "Have you heard that story?" the response is often weary: "No, I've heard another story," abruptly bringing the dialogue to a close. The days of connecting deeply through discussions, even about the weather, seem to be gone. People once became acquainted and drew closer to one another. However, now, when someone attempts to approach another, it feels as if two dangers are converging.

Teachers are fed up with their pupils, and pupils with their teachers. The desire for knowledge has waned. People may attain education, but they keep knowledge at arm's length. The eagerness for professional education has driven individuals apart. Doctors often love the wealth a patient possesses, yet lack affection for the patient themselves. Patients, in turn, grow weary of doctors even as hospitals remain consistently crowded.

People no longer love one another. Their love for wealth has rendered it impossible for them to connect. What constitutes true development? The most advanced nations have created weapons of mass destruction, leaving the earth and sky reeking of danger. Only humanity is at risk. The very existence of humankind hangs in the balance. Nations are weary of one another; countries grow tired of their wealth. This has led to disaster for Russia. What heights did it achieve, only to come crashing down? Now, despite all its might and self-delusion, America faces similarly perilous circumstances. Pride and discomfort with one another ultimately lead to destruction. Western civilization may have reached the final stages of its

journey, with its foundations showing signs of inherent instability.

Yet, even now, hope for a better future for humanity lies within Eastern civilization. Materialistic thinking has contributed to man's discontent. The only remedy lies in embracing a spiritual life. A few lamps still flicker in the East, illuminating the path. People speak of the soul. However, the disease of materialism spreads at an alarming rate, even in the East. Every sensible person has a duty to confront this issue. They must seek to overcome the affliction of wealth's allure. It begins with love—making an effort to bridge the distances that separate hearts. One must love God and, in worshipping Him, hold affection for humanity, His creation. Until man acknowledges the reality of others, he will know no peace or serenity.

This universe is profoundly interconnected. Allah grants vision to one person while endowing another with beauty. Creation is stifled if these two realities remain distant. Only when one mirror encounters another do we behold the delightful reflection. The essence of creation lies in the fact that the power of listening is entirely dependent on the power of speech. Others are significant; they are essential for our existence. Without them, we risk becoming nothing. Our elders, well aware of this truth, lament that we have reached a point where even truth has forfeited its “veracity.” This is why Muslims lack their former fervor.

Although all things remain in place, everything is in a state of change. Each construct exceeds its foundations, and the outcome is clear. Only respect for humanity will help us rise above this negative state. This affliction has been propagated by those who claim to love God yet grow weary of the human beings He has created. We freely dispense advice to others and preach to one another, yet we wish to dominate without

extending love because we have grown weary of each other. Still, we are all the same—formed by the hand of the Creator. We enter life in identical fashion and experience similar journeys as we navigate our paths. So why are we fed up with one another? Why should travelers quarrel and wear themselves out during their journey? We should embrace our religion, adhere to our beliefs, and serve those deprived of blessings. Perhaps then, better times will be on the horizon.

Once, as the noble Prophet (SAW) emphasized the importance of feeding the hungry, one of his companions asked, “O Prophet of Allah, will we also be rewarded for feeding a non-Muslim?” The Holy Prophet (SAW) firmly responded, “You are to provide for the hungry. A hungry person, irrespective of their faith, is simply hungry. It does not matter if they are Muslim or Jewish—whenever you encounter someone in need, feed them.”

We observe today that when a poor man seeks money for medicine, we first tell him to recite the third Kalima (declaration of faith). What he requires is medicine, not a sermon. This is not the time for preaching. The loudspeakers blare incessantly, day and night, and astonishingly, much of what we hear is pre-recorded. The air fills with noise, drowning out meaningful conversation. There is a time for everything to be said. We endure such an overload of sound that we find ourselves praying to God for relief from this cacophony. Preaching occurs in mosques, public meetings, weddings, and funeral prayers. Everyone seems busily delivering sermons to others. A person assailed by such noise lacks the opportunity to think, making it impossible to act.

Is there not a possibility for humanity to unite and adopt a common course of action, guiding the nation toward tranquility? Must the nation remain divided between the ruling class and the opposition? Is it essential to raise slogans like

"Long live this" and "Death to so-and-so"? Is there no way to avoid the fatigue of our current state?

Now is the time to pray. O Allah, show mercy upon us. Save us from the torment of egoism. O Allah, Your powers are perfect and exalted. Everything You create is wise, and humanity is the loveliest of Your creations. Grant us the ability to honor others. Infuse in us the spirit to recognize the realities of those who do not share our faith. Enable us to understand this diversity. Give us the courage to listen patiently to those who speak against us. Many are waiting for better times. May their wait be filled with grace and crowned with success. Usher in an era in which we worship You and cherish Your created beings. Do not let the sun grow weary of its rays. Do not allow the rays to erase the sun.

There are those who sit beneath the shade of a tree. Do not permit them to steal that shelter and depart. Let us enter a time of leniency and love. Instead of racing for money, fame, and power, bless us with feelings of serenity, compassion, love, and kindness!



The Known and the Unknown

It is common knowledge that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. As the sun sets, night falls. The night is revealed in all its glory, and when day breaks, the same cycle begins anew.

We all understand that seasons change according to the orbits of the earth and the sun. Flowers bloom in spring, and leaves fall in autumn. In certain seasons, birds construct their nests in particular ways—big and beautiful nests—only to fly away to unknown destinations, abandoning their creations.

Is there anyone who doesn't know that light descends from the sky? Loveliness manifests when light appears and rain falls. If there were no rain and light, the world would become a vastly different place. We acknowledge that the earth's beauty is a gift from the heavens. Yet, despite this vastness of light, there are certain places that remain shrouded in darkness for all eternity. Why is this so? The clouds, akin to God's blessings, rain on continuously. Yet, some people yearn for just a drop of water and are denied it. One field is awash with water, while another, merely adjacent, suffers from the torment of dryness. Why should it be this way?

At a certain fixed moment, life is created, and at an equally definitive moment, it comes to an end. People die, yet life continues unabated. What is this secret? One child, upon birth, falls victim to longings and despair. Another child, reveling in abundance and oblivious to life's pains and anguish, grows up nourished and cared for.

Men are equal, but we do not understand in what sense they are equal. Although death is a common experience, we find that their graves are seldom in similar conditions. There are

tombs where throngs of admirers create an atmosphere of celebration, while other graves lie neglected, shrouded in dismal appearances. What is the secret that allows one to find tattered tents of nomads amidst a bustling, civilized, and affluent city? Why do medical sciences continue to advance while the number of patients in hospitals rises? People begin to moan even as they laugh. An unknown process begins to emerge from within the known process.

We know that, in terms of physical appearance, twins are identical. Yet, even twin brothers raised in the same household are not alike; their feelings diverge. One may become a poet, while the other remains entirely different. What miracle does a morsel of food hold? A mouthful transforms into blood and bones, eyesight and the grace of imagination—into beauty and loveliness as well. What wonders arise from a mere morsel? Why is this so?

We plant colorless seeds in colorless soil, irrigating them with colorless water, and in time, flowers of vibrant colors emerge. The same water turns green in the leaves and red in the roses. Do the water, seed, and soil possess a peculiar consciousness of their own?

Even today, when a corpse is buried in the lifeless earth, entrusted to the ground, the earth protects it. Remarkably, even the wreath placed upon it does not wilt. Does the earth possess the power of hearing?

We all recognize that the cow is a beautiful creature. People consume its meat, while Hindus worship it. The cow gives milk—this much is well known. The significance of milk is clear. Some regard milk as light. We know everything about the cow. Yet, despite this knowledge, we remain baffled by how a stream of pure milk emerges from blood and dung. A plenitude of purity, a plenitude of light, a plenitude of wealth. How can this be?

Leave all else aside. Consider the ordinary spider, which consumes earth and then expels it; from this expulsion emerges a thread of silk. With this thread, it weaves a stunning web that adheres to geometric principles—a creation that is both lovely and mesmerizing. This is the spider's nature, undeniably beautiful. Tied to the spider's web is a significant event in Islamic history, illustrating how the web provided a justification for the preservation of the greatest life. Thus, this delicate web serves as powerful proof. How can this be?

We observe that a honeybee collects nectar from flowers and, through an unknown process, transforms it into honey. How can this be? How did an illiterate bee acquire such astonishing knowledge that even the most esteemed teachers struggle to understand it? Who imparted this wisdom to the bee?

We are aware that an ordinary drop of water seeps into an oyster shell. Because of this drop, the oyster undergoes a rare and unique transformation, turning the common drop into a radiant pearl. There exists a hidden consciousness within the oyster shell. Although science has successfully created artificial pearls, the moment these are presented to expert jewelers, their artificial nature becomes apparent. The imitation pearl may hold little value, while the genuine pearl is priceless. Mian Muhammad beautifully expresses this notion: "The red glass bead and ruby, both are beads of a sort; But when the jeweler looks at them, they seem light-years apart."

We understand that hard work can lead to success. Yet, we remain perplexed as to why not every effort yields results. Those who succeed, as well as those who don't, both put in considerable effort. The wealthy may exert significant effort, while the poor often work even harder yet remain impoverished. Is there more to one's circumstances than just effort? Do we call this destiny? Why should destiny exist?

Why is a person unaware of their own destiny? Can destiny be cruel? We do not know.

Why does a sudden earthquake strike while the air is still and life is tranquil? Communities are upended, and what once seemed solid crumbles to dust. Lives filled with joy are snuffed out beneath the rubble without reason. What causes these earthquakes?

We observe the silent mountains that have loomed over us for ages, appearing to be mere piles of stone. What is their reality? Though they are composed of simple stones, a strange interplay occurs among them. Water, fire, and soil intertwine; metals are mixed in the earth. Gold, silver, copper—in short, various valuable metals lie within these nameless mountains. These heaps of stones harbor treasures of immense worth: unending wealth of timber, vast stores of minerals, red stones, black stones, and marble—an abundance of riches. We discover salt mines, endless supplies of salt, and substantial deposits of coal. More remarkably, nearby these coal deposits lie priceless diamonds. Astonishingly, these brilliant diamonds are, in fact, composed of carbon in a different form. How did carbon acquire the ability to take on such a magnificent shape? Humanity's intellect is left baffled. We remain unaware of how this marvel came to be.

We understand that a sea is an expanse of deep and vast water. Yet those who have ventured into this immense body have made many remarkable discoveries that leave the human mind in a state of awe. To date, science has been unable to explain why such charisma exists within the ocean.

Human beings know that their limited eyesight can observe countless scenes in a single second. The entire stretch from the earth to the sky lies within the grasp of our vision. What is there that a person cannot see? However, if one wishes to

examine one's own eyesight, they find themselves feeling helpless and ignorant.

We recognize that there have been ages and eras that have come to an end, now forever in the past. Although they are long gone, we also note that what has ended never truly ceases. Events that once occurred become part of our curriculum, and this education is described as knowledge pertaining to our times. It is as if the non-existent past informs the knowledge of the present. On one hand, what we observe constitutes our knowledge; on the other hand, what we study becomes our knowledge. Occasionally, our thoughts and reflections can also be seen as knowledge. If we were to disregard everything that is no longer present, including the ages that have passed, we would possess nothing that could be labeled as knowledge. All our literature, philosophy, history, sociology, theology, and politics would lose their significance and relevance. Our religion stems from the teachings of those who came before us. Our beliefs are rooted in the past.

One of the most revered prophets dreamed that he was sacrificing his son. He shared this dream with his son, who, understanding the filial duty, said, "You should do what you have been commanded." The son lay down, and a large knife was employed to carry out the sacrifice. However, inexplicably, a fat-tailed sheep was found and slaughtered in place of the son. This incident, despite occurring long ago, resonates even today. We continue to sacrifice sheep, goats, and cattle to commemorate the event. Why is it that this event from the past is not relegated to history? Why do we not forget this bygone era? Why does the past refuse to fade away? The traumas that once caused us grief may have concluded, yet why do certain things still bring tears to our eyes? The event of Karbala is ancient, yet its significance remains ever-present. What transforms the past into the present? What lies before our eyes belongs to us, while what we cannot see

remains part of our vision. Indeed, some individuals can even glimpse events yet to come. There are those who approach celestial beings and learn of an extraordinary secret poised to be revealed.

What is this secret that remains undisclosed? We all sense there is something significant, yet we are unaware of its nature because it has not been unveiled. Many claim that something momentous is about to happen. But what exactly is to occur? No one speaks of it. Our lives are spent contemplating the past and the future; in essence, the present exists as a muddled confluence of memories and anticipations. Despite being free, why do we feel so powerless that we cannot escape the shadows of the past or shake off our preoccupation with the future? Have we been bound? Is there no way to experience freedom and redemption? The one thing we seek is precisely what no longer exists. The past has vanished, yet it remains before us and does not come to an end. The future remains unformed. But who speaks to us? Who shapes our dreams and formulates our hopes and apprehensions?

We know so much, yet there is still an overwhelming amount that eludes our understanding. Why is this the case?



Final Wish

It is a rare blessing to have the opportunity to express one's last wish, and I thank you, my Lord, for granting me such an opportunity. You have allowed me to remain in my senses, giving me the chance to savor the blessings that came my way as choice delicacies. However, I regret that, despite my full utilization of your divine providence, I failed to utter a word of gratitude. As for prostrating myself in acknowledgment of your blessings, I have not thought of it at all.

You showered your blessings upon me when I asked for them, and sometimes you graciously bestowed them without any request on my part. How ungrateful I am! All the possessions and belongings I have in life illustrate how kind you have been to me. My Lord, you endowed me with consciousness and, as a favor, granted me both external and hidden insights. What is it that you have not given me? You allowed me to associate with the company of pious elders, though, regrettably, I was not worthy of it. Perhaps I should have strived to be more capable. But here I am, speaking to you directly. So, my Lord, I perform my ablutions with tears and prostrate myself before you. This prostration signifies my surrender, my love for you, and my gratitude for your blessings, as well as an acknowledgment that despite my worship, I failed to render my repentant forehead transcendence through my prostration.

My Lord, this moment arrives when, on the one hand, it fills me with illumination, and on the other, it instills fear in me. Yet, I must declare, if you do not view it as arrogance or insolence, I fear nothing. I express my thoughts through "words unburdened by desire" because I have unwavering faith in your benevolence. This being, composed merely of

clay, hopes to reach an exalted state, relying solely on your support.

Oh Allah, forgive me for all eternity. I come to your divine court with nothing to offer except a few tears of repentance. I possess nothing but shame and remorse. These few tears represent a meager offering, poured from a broken goblet that has endured numerous fractures. The stars in your sky perhaps fall only once, while this goblet—broken time and again—will remain whole because it is a testament to your kindness. Nonetheless, today I confess, for everyone believes I am nearing my end. There is no one present but you and me. This is the first time I have felt such profound solitude. All the desires of my past have transformed into regrets, and I feel deep sorrow as I realize that, at times, when I prayed to you with tears in my eyes, I only sought to enable myself to commit more sins. What have I done, my Allah? I asked you for wealth, and it was granted to me. Yet, with that wealth, I tormented your creations and wounded their egos. I ensured that their lives were devoid of comfort. My Lord, what you generously provided, I had the audacity to misuse in your presence. How I wish I had died rather than appearing before you with wealth amassed through sin; a wealth gained by encroaching upon the rights of the poor and the orphans.

On the surface, I performed the Hajj (pilgrimage), but as you know, and as I can recall, my pilgrimage lacked true devotion to you. I pursued it for my political and social ambitions. I sincerely regret that, while espousing religion, I became entangled in mundane affairs. In certain instances, I established a religious party and engaged in wrongdoing by making utterly baseless claims. To satisfy my ego, I fabricated false visions to impress naive individuals. I committed great injustices by narrating false dreams and concocting fictitious meditations. I wrongfully asserted that I held a high spiritual status. I indulged in injustice, and in days gone by, I felt a

sense of satisfaction in having deceived many people. But today, my Lord, there is no room for falsehood in your presence, and I fear the truth as well. Nonetheless, during these last hours, I have the courage to declare that I seek forgiveness from all those who were ensnared by my fanciful statements.

How naive people can be! As soon as they hear rumors regarding someone's spiritual status, they flock to them. Often, they fall prey to a “dubba pir” (fake spiritual guide) or a soldier *pir*. They are misled by numerous tricksters, despite your clear assertion that our actions alone will determine our fate in the hereafter. The status of others will not aid us. O Allah, this hour is precious to me, as people believe I am on my deathbed. But in truth, I know it is the hour of true dawn, the moment of my awakening. Now, there are no formalities that separate us. I can feel that you are as close to me as a majestic being can be to a mortal man.

My Allah, I do remember the days when I seemingly worshipped you. I recited the prayers you ordained with enthusiasm and participated eagerly in gatherings where your holy names were praised. I had many justifications for striking my heart with a shout of ‘Allah Hu.’ I aimed to convince others, to demonstrate that I was a devoted worshiper, an ascetic, and a reciter of Allah’s names. Forgive me for this hypocrisy. I did offer prayers, but they were mere pretense. My worship was often for show—for the sake of society and sometimes indulging in collective hypocrisy during political gatherings.

My Allah, I was a harsh person. However, having come to your court and being guided to repentance, I now realize that your benevolence far outweighs our transgressions. In fact, your kindness and our misdeeds should not even be mentioned together. Yet, it is a great fortune to acknowledge one’s

wrongdoings and have the opportunity to seek your forgiveness. You have granted me this timely moment. I possess nothing but tears of gratitude—tears that symbolize my repentance.

My Allah, I also thank you for allowing my tears to flow. I am grateful that I do not weep now for unfulfilled desires or out of longing. Today, I grieve for all my errors and shortcomings, including my hypocritical prayers, and you have given me the chance to mourn. My tears express my joy and will serve as a light for the rest of my life. This is not the repentance of a dying man; my senses are intact, my consciousness is clear, my breathing is steady, my emotions are alive, my blood circulates well, and my faith in you is resplendent. I still do not know how long you will allow me to remain alive in the days ahead. I thank you, my Lord, for granting me the opportunity to repent before my death. You alone guide us to adhere to the true path. My Lord, I share these thoughts with you to lighten my heart, hoping that my heart will again bow before your majesty.

I remember the day I launched my business. My venture was quite successful, and I adorned my words with many lies. I impressed my customers with my seemingly pious demeanor and took from them all that I desired. At that time, I did not comprehend the gravity of my actions. In truth, I was robbing myself. By accumulating wealth at others' expense, I was compromising my dignity and mocking my afterlife. I was poisoning my future with greed.

My Lord, I adopted many professions, and the aim of each was to deceive people to the fullest extent, playing colorful tricks on them. I acquired land, sold it, and transformed earth into gold. Yet now, when no one is beside me, I realize that if you do not accept my repentance, I will be tormented by the very gold I have hoarded. That gold will become heated to brand

me. My Lord, save me from punishment for the sins committed in secrecy. I did not technically murder anyone, but I made life exceedingly difficult for others, depriving them of life's comforts and amassing wealth that I never truly needed. I was foolish enough to keep watch over others' wealth, and now, as I perceive the plight I am in, I confess my helplessness and sincerely beg your pardon from the depths of my heart for my capitalist mentality.

My Allah, take pity on me. I remember the day I embarked on my political career. I drew strength from the people by promising to serve them, only to use that power against them. It was the poor who made me strong, yet I did nothing to illuminate their dark lives. My Allah, today, I lay it all bare. How I wish I had aspired to serve rather than to govern, for serving people would have drawn me closer to you, while governance, being steeped in egoism, casts me far away from you. For this, I earnestly seek your forgiveness, my Allah!

Today, I can think of no prayer and have nothing to say about the successful completion of any of my projects. All I desire is forgiveness for my persistent neglectfulness. My Allah, this is what I pray for—the last prayer of a sun about to set. Bestow upon me the blessing I have yet to request. You know what I seek. You are aware of this blessing, this benediction for which I should have asked long ago. Yet, in my folly, I did not. I earnestly wish, my Allah, to catch a glimpse of the glory of your Beloved (SAW) before I finally descend. That glorious vision alone is the ultimate blessing I desire. You have granted me so much already. I am certain that you must have forgiven me. I believe that only those whom you show mercy are graciously led to repentance. I feel, with utmost sincerity, that no supplicant returns empty-handed from your divine mercy. Those who seek forgiveness need only to express their remorse and will be rewarded with ecstasy. The

one who calls upon you for help while adrift in midstream always manages to reach the other shore.

My Lord, I have finally come to understand that calling upon you is an expression of proximity. My Lord, I call upon you. I stand before you as a supplicant in your court. Please allow me to see that glorious vision. Yes, only the glorious vision. I offer my prostrations—my heart's prostrations, my soul's prostrations—if you bestow kindness upon me. What I possess in abundance is humility, and what you can grant your servant is a glimpse of the glorious vision of your Beloved (SAW). To you belongs the majesty of that vision. The Being of the Beloved (SAW) alone is a phenomenon of numinous brilliance.

My Lord, you have honored me with such an auspicious moment today that it has given rise to another desire within me. I wish to go and see all those I have mistreated and humbly seek forgiveness from them with folded hands. Therefore, my Lord, do not let the setting sun go down until I have had the chance to begin my journey anew. I have missed many opportunities, but in spite of that, grant me the ability to relive those moments now lost to the past.

A great deal has been taken from me, but a fair amount remains. You who answer our prayers, I thank you, for now I can hear voices. The doctors tell my relatives, "Congratulations. The patient has survived." Who knows what has transpired, what has taken place, and what is still to come?

Thank you, my Lord. I am grateful for this great favor!

