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In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

The Islamic View

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Fasting before Islam

by Dr Zahid Aziz

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُتِبَ عَلَيۡكُمُ ٱلصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبۡلِكُمۡ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَتَّقُونَ ١٨٣

"O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you **as it was prescribed for those before you**, so that you may guard against evil." (ch. 2, *Al-Baqarah*, v. 183)

I would like to refer to this first verse of the Holy Quran about fasting and refer to a particular aspect of what it says. It tells us that fasting was a spiritual practice to be found in all religions before Islam. Not only in the established religions, but it is reported in *Bukhari* that the Quraish, from pre-Islamic times, used to keep a fast on the 10th of Muharram (*hadith* 1893), and the Holy Prophet too fasted on that day before fasting in Ramadan was ordained. The Quraish probably took that practice from the Jews. When the Holy Prophet came to Madinah he asked the Jews why they fasted on that day and they replied that it was an auspicious day for them as it was the anniversary of the day God liberated them from the Pharaoh, and Moses had fasted on that day. The Holy Prophet replied:

> "We have more right to commemorate Moses than you."

So he ordered Muslims to fast on that day as well (*hadith* 2004). But after fasting in Ramadan was prescribed, the Holy Prophet gave up fasting on that day and said that Muslims could fast on that day if they wished, or not fast if they wished (*hadith* 1893, and 2000–2002).

In fact, Moses, Jesus, and Buddha, who were among the greatest Founders of faiths, practised quite rigorous fasting as a preliminary to attaining their first experience of spiritual enlightenment and communion with God. The Holy Prophet himself, before his appointment as Messenger of God, undertook rigorous devotions in the cave of Hira every year in the month of Ramadan. According to the Holy Prophet's biography by Muhammad Husayn Haykal:

> "In that cave Muhammad used to spend the whole month of Ramadan. He would satisfy himself **with the least provisions**, carried to him from time to time by a servant, while devoting himself uninterruptedly to his spiritual pursuits in peace, solitude and tranquillity. His devotion often caused him to forget himself, **to forget his food**, and, indeed, to forget the whole world around him. … Whenever the year revolved and the month of Ramadan arrived, Muhammad would return to the cave of Hira for meditation … In his retreat he prayed day and night **and fasted long periods**."

(*The Life of Muhammad*, Third Edition, English translation, 1983: see pp. 70, 72 and 73. The bolding here is ours.)

About Moses, we read in the Bible that he told his followers:

> "When I went up into the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the Lord made with you, then I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water" (Deuteronomy, 9:9).

Similarly, about Jesus, who appeared about fourteen centuries after Moses, it is written in the Gospel of Matthew that he "fasted forty days and forty nights" (4:2) before beginning his ministry, and he explained the purpose of fasting by quoting from the scripture of Moses as follows:

> "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'" (Matthew, 4:4).

This indicates that the Word of God gives a human being another kind of life, besides his physical life which relies on food like bread. That is the life we seek through fasting.

Apart from the very rigorous fasting by Founders of religions, there was also fasting by ordinary people before Islam. The purpose of fasting was self-purification, as mentioned in the Quran in the verse I quoted above. There was a prophet, Jonah (*Yunus*), who was commanded by God to tell the people of the city of Nineveh that they would be destroyed in forty days for their sins. Their story in the Bible says:

> "The people of Nineveh believed God's warning. So they decided not to eat any food for a while. And all of them put on the rough clothing people wear when they are sad. That is what everyone did, from the least important of them to the most important" (Jonah, 3:5).

The king himself did the same:

> "Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh. He got up from his throne. He took off his royal robes. He also dressed himself in the clothing of sadness. And then he sat down in the dust" (Jonah, 3:6).

He issued the same instructions to his people:

> "People and animals must not eat or drink anything. Let people and animals alike be covered with the clothing of sadness. All of you must call out to God with all your hearts. Stop doing what is evil. Don't harm others. Who knows?

> God might take pity on us. He might not be angry with us anymore" (Jonah, 3:7–9).

As can be seen here, this fasting was meant so that people may "stop doing what is evil and don't harm others" and God would have mercy on them. However, in world religious history the wrong idea developed that if you inflict suffering on yourself by fasting, God would feel sorry for you and avert His punishment from you. So when some disaster came upon people, because it was considered as a punishment, people would fast as a way of showing God their self-inflicted pain and their mourning, believing that God would then feel sorry for them and remove their troubles.

Islam *rejected entirely* the idea that people, in order to avert God's anger and get His compassion, should inflict some voluntary suffering or punishment on themselves. Instead of this wrong idea, Islam introduced regular fasting in a fixed month, regardless of whether people were facing some trouble or not at that time. So, fasting is not a way of averting God's punishment on particular occasions of disaster, whether such disaster has come due to people's sins or not, but it is a regular practice for the development of the inner human faculties.

In times of distress, Muslims do have recourse to fasting outside Ramadan. But fasting helps *not* because God sees people suffering due to fasting and takes pity on them. It is because through fasting they improve their moral behaviour, turn away from selfishness and turn towards helping others. Because of this, they gain God's mercy and favour.

In the teachings of the earlier prophets, we can read about the true significance of fasting as taught by Islam. Jesus gave his followers these instructions in his famous Sermon on the Mount:

> "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad appearance (i.e., looking in distress). For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to people to be fasting … But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to people to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly" (Matthew, 6:16–18).

There is a good lesson in this for Muslims also. What Jesus has said in the words beginning "but to your Father who is in the secret place …" is the same as what the Holy Prophet Muhammad told Muslims. The Holy Prophet told them that God says about the person who is fasting:

> "He refrains from food and drink and lustful desires to seek My pleasure: **fasting is for Me only and I will grant its reward**; and a virtue brings reward ten times like it" (*Bukhari*, *hadith* 1894).

There was a prophet of the Bible called Isaiah, between the times of Moses and Jesus. His people, that is, the Israelites or the Jews, complained to him that God had not seen or noticed that they had been fasting, and had not removed their troubles. God gave Isaiah the answer to their complaint, and it was this:

> "Look, at the same time you fast, you satisfy your selfish desires, you oppress your workers. Look, your fasting is accompanied by arguments, brawls, and fistfights. Do not fast as you do today, if you are trying to make your voice heard in heaven. Is this really the kind of fasting I want? Do I want a day when people merely humble themselves, bowing their heads like a reed and stretching out on sackcloth and ashes? Is this really what you call a fast, a day that is pleasing to the Lord?
>
> No, this is the kind of fast I want: I want you to remove the sinful chains, to tear away the ropes of the burdensome yoke, to set free the oppressed, and to break every burdensome yoke. I want you to share your food with the hungry and to provide shelter for homeless, oppressed people. When you see someone naked, clothe him! Don't turn your back on your own flesh and blood! Then your light will shine like the sunrise; your restoration will quickly arrive; your godly behaviour will go before you, and the Lord's splendour will be your rearguard. Then you will call out, and the Lord will respond; you will cry out, and he will reply, 'Here I am.' You must remove the burdensome yoke from among you and stop pointing fingers and speaking sinfully. You must actively help the hungry and feed the oppressed. Then your light will dispel the darkness, and your darkness will be transformed into noonday" (Isaiah, 58:3–10).

This, then, is the kind of fasting that prophets of Allah taught, and of course the same kind of fasting is required by Islam, as is clearly stated in the Quran and as shown by the Holy Prophet Muhammad by his example. May Allah enable us all to fast with these thoughts uppermost in our minds. *Ameen.*

I may add here that the well-known prayer from the Quran, "Our Lord, grant us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and save us from the punishment of the Fire" (2:201), in a way relates to fasting. The "good in this world" is the physical side of fasting, that we be granted to complete the fasts fulfilling the outward rules relating to them. The "good in the Hereafter" is that we attain the underlying moral and spiritual aims of fasting, which last long beyond the physical fast.

The audio form of this talk is available on YouTube at the link:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AG0ZxjooSyg

Statements by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of his Beliefs and Claims in his *Lecture Ludhiana*, November 1905

Some Key Extracts

A misimpression has been spread regarding the claims of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, to the effect that although he denied claiming to be a prophet from the time he began his mission till the year 1901, but from this date onwards he announced that he was a prophet, declared prophethood as continuing after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and declared that those Muslims who did not believe in his claims were unbelievers (*kafir*) and expelled from the fold of Islam.

In order to refute this misimpression we quote below some extracts from a lecture which Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad delivered in the city of Ludhiana on 4 November 1905 to thousands of people. This lecture dates from a late period in his life, so late that his next publication after this lecture was his Will, *Al-Wasiyya*, in December 1905.

1. He states in this lecture:

> "I say with deep regret and pain that the Muslim community were both quick and callous in opposing me. The only issue of disagreement was the death of Jesus, which I was proving and still continue to prove from the Holy Quran, the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the consensus of his Companions, logical arguments, and previous scriptures. In accordance with the principles of Hanafi law, I was supported by the clear verses of the Holy Quran, *Hadith* reports, and arguments from Islamic teachings. But these people, before properly enquiring from me or listening to my arguments, opposed me on this issue and went to the extreme extent of declaring me to be a *kafir* and attributing to me whatever false beliefs they wanted" (p. 258). [1]

Our comments:

This shows clearly that the real and basic difference between Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and his Muslim opponents was on the issue of the death of Jesus, whether he died a natural death after completing the course of his life, as Hazrat Mirza sahib believed, or he did not die but was taken up by God bodily to heaven and is still alive there. His difference with his Muslim opponents was not on any fundamental beliefs or practices of

[1] The original Urdu text of *Lecture Ludhiana* is in the collection *Ruhani Khaza'in*, volume 20, pp. 249–298. In this article the page references are to this volume.

Islam, nor did his difference relate to any kind of claim to prophethood on his part.

2. Continuing, he states:

> "But I have been explaining from the very beginning that I consider it to be an act of unbelief to deviate, however slightly, from following the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet. I believe that whoever digresses at all from this path would be consigned to hell. I have expounded this belief in very clear terms, not only in my speeches, but also in my books which are almost sixty in number. Indeed, this has been my constant preoccupation and concern.
>
> If these opponents of mine were God-fearing, was it not their duty to enquire from me why I have said something which is against Islam? They should have asked for my answer. But no, they did not care for that at all, and merely on hearsay they at once labelled me a *kafir*.
>
> I am amazed at their audacity because, in the first place, believing whether Jesus is alive or dead is not a prerequisite to being a Muslim. When a Hindu or Christian becomes a Muslim, do you ask him to affirm that Jesus is alive? What you require of him is no more than to proclaim belief in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and destiny being from Allah, whether good or bad, and the rising after death. Despite the fact that this issue (of the life or death of Jesus) does not form an essential of Islam, why, when I declared that Jesus was dead, was I subjected to such violent persecution? We were declared kafir, we were prohibited to be buried in the graveyards of Muslims, our possessions and our women were declared as lawful to be looted, and to kill us was deemed a good deed deserving of reward in the hereafter, and so on and so forth.
>
> There was a time when these same *Maulvis* used to shout that if there were ninety-nine reasons to call someone a *kafir*, and only one reason to call him a Muslim, even then the verdict of *kufr* must not be issued against him, and he should be called a Muslim. What has changed now? Am I worse than even such a person? Do I and my followers not declare that 'I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger'? Do I not say the Islamic prayers? Don't my followers say them? Do we not fast during Ramadan? Do we not hold all the beliefs which the Holy Prophet preached in the form of the religion of Islam?
>
> I declare truly and swear by God the Most High that I and my followers are Muslims, and we believe in the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the Holy Quran in the way that a true Muslim ought to believe. I believe that to deviate even in the slightest from Islam leads to spiritual destruction" (pp. 259–260).

Our comments:

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad says here that, to enter the fold of Islam, it is required to make a declaration only of its fundamental articles of faith: "belief in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and destiny being from Allah, whether good or bad, and the rising after death." It is clearly obvious from this that he could not have himself declared such people to be unbelievers or *kafir* who, while acknowledging faith in these articles, did not accept his own claims. Similarly, he writes that those people who carry out the fundamental practices of Islam, that is, declaration of the *Kalimah Shahadah*, prayer, fasting, etc., cannot be branded as *kafir.* This shows that he himself could not have branded such people as *kafir* because they did not become his followers. Also, he has expressed his support here for the principle that: "if there were ninety-nine reasons to call someone a *kafir*, and only one reason to call him a Muslim, even then the verdict of *kufr* must not be issued against him, and he should be called a Muslim."

3. Further on, he says as follows about his mission and his claims:

> "The aim and purpose of my coming is the revival (*tajdīd*) and support (*tā'īd*) of Islam. This must not be construed to mean that I have come to teach a new *Shariah*, or to deliver new commandments, or that a new book will be revealed. Certainly not. If anyone thinks that this can happen, I consider him to be badly misled and lacking in faith. Prophethood (*nubuwwah*) and *Shariah* have ended with the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Now no *Shariah* can come. The Holy Quran is the last book (*khātam-ul-kutub*). Not a jot or tittle can be added to or removed from it now. Of course, it is true that the blessings and bounties to be derived from the Holy Prophet, and the fruits of the teaching and the guidance of the Holy Quran, have not come to an end. They are ever-present and fresh in every age, and it is as evidence of those bounties and blessings that God the Most High has appointed me" (p. 279).

Our comments:

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad here describes his mission as that of the *tajdīd* or revival of Islam. The person who does the work of *tajdīd* is known as a *mujaddid*, and thus his claim is that of being a *Mujaddid* of Islam. Not only is it that he did not "come to teach a new *Shariah*", but also that he brought no new book, whether such a book contained any new *Shariah* or not. He also adds: "Prophethood (*nubuwwah*) and *Shariah* have ended with the Holy Prophet Muhammad", that is, along with *Shariah*, prophethood or *nubuwwah* have also come to an end.

Moreover, he says here that the Holy Quran is *khātam-ul-kutub.* That can only mean that the Quran is the last book of God. Therefore, the word *khātam* means "last".

4. Later on in this lecture he mentions a certain teaching of Islam and says about it:

> "This is what Islam teaches and it is indeed the perfect teaching. No other teaching or *shariah* can come after it. The Holy Prophet Muhammad is the *Khātam* of the Prophets, and the Holy Quran is the *Khātam* of the Books. Now there can be no other *Kalimah* or prayer. Whatever the Holy Prophet taught by his words or by his practice, and whatever is contained in the Holy Quran, salvation cannot be attained by departing from it. He who departs from it will be consigned to hell. This is our faith and belief. But it should also be remembered that the door of revelation and being spoken to by Allah remains open for this *Ummah*. This door is an ever-present testimony to the truth of the Holy Quran and the truth of the Holy Prophet" (pp. 285–286).

Our comments:

His words, "The Holy Prophet Muhammad is the *Khātam* of the Prophets (*Khātam-un-Nabiyyin*), and the Holy Quran is the *Khātam* of the Books (*Khātam-ul-Kutub*)", clearly show that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the *Khātam* of the Prophets **in the same sense** as that in which the Holy Quran is the *Khātam* of the Books. The meaning of the Holy Quran being *Khātam-ul-kutub* **certainly cannot be** that, although it is the best and most perfect of the Books of God, nonetheless books of God of a lesser status can come after it, and Muslims must believe in those books as a fundamental article of faith as they believe in the Holy Quran. Therefore, the meaning of the Holy Prophet Muhammad being *Khātam-un-Nabiyyin* **cannot be** that, although he is the most excellent of the prophets, yet prophets of God of a lower rank can come after him, in whom Muslims must believe as a fundamental article of faith as they believe in the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

He has also said here:

> "But it should also be remembered that the door of revelation and being spoken to by Allah remains open for this *Ummah.*"

This means that it is not the door of prophethood but the door of revelation from God to non-prophets which remains open.

Conclusion

The extracts we have presented above in this article show clearly that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, believed till the end of his life that no prophet can come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and that those Muslims who do not believe in the claims of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad do not become *kafir* or excluded from the fold of Islam. The beliefs and practices which are required for a person to be a Muslim are still the same today as they were stipulated in Islam at the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. There is no later prophet, after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, in whom a Muslim must believe in order to remain a Muslim.

Short Summaries of the Speeches delivered at the Annual Gathering (*Salana Duaiyya*) of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement at Lahore on 26 December 2025

Muzaffar Ahmad Sayal of Lahore

Respected elders, dear brothers and sisters,
assalamu alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh.

Today, I would like to speak about a very important subject: *Action*.

Human life is shaped not merely by intentions or words, but by actions. Paradise and Hell are not created by claims alone; they are the result of what a person does. Man is created from clay — neither from light like the angels, nor from fire like the devil. Whether he rises higher than angels or falls into destruction depends entirely on his deeds.

Allah Almighty repeatedly reminds us in the Quran that faith alone is not sufficient. Faith must be accompanied by righteous actions. We often pray to Allah and ask for His blessings, but we forget to reflect on whether our actions deserve those blessings. Good deeds lead toward Paradise, while actions that harm others cannot be compensated by prayers alone.

Allah says in *Surah Al-Mulk* that He created life and death to test us, to see who performs the best deeds (67:2). This test gives every human being the opportunity to obey Allah and prove sincerity through action. True success belongs to those who work for the pleasure of Allah.

Intention without action remains incomplete. A goal achieved only in thought has no value unless it is practiced. Intention is like a seed—unless it is nurtured with effort, it

can never grow into a fruitful tree. Allah clearly states in *Surah An-Najm* that a person will only receive what he strives for (53:39).

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him) explained that merely declaring faith with the tongue is not enough. Real faith transforms the heart and reflects itself through righteous deeds. Allah does not judge us by our words alone, but by our hearts and actions.

Being a Muslim is not just a title; it is a continuous process of self-reform and action. Good deeds bring light and peace to the soul, while wrongdoing darkens it. Qualities like kindness, charity, and compassion only gain value when they are practiced consistently.

Without action, intentions remain dreams. Excessive thinking without practice weakens a person, while action strengthens character and brings clarity. Social reform does not come through speeches alone—it comes through personal example. The lives of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) are the greatest proof of living the Quran through action.

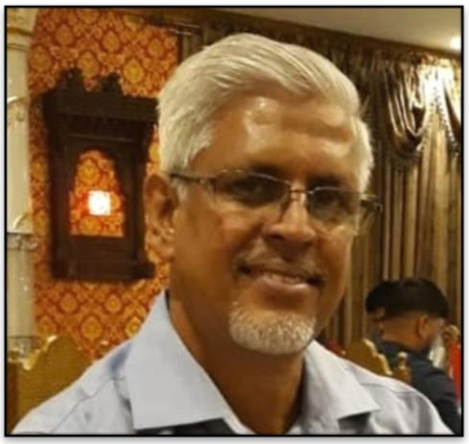
History shows that nations progress through hard work and effort, while laziness leads to decline. Allah promises leadership and stability to those who believe and perform righteous deeds, as mentioned in *Surah An-Nur* (24:55).

Therefore, instead of only criticizing society, let us begin reform with ourselves. Do not leave this gathering thinking only that the speech was good. Leave with a firm resolve to adopt at least one good action in your life from today.

May Allah grant us the ability to act upon the Quran, the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet, and the true teachings of Islam.

Wassalamualaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh.

Maulana Mansoor Baksh of Guyana



In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His servant and Messenger.

My dear brothers and sisters, *as-salāmu alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh.*

Today, I bring you greetings from Guyana and Suriname, where there is great excitement about this *Jalsa* and its purpose. While we often expect intellectual and inspiring discussions at such gatherings, there is one essential element that we are deeply lacking today—*Love*. Without love in our hearts, our existence loses its true meaning.

Allah did not send the Holy Prophet Muhammad merely to produce scholars. The Prophet was *ummī* (unlettered), yet his greatness lay in the love he inspired. In the Battle of Uḥud, the Companions formed a human shield around him—not because of authority, but because of love.

Today, we must honestly reflect on ourselves. We readily stand for worldly leaders, yet hesitate to show respect and love for our spiritual leadership. If we do not respect our own *Amir* (Leader), how can we expect the world to respect him?

The Companions gave their lives. The real question for us is: *What have we given?* What have we given to the Anjuman? What sacrifices have we made? Faith is not proven by words, but by action.

We run eagerly for money and worldly gain, but we hesitate when it comes to *salāh* (prayer), sacrifice, and service—yet we still hope for Paradise.

The Prophet warned that one who does not recognize the *Imam* of his time dies a death of ignorance. Our *Imam* is Ḥazrat Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad Sahib. Do we truly know him?

One clear sign of a true *Imam* is spiritual life—living faith, accepted prayers, divine guidance, and closeness to Allah. Ḥazrat Mirza Sahib demonstrated this through his unmatched Arabic excellence, deep Quranic commentary, acceptance of prayers, and divine revelations.

If these signs do not continue among us—if prayers are not accepted and hearts are not alive—then we must ask ourselves whether we are spiritually alive or dead.

Allah continues to speak, but only the living hearts can hear Him.

In one word, the greatest lesson is *love*—love for Allah, His Messenger, His *Imam*, and one another.

May Allah grant us true life, true love, and the spirit of sacrifice. May He unite us as a strong family and enable us to give for His cause. *Āmīn*.

Ejaz Ul Haq Butt

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Dear brothers and sisters, today a beautiful recitation attributed to Hazrat Ali (*as*) reminds us of a painful truth: we have fallen behind not because of lack of talent, but because of our moral and spiritual decline.

There was a time when honesty, discipline, respect for teachers, and fear of Allah shaped our society. Our elders taught us truthfulness, patience, and service to humanity, but gradually, hypocrisy, intolerance, and the misuse of religion entered our lives. Religion was used for personal gain, politics, and hatred, and as a result our unity was broken and our society weakened.

History teaches us that injustice never succeeds. Those who exploited religion and oppressed others eventually faced Allah's judgment. This is not limited to one era—Allah's law is the same in every age.

The Holy Quran provides us with a clear solution, especially in *Surah Al-Hujurat* (49:5–6, 9–12). Allah teaches us to be patient, to verify news before spreading it, to avoid mocking others, to stay away from suspicion and backbiting, and to reconcile disputes with justice. These are the qualities that build nations and earn respect.

True Islam does not teach hatred or arrogance. It teaches humility, peace, and service. When faced with ignorance, Allah commands us to say *Salaam* and walk away with dignity.

The mission revived by Ahmadiyyat, named after the blessed name *Ahmad* (peace be upon him), calls us back to a living relationship with Allah, firm belief in His mercy, and sincere service to humanity. True faith means trusting Allah even when the world says it is impossible.

If we wish to rise again as a nation, we must return to the Quran—not only in words, but in character. When we do so, Allah promises that He will transform us into a dignified and beautiful community. May Allah guide us all. *Ameen*.

Fazal Haq of Lahore

I bear witness that there is no god except Allah. He is One and has no partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is His servant and His Messenger. After this, I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the accursed. In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

> "The believers have indeed attained success" (The Quran, 23:1).
>
> "My Lord, expand my chest for me, make my task easy for me, and enable me to speak clearly" (The Quran, 20:25–27), as was the prayer of the righteous of the past.

Respected elders, honourable mothers and sisters, dear daughters and children, *assalāmu ʻalaikum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu*.

The topic on which I wish to share my thoughts today is *Success*.

First of all, while remaining attached to Hazrat Masih Mauʻood (pbuh), I sincerely thank Allah Almighty for granting us the opportunity to gather at one place and to benefit from this blessed sitting. Such gatherings are not meant merely for listening or speaking. Rather, when a believer attends such a gathering, he expresses his faith, his spiritual readiness, and his inner condition.

In reality, these moments have the power to change the direction of our lives.

Today, I wish to explain a subject that is not merely a title, but a complete summary of our religious, spiritual, and practical lives, and that is: true success lies in remaining firmly attached to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

This is a claim which, when reflected upon, reveals the true meaning of human life. Every human being desires success, but the real question is: Is success limited to temporary worldly gain, or is it that success leads a person to eternal salvation?

The answers to these fundamental questions are found in the Holy Quran, the blessed *ahadith* (narratives) of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and the teachings of the Promised Messiah (pbuh).

When the Holy Quran speaks of success, its standard is entirely different. Allah Almighty declares:

> "Successful indeed are the believers" (23:1).

Here, Allah Almighty does not say that the wealthy are successful, or the powerful are successful, or those in authority are successful. Rather, He clearly states that the *believers* are successful.

This makes it evident that in the sight of Allah Almighty the criterion for success is faith, not worldly status.

According to the Holy Quran, a true believer first and foremost possesses complete faith in Allah Almighty. He firmly believes that Allah is his Creator, his Master, and the All-Powerful. He believes that profit and loss, honour and disgrace, life and death—all are in the hands of Allah.

Such belief frees a person from fear and arrogance. He is neither frightened by circumstances nor crushed by despair, because his trust rests in Allah Almighty alone.

Allah Almighty further states:

> "And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger has indeed attained a great success" (33:71).

This verse makes it clear that true success is conditional upon obedience—and obedience is always owed to the one whom Allah appoints as a guide.

Here we encounter an eternal *sunnah* (practice) of Allah Almighty: Allah has never left mankind without guidance. Whenever religion weakened, customs overtook faith, innovations spread, and spirituality declined, Allah raised one of His chosen servants to guide people back to the straight path.

The Holy Quran declares that for every nation, Allah sent a guide (13:7).

Under this divine law, we see the advent of Hazrat Nuh, Hazrat Ibrahim, Hazrat Musa,

Hazrat Isa, and finally our beloved Prophet, the *Khatam-un-Nabiyyin* (Seal of the Prophets), *Sayyid-ul-Mursaleen* (Chief of the Messengers), Ahmad Mustafa Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon them all).

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) gave glad tidings to his *Ummah* (Community) that in the latter days a Messiah and Mahdi would appear to revive the religion. This is not a new belief, but an established truth supported by Islamic teachings.

When we examine the condition of Muslims in the nineteenth century, we see that religion had been reduced largely to rituals. Islam was attacked from every direction, and spirituality had nearly vanished.

At such a critical time Allah Almighty raised the *Imam* of the age, the *Mujaddid* of the fourteenth century, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad—the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (pbuh).

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad explained the purpose of his advent in his writings. In *Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya*, he stated that he was sent to revive faith and to establish the existence of God through spiritual signs, so that truth and righteousness might once again flourish in human hearts.

In another place, he wrote that God sent him to draw people back to Allah through patience, compassion, and gentleness, and to guide them with the light granted to him.

In *Fath-e-Islam*, he declared that he was sent at the appointed time to reform people so that faith might once again be firmly established in their hearts. The mission of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi was not to bring a new religion, but to revive the true spirit of Islam, defend the honour of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and restore living faith to the *Ummah*.

At this point, an important question arises: What does true attachment and allegiance to the Promised Messiah mean?

It does not mean merely verbal acceptance or being counted among a group. True allegiance means belief from the heart, proof through action, and a strong bond with the *Jama'at* system.

The Promised Messiah (pbuh) clearly stated that mere verbal allegiance is meaningless unless it is supported by practical obedience. Only the one who truly follows his teachings becomes part of his spiritual household, about which Allah promised protection.

This can be understood through a simple example: If a patient has full confidence in an expert doctor but does not take the prescribed medicine, will he be cured? Never. Healing comes only when the treatment is followed.

Similarly, the spiritual knowledge granted to the Promised Messiah can only lead to success if it is acted upon.

When a person develops true attachment to the Promised Messiah, a visible transformation occurs in his life. His thoughts become pure, his bond with the Holy Quran strengthens, his morals improve, and spiritual diseases such as falsehood, jealousy, and arrogance gradually disappear.

In *Al-Wasiyyat*, the Promised Messiah (pbuh) said:

> "Do not think that Allah will waste you. You are a seed in the hand of God."

A seed, when planted, grows, spreads branches in every direction, and becomes a great tree. Today, this *Jama'at* has spread from one corner of the world to another—from Asia to Africa, Europe, and beyond.

This success does not benefit individuals alone; its effects extend to families, generations, and the entire community. That is why the Promised Messiah established a *jama'at* system—so that faith might flourish collectively, and the weak might be supported by the strong.

Remaining attached to the *Jama'at*, obeying its leadership, and maintaining discipline are essential for unity, order, and success.

Finally, dear brothers and sisters, we must reflect honestly: Are we truly following the teachings of the Promised Messiah? Does our daily life reflect his guidance?

This requires regular study of his books, strong attachment to the Holy Quran and the *Hadith*, sincere prayer, moral reform, and active cooperation with the *Jama'at* system.

The Promised Messiah (pbuh) stated that prayer is the means by which a dead heart is revived.

If we truly desire success in this world and the Hereafter, there is no other path. True success lies with Allah, with the *Jama'at* He has established, and with sincere and complete obedience.

May Allah Almighty grant us true understanding, firm faith, sincere obedience, and lasting success. *Āmīn*.

And the last of our supplications is: All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds.

Mr Tayyab Anwar Ahmad of Lahore

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the accursed.

Respected leader of the community, honourable President, esteemed guests, respected audience, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

At the very beginning of my speech I would like to take you, for a brief moment, to a place of imagination. Let us imagine a creature that lives inside another creature. This inner creature has hands, yet it cannot use them; it has eyes, yet it cannot see; it has feet, yet it cannot walk. If we were to tell this creature that outside its world there exists an infinite universe of stars, rivers, and galaxies, it would probably not believe us. For it, that dark and confined space alone is the entire universe.

We call this creature a child growing in the mother's womb—an embryo.

Hazrat Masih Maud (peace be upon him) explained this reality in a beautiful way. He said that all of us who currently exist in the material world are exactly like that unborn child. Our physical body is, in fact, a womb in which a great reality is being nurtured—the soul. And the central theme of my talk today is precisely this hidden reality: *the soul, its relationship with the Divine Being, and our spiritual journey*.

Spirituality has always been at the heart of every religious tradition. There are several perspectives through which people have attempted to distinguish spirituality from religion. One school of thought suggests that religion is about following someone else's spiritual experience, whereas spirituality is about attaining one's own personal spiritual experience. Another view is that religion is obedience to laws, dogmas, and rituals, while spirituality is reflection and rationality. Yet another distinction is that religion concerns

faith, while spirituality concerns inner peace and a way of life. Some also say religion relates to the beliefs and practices of a particular group, whereas spirituality is universal.

If we summarize all these perspectives, it appears that spirituality focuses on the soul, while religion focuses on God.

A well-known author, Huston Smith, wrote an essay titled "Spirituality versus Religion" in which he expressed concern about how these terms are used. He wrote that he is concerned about the relationship between spirituality and religion because it has become increasingly common for spirituality to indirectly denigrate religion.

People used to distinguish between religion and religious institutions, which is a valid distinction. However, later, spirituality emerged in such a way that everything labelled spiritual was considered good, and everything associated with religion was considered bad; thereby stigmatizing religion. But this is not an "either-or" issue for religious people. Rather, spirituality is about the relationship between God and the soul, while religion is about the methods that nurture and develop that relationship.

Turning to Islam, the Holy Quran teaches that human beings possess both a material and a spiritual existence. The material existence is the body, while the spiritual existence is the soul. The Quran describes the soul as a Divine spirit that has been breathed into every human being:

> "And when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My Spirit …" (15:29).

Thus, within every human being exists the Spirit of God, regardless of race, religion, gender, or any other distinction. This means that Divine attributes exist within all of us, and that the spiritual foundation of all humanity is one.

Just as a child is born in an immature state and gradually develops, the Divine attributes within every human being exist in an embryonic form. Spiritual development in Islam means nurturing and cultivating these Divine qualities.

The Quran illustrates this through the metaphor of a seed:

> "He has indeed succeeded who purifies it, and he has indeed failed who suppresses it" (91:9–10).

Just as a seed has the potential to become a flourishing garden if properly nurtured, the soul too has the potential to attain spiritual peace and blossom into a spiritual garden. And just as a seed requires care to grow, the Divine attributes within the soul must be practiced to flourish. Life itself provides opportunities to cultivate these qualities—love, forgiveness, mercy, wisdom, and justice.

To reflect Divine attributes in our actions, we must understand God's nature. Although God cannot be seen with physical eyes, His attributes can be manifested through human character. The Quran mentions ninety-nine Divine attributes, and *Surah Al-Fatihah* summarizes four fundamental ones: Lord of all worlds, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, and Master of the Day of Judgment. These serve as ideals for human conduct.

Islam describes spiritual development as a journey consisting of three stages:

1. *nafs-e-ammarah* (the commanding self),
2. *nafs-e-lawwamah* (the self-reproaching self),
3. *nafs-e-mutmainnah* (the tranquil self).

The first stage is dominated by uncontrolled desires, where a person prioritizes personal gratification without regard for others. The Quran describes this state as one that commands toward evil.

The second stage is when conscience awakens, remorse arises after wrongdoing, and a struggle begins to transform base desires into moral virtues. This is the stage of inner struggle—the true *jihad*.

The final stage is spiritual serenity, where goodness flows effortlessly, ego dissolves, and the soul aligns completely with Divine will. The Quran addresses this soul:

> "O tranquil soul, return to your Lord, pleased and pleasing. Enter among My servants, and enter My Paradise" (89:27–30).

Salvation in Islam is not merely about rituals or declarations of faith, but about the state of the soul. Heaven and Hell are not only future destinations but states of being that begin in this world—inner peace or inner restlessness.

Peace-making, forgiveness, and reconciliation are not tickets to Heaven later; they are the price of being truly human and the signature of Heaven here and now.

In summary, life is a precious opportunity to nurture the human soul so that when it leaves this physical world it is illuminated with Divine light. The essence of Islam is a living relationship with the Creator. This journey is from a seed to a flourishing garden, with the ultimate goal of attaining peace beyond fear and sorrow.

May Allah support us at every step of this journey and shower His blessings upon us all.

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Glimpses of the Annual Gathering (*Salana Duaiyya*), Lahore, December 2025

Representatives of Guyana, Indonesia, and the UK attended the Annual Gathering on the invitation of the President/*Ameer* of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, Dr A.K. Saeed, and other officials of the Central Anjuman.

We are sharing with you some photographs that were taken during their visit, including to historical places in Lahore and the Murree Hills.

↓ *Hazrat Ameer with the Indonesian delegates on their arrival at Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore* ↓

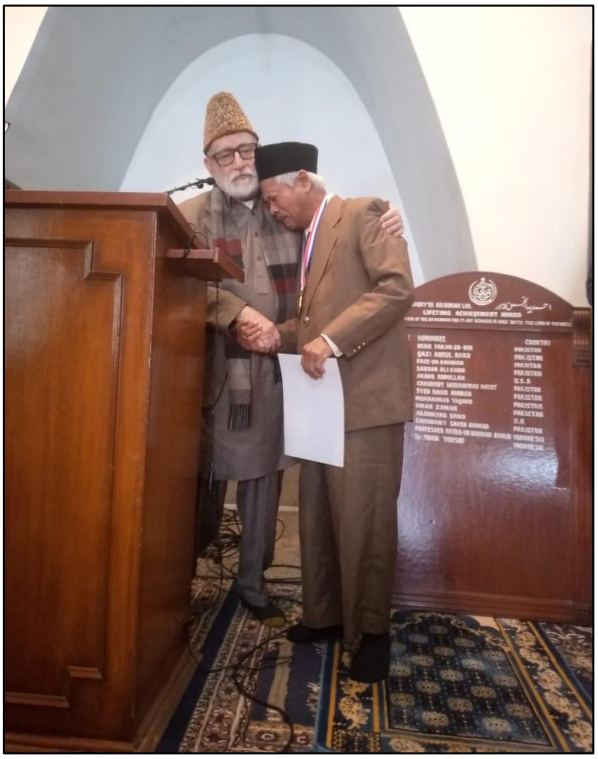
↓ *Mr Shakeel Humayun, General Secretary (right), and Mr Mansoor Baksh at Darus Salam, Lahore*

↓ *The Yatamin family being warmly welcomed in Lahore*↓

↓ *Hazrat Ameer with foreign delegates and other members* ↓

↓ *Ladies group picture after the International Consultative Committee meeting* ↓

↓ *Mr Yatimin from Indonesia receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award from Hazrat Ameer* ↓



↓ *Mr Amir Aziz,* Imam*, Berlin Mosque, Germany, another recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award* ↓

↓ *Hazrat Ameer with Tina Afiatin (right) and Nadia Mufida (left)* ↓

↓ *The Yatimin family at a teahouse in Lahore* ↓

↓ *Mr and Mrs Shakeel Humayun accompanied the Yatimin family on a visit to Murree Hills* ↓

↓ Our esteemed Patron, Mr Nasir Ahmad (far left), with brother Yatimin, Hazrat Ameer, Dr and Mrs Jawad Ahmad, and Ch. Saadat Ahmad at Ch. Saadat's house during a luncheon gathering at Ch. Saadat's house ↓

↓ Dinner hosted by Mr Nasir Ahmad for foreign delegates, family, and friends ↓

↓ *Mr Nasir Ahmad with Mr and Mrs Yatimin of Indonesia* ↓

↓ *Late night tea session hosted by Dr. Jawad Ahmad* ↓

(Continued on the next page)

↓ *Shabban (the youth arm of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement) selling frames of poetic verses of the Promised Messiah* ↓

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For books on Islam and the Ahmadiyya Movement, translations of the Holy Quran in Urdu, English, German, French, Russian, Arabic, Javanese, Indonesian, Dutch, Spanish and Turkish, visit our websites:

www.ahmadiyya.org

www.ahmadiyah.org

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www.alahmadiyya.org

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Read a selection of Lahore Ahmadiyya literature on the website archive.org at the link:
http://bit.ly/4ok2NTj