

The Detroit Address

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad



The United States has been plagued with issues of racial tension since its inception and the issue of racial inequality continues to be at the heart of unrest within the country. *The Detroit Address* is a Friday Sermon delivered by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^{rta}, the Fourth Khalifah of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, on October 16th, 1987, in Detroit to the members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. In it, he pinpoints factors that have caused racial tension in some communities in the United States, and presents Islam's longstanding rejection of the notion that any one race is superior to another.

The root cause of tension between Pakistani and African American Ahmadis is found to be an inferiority complex in some members of the Community. Giving the example of the people of Nūḥ^{as} [Noah], Ahmadis are warned that failure to change their ways and adopt mutual love and compassion between one another will result in an unfortunate fate for both themselves and their nation. He admonishes the American members of the Community to break the chains of societal and psychological oppression by urgently re-examining their way of life in light of the character of the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sas}.

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The Detroit Address

by

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^{rta}

MAJLIS KHUDDAMUL AHMADIYYA USA

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*An English translation of the Friday Sermon delivered by
by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul-Masiḥ IV^{rta}
on October 16th, 1987
at Detroit, Michigan, United States of America*

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Hadrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad

Khalifatul-Masih IV^{rta}

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ḥaḍrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (December 18th, 1928 – April 19th 2003), Khalīfatul-Masīḥ IV^{ra}, was the supreme head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. He was elected as the fourth successor of Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, the Promised Messiah, on June 10th 1982. Ḥaḍrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad passed away on April 19th, 2003. His successor, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{atba}, is the present Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad was born on December 18th, 1928, in Qadian, India, to Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad^{ra} and Ḥaḍrat Syeda Maryam Begum. He received his early schooling in Qadian before immigrating to Pakistan, where he completed his Shahid Degree with distinction from *Jamia* [Theological Academy] Ahmadiyya Rabwah and an Honors degree in Arabic from Punjab

University. He then studied for two years at the University of London at the School of Oriental and African Studies before returning to Pakistan. It was during this time that he traveled extensively throughout the West, learning the language and experiencing the cultures of the world. This experience helped him see the many challenges and social habits throughout the world, which would help him in his future endeavors.

Upon his return in 1957, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^{rtā} married Ḥaḍrat Asifa Begum and was appointed the vice president of the newly established *Waqf-e-Jadid* Foundation, whose main task was to educate community members who lived in rural areas of Pakistan.

Immediately after being elected to be the Khalifah [spiritual head] of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community he became a champion of peace in the world, touring various countries and preaching the message of “Love for All, Hatred for None.” In his 21 years of *Khilāfat*, he propounded many Islamic teachings to the world, from women’s rights, race equality, living an ideal family life, preaching the faith, striving in financial sacrifice, shunning un-Islamic customs, focusing on prayers, and exegesis of the Holy Quran. He was also a prolific scholar, orator, writer, poet, and homeopath.

As a result of Ordinance XX, the anti-Ahmadiyya legislation which passed on April 26th, 1984, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^{rtā} was forced to leave Pakistan immediately. Due to

the prohibitions placed by Ordinance XX, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^{rtā} was unable to perform his duties as the leader of the Community without violating the Ordinance. As a result, he was compelled to leave Pakistan and migrate following its promulgation, eventually moving the headquarters of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community to London.

As the spiritual head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^{rtā} established Muslim Television Ahmadiyya (commonly referred to as MTA). This satellite-based channel broadcasted its first show on August 21st, 1992 from London. It started with a weekly one-hour program, transmitting the weekly Friday sermon delivered by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^{rtā}. Today, MTA broadcasts 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and is watched globally by millions of people. Broadcasts are simultaneously televised into six languages.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^{rtā} regularly held question and answer sessions both with Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis from around the world. Since his migration to England, separate sessions were held in Urdu and English. In addition to these, separate question and answer sessions were held with Arabic, French, and Bengali speakers through translators. Towards the end of his life, these question and answers were held almost on a daily basis.

He touched the lives of millions and continued to spread the message of peace until his death on April 19th, 2003.

FOREWORD



In this poignant and timeless message delivered as a Friday Sermon on October 16th, 1987, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ IV^{rta} addresses the root of racial prejudice and discrimination. Popularly referred to as “The Detroit Address,” Ḥuḍūr^{rta} uses the lens of the Holy Quran to analyze the causes of poverty, racism, and prejudice.

He addresses the problem of race relations between African Americans and Pakistanis by drawing lessons from the story of Prophet Nūḥ^{as} [Noah]. As he discusses the cultural challenges affecting each race in the US, he explains that both groups are vulnerable to the same spiritual disease which manifests in different ways.

Ḥuḍūr^{rta} applies the teaching of the Holy Quran to develop and offer tools to cure this disease. He urges that we must learn to openly embrace the poor and marginalized with the loving message of Islam.

This sermon was originally translated into English by Maulana Mubasher Ahmad, M.A., LL.B., and is being reprinted with minor grammatical edits.

Wasalaam,

Bilal Rana

Sadr Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya,
United States of America, June 9th, 2018

The Detroit Address

THE DETROIT ADDRESS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ○ اَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ○ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ○ مَلِكِ
يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ○ اِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَاِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ○ اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ○ صِرَاطَ الَّذِيْنَ
اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۙ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوْبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ○¹

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا نَرَاكَ اِلَّا بَشَرًا مِّثْلَنَا وَا مَا نَرَاكَ اَتْبَعَكَ
اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ اَرَادُوْا لَنَا بِاَدْوِي الرَّأْيِ ۗ وَا مَا نَرَى لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍ بَلْ نَنْظُرُكُمْ
كذٰبِيْنَ ○ قَالَ يَقُوْمُ اَدْعَيْتُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّيْ وَا اِنِّيْ رَحِمَةٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِيْ
فَعَبَّيْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ ۗ اَنْتُمْ مُّكِبُوْهَا وَاَنْتُمْ لَهَا كٰرِهُوْنَ ○ وَا يَقُوْمُ لَا اَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا ۗ
اِنْ اَجْرِيْ اِلَّا عَلَى اللّٰهِ وَا مَا اَنَا بِطَارِدِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۗ اِنَّهُمْ مُّلقُوا رَبَّهُمْ وَا لِكَيْفِيْ اَرْسَلُهُمْ
قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُوْنَ ○ وَا يَقُوْمُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُنِيْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ اِنْ طَرَدْتُّهُمْ ۗ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ○ وَا
لَا اَقُوْلُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِيْ خِزٰيْنُ اللّٰهِ وَا لَا اَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبُ وَا لَا اَقُوْلُ اِنِّيْ مَلِكٌ وَا لَا اَقُوْلُ

-
1. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, The Gracious, the Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment. Thee alone do we worship and Thee alone do we implore for help. Guide us in the right path— The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed *Thy* blessings, those who have not incurred displeasure, and those who have not gone astray (*Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah*, 1:1-7). [Publisher]

لِلَّذِينَ تَزْدَرِي أَعْيُنَكُمْ لَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ إِذًا
 لَيْسَ الظَّالِمِينَ ١

[Translation:] The chiefs of his people, who disbelieved, replied, “We see you to be nothing but a mortal like ourselves, and we see that no one has followed you but those who, to all outward appearance, are the meanest of us. And we do not see in you any superiority over us. No, we believe you to be liars.”

He said, “O my people, tell me if I stand on a dear proof from my Lord, and He has bestowed upon me from Himself a great mercy which has remained obscure to you, how will

1. The chiefs of his people, who disbelieved, replied, ‘We see in thee nothing but a man like ourselves, and we see that none have followed thee but those who, to all outward appearance, are the meanest of us. And we do not see in you any superiority over us; nay, we believe you to be liars.’ He said, “O my people, tell me: if I stand on a clear proof from my Lord and He has bestowed upon me from Himself a great mercy which has been rendered obscure to you, shall we force it upon you, while you are averse thereto? And O my people, I ask not of you any wealth in return for it. My reward is due from Allah alone. And I am not going to drive away those who believe. They shall certainly meet their Lord. But I consider you to be a people who act ignorantly. And O my people, who would help me against Allah, if I were to drive them away? Will you not then consider? And I say not to you, ‘I possess the treasures of Allah,’ nor do I know the unseen, nor say I, ‘I am an angel.’ Nor say I concerning those whom your eyes despise, ‘Allah will not bestow any good upon them’—Allah knows best whatever is in their minds—Surely, I should then be of the unjust (*Sūrah Hūd*, 11:28-32).” [Publisher]

it fare with you? Shall we force it upon you, while you are averse to it?”

“And O my people, I do not ask of you any wealth in return for it. My reward is only with Allah. And I am not going to drive away those who believe. They shall certainly meet their Lord. But I see that you all are an ignorant people.”

“And O my people, who would help me against Allah, if I were to drive them away? Will you not take heed?”

“And I do not say to you, ‘I possess the treasures of Allah’ nor do I know the unseen, nor do I say, ‘I am an angel.’ Nor do I say concerning those whom your eyes despise, Allah will not bestow any good upon them’—Allah knows best whatever is in their minds. Surely, in that case, I should be of the unjust.”

These verses from the Holy Quran, which I have just recited, do not merely narrate an ancient historical episode, but along with other Quranic verses and historical evidence, these verses are meant to describe a permanently established psychological phenomenon. Time and time again, conditions of Nūḥ’s^{as} [Noah’s] era are repeated, and every time, human response to them remains the same. As indicated by the Holy Quran, a great civilization and rich culture flourished at Nūḥ’s^{as} time. The Promised Messiah^{as} has elaborated in detail that a rare and magnificent civilization existed in the age of Nūḥ^{as}. One of the arguments put forward by the people to reject Nūḥ^{as} was, as described in these verses:

وَمَا تَرَاكَ اتَّبَعَكَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَرَادُوا بِإِدْبَارِ الْوَأْيِ¹

(Paraphrasing) In our view, we find only low and insignificant people as your followers. None of our educated, wealthy, and honorable people follow you. What superiority, if any, do you have over us? How can we take his followers and him, who is a leader of the poor, the weak, the low, and the distressed as better or elevated than us?

وَمَا تَرَىٰ لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍ بَلْ نَظُنُّكُمْ كَاذِبِينَ²

Under the circumstances, we are compelled to conclude that you are a liar. Were you a truthful person, people with honor and dignity, influential leaders, and great nations on Earth would have followed you.

Nūḥ's^{as} response to this objection is recorded verbatim in the Holy Quran:

قَالَ يَقَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَىٰ بَيْتِكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّي وَإِلَّاهِي رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ فَعَبَّيْتُمْ
عَلَيْكُمْ³ أَنْ تَزْمُومُونَهَا وَتَنْتُمُوهَا كِرْهُونَ³

O my people, do you not realize that God has sent me with cogent arguments and bright signs, and He has bestowed

1. *Sūrah Hūd*, 11:28 [Publisher]

2. *Sūrah Hūd*, 11:28 [Publisher]

3. *Sūrah Hūd*, 11:29 [Publisher]

upon me a great mercy? If you are unable to recognize this mercy and are unable to see my closeness to the Creator and His love for me, how then can I help cure your blindness? Things which you value as great are insignificant in my eyes, and the great blessings which God has bestowed on me remain obscure to you. How can I impose these favors upon you? His love and bounties are supreme over everything. And one who enjoys the blessing of our Lord, he alone is, indeed, to be counted as great. He further said:

وَيَقُولُ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ¹

And, O my people, I do not ask of you any monetary reward for my service to the nation. My reward is due from Allah alone. I teach goodness. I give you guidance day and night without demanding any favors in return. That is, if your wealth were of any value to me, I would have asked for money in return for my good works.

Here the Holy Quran has given us sound criterion based on great insight and wisdom that always makes a distinction between the truthful and the liars. People who work in the name of goodness can be one of two kinds: those who spend out of their own pockets and make personal sacrifices prior to preaching, or those who receive millions of dollars from big governments before providing guidance or service to humanity. In this latter category, service is conditional

1. *Sūrah Hūd*, 11:30 [Publisher]

upon receipt of funds. If the flow of funds ceases, so does their service to humanity. Obviously, such people give real value only to money and not to the service. If the history of the Ahmadiyya Jamā'at [Community] is studied from this point of view, it becomes clear that the Jamā'at, even when it was utterly poor and without any resources, embarked on its mission to spread the message of goodness to nations in the West as well as in the East. There was no one in the world to financially help the Jamā'at. At the time when Ḥaḍrat Muftī Muḥammad Sādiq^{ra} was sent to give the message of guidance to the great and mighty nation of America, Qadian was in such an impoverished condition that sometimes the Jamā'at functionaries could not even be paid their meager allowances sometimes for more than six months, and their families even faced starvation. As he could not bear the pangs of the suffering of the workers of the Jamā'at, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Ma'ūd^{ra1} would make special appeals to some wealthy members of the Jamā'at for a loan or trust money which would be refunded in due time.

In response to his distressful calls, God would show mercy, and some members would send generous donations

1. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ II, Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad^{ra} (1889–1965), was the second successor of the Promised Messiah^{as}. He is also called Musleḥ-e-Mau'ūd (Promised Son) because he was born in accordance with the prophecy made by the Promised Messiah^{as} in 1886 concerning the birth of a righteous son who would be endowed with unique abilities and attributes. [Publisher]

while others presented refundable trust money. A study of the Ahmadiyya Movement would reveal that for years, financial constraints were of such great magnitude that the functionaries were paid their meager allowances out of loaned and borrowed funds. Allowances given to the present day life devotees bear no comparison with allowances paid at that time. The allowances paid in those early days were hardly enough for survival, and as I have said, the Jamā'at barely managed to give them after several months.

Under these strained and desperate circumstances, a dervish¹ devotee was sent by the Ahmadiyya Jamā'at to the United States with the message of Islam. This indeed was the point that Ḥaḍrat Nūḥ^{as} was trying to explain to his people. He was least interested in their wealth. He and his followers were making sacrifices even before giving any advice or guidance to others. Why then didn't Nūḥ's^{as} people understand that greatness was not in being wealthy? Real greatness lays in mans' nobility and his relationship with God. Nūḥ's^{as} nation wanted him to notice and honor the affluent. How could Nūḥ^{as} honor the rich and turn away from the poor who were ready to offer everything for the sake of God and who came to him to serve God's true religion?

Should he^{as} throw them away because they were penniless, or because they had no worldly status, or discard them because of the color of their skin was black? Or because they

1. A dervish is a person who leaves all the pleasures and comforts of this world and devotes his life to God. [Publisher]

once were slaves? Even at that time, powerful and wealthy nations had slaves which included not only blacks but also all other races. Nūḥ^{as} told his people that in their eyes those who have neither wealth, worldly status, nor national superiority are a despicable lot and should be ignored. He further told his people that they were wrong in asking him to adopt their criteria before they agreed to listen to him. This dialogue between Nūḥ^{as} and his people also indicates that Nūḥ^{as} himself belonged to an elite ruling class, which held a high status and authority, and people of his class felt embarrassed and disgraced when Nūḥ^{as} started embracing the low and the poor. Therefore, the elite wanted nothing to do with him. They would have gladly accepted him if Nūḥ^{as} had confined his work to the elite group and excluded the poor and the lowly. By not adopting their course, they claimed that Nūḥ^{as} had disgraced his class of people.

In response to this, Ḥaḍrat Nūḥ^{as} said:

۱ **إِنْ أَجْرِي إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا**¹

You are unaware of the greatness granted to my followers by God. My reward is due from Allah alone. In no case will I reject, or drive away, those who believe in God.

2 **إِنَّهُمْ مُلْقَوَائِيهِمْ**²

1. *Sūrah Hūd*, 11:30 [Publisher]

2. *Sūrah Hūd*, 11:30 [Publisher]

They will surely attain the nearness and love of God. And none has a greater status than those who have found nearness to their Lord.

وَلِكَيْتَ أَرَأَيْتُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُونَ¹

As a matter of fact, I consider you to be extremely ignorant and foolish. By being involved in matters low and dishonest, you do not realize how many blessings were to be bestowed upon you, which you have forfeited.

He further said:

Not only do I love these poor people who have become servants of Allah, but I would also like to make you aware of another truth. Those who do not have a natural inclination to love the poor, and choose to regard them low and mean, will not be spared of God's punishment and no one will be able to help you.

وَيَقُومُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ طَرَدْتُهُمْ أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ²

If I reject and repel these poor people, who will safeguard me from Allah's chastisement? Why then, do you not understand and take heed?

1. *Sūrah Hūd*, 11:30 [Publisher]

2. *Sūrah Hūd*, 11:31 [Publisher]

وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ¹

Then, reverting to the matter of wealth, he said:

I do not claim to possess any worldly treasures, and I cannot give you any wealth. Neither do I claim to have the secrets of the unknown, nor do I claim to be an angel.

وَلَا أَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ تَزْدَرِي أَعْيُنُكُمْ لَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا²

Yet, I cannot say that God will not bless the poor people that you despise.

This is a way of expression used in Arabic, and in English as well. In a sentence with a double negative, the intent is to give more force to the idea in the positive; it signifies that Nūḥ^{as} was stating that he did not claim to be an angel, or to have the knowledge of the unknown, or to possess wealth. He was merely a human being who was a recipient of many blessings from God. Nonetheless, he was absolutely sure that his followers would also receive *khair*—wealth and prosperity of the world. The word *khair* denotes worldly wealth, while *hasanah*, is primarily defined as spiritual and moral blessings. Worldly blessings are also included in the definition of *hasanah*, but as a secondary meaning. Fundamentally, *hasanah* indicates virtues, excellences, and spiritual and religious blessings. The term *khair* in the Holy

1. *Sūrah Hūd*, 11:32 [Publisher]

2. *Sūrah Hūd*, 11:32 [Publisher]

Quran fundamentally means wealth and material possessions, although other related meanings are also implied. This matter indicates that Ḥaḍrat Nūḥ^{as} was giving the message that, despite his limited knowledge and resources, he was certain God would grant in abundance, including the worldly wealth, to his followers and their coming generations. In other words, if his nation was interested in matters of material wealth and status, then they were being warned that they would become poor and low, and likewise, the poor followers of Ḥaḍrat Nūḥ^{as} would become rich and high. At the end he^{as} says:

اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ إِنَّي إِذَا لَأَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝¹

God looks into the hearts and bestows His blessing and glory on the basis of real intentions nourished by people in their hearts. God knows best what is in their hearts, how much they love Him in their hearts, and to what extent they are willing to offer sacrifices. Though they do not have much materially, they are ready to offer whatever they have for the sake of God. God values and loves what is in the hearts. And if I do not give due consideration to all these matters, and I do not treat them in a manner ordained by God:

إِنَّي إِذَا لَأَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝²

1. *Sūrah Hūd*, 11:32 [Publisher]

2. *Sūrah Hūd*, 11:32 [Publisher]

Then I would be a great loser and become one of the transgressors.

From this brief interpretive translation of these verses, it is clear that although Nūḥ's^{as} period is far off in history, the subject matter still relates to the present day condition in America.

Here too lives a race who is looked down upon by others. Their own countrymen, who are of white color, mistreat them. Although the law of the land establishes some rights, liberties, and equal opportunities, in actuality, these people remain impoverished. They are seen doing the lowest jobs in the streets and in factories. The fact is that actual power and authority are still in the hands of the whites. Consequently, the blacks live in an agitated state of extreme distress. As far as Islam is concerned, it is a universal religion that does not discriminate between races. It forbids mistreatment of people due to their race or color. Yet, at the same time, it does not allow the discriminated to take revenge or act unjustly. Islam is a religion of balance and does not allow any injustice. Therefore, I am making it clear that Ahmadiyyat does not take sides or discriminate among people. According to Ahmadiyyat, all human beings are equal and enjoy the same status. If Ahmadiyyat makes any discrimination, it is between the oppressor and the oppressed.

Discrimination is not based on the color of the skin. At the moment, I do not intend to go into the details of this subject.

Presently, I would like to say a few important things in light of these Quranic verses to all Ahmadis regardless of their color—be they black, white, or any other color. The fact of the matter is that immigrant Pakistanis who have settled here are victims of a type of complex, namely, the inferiority complex. In fact, this inferiority complex has nothing to do with the shade of your color—may it be pure black or lesser black. This complex develops due to a narrowness of heart and mind. The narrowness of the heart and mind of a person, regardless of his color, always expresses itself in a feeling of inferiority. Many ills of human society grow out of this complex, but the consequences are extremely devastating if people become its victims in the realm of religion. These verses of the Holy Quran tell us that truth and an inferiority complex cannot exist together. The two are in direct opposition to each other and cannot flourish together. Truth suffers greatly at the hands of this complex. Like a thing destroyed by termites, one loses faith due to an inferiority complex; it preys upon truthfulness and nobility of character. However, at times it may be temporary. For example, immigrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, or any Arab country may feel that they are financially better off as compared to the blacks, and further may feel that their color is lighter. Thus, unconsciously, they tend to become a part of the social setup of the whites. By making closer relationships with the whites, they may feel a kind of superiority over others. In my opinion, in most cases, this is not a consciously developed attitude.

For if it was a conscious effort, they could not remain true Ahmadis. They would immediately become untrue and faithless because they would contradict the Holy Quran's fundamental teaching. However, as I have stated, man is a victim of thousands of deceptions. He does not realize his own weaknesses throughout his life. Sometimes, at his deathbed, he is amazed to realize how he has spent all his life in ignorance. Therefore, it is necessary that after a thorough analysis of the situation, he should be made to face reality in such a way that he is helped to understand what and why he is doing is something wrong. It should then be explained to him why he should stop what he is doing wrong. However, I am not blaming all of the immigrants for making a conscious mistake; nevertheless, this is happening due to a lack of understanding, and a vast majority of them do become prey to such ills. Quite a long time ago, when there were not many Pakistanis in America, one person told me that in his opinion, the greatest problem in America was, God forbid, that our missionaries had made a blunder by first going to the blacks for *tabligh* [preaching]. Consequently, the blacks were joining Ahmadiyyat in great numbers, and thus, the doors were being closed for the whites to enter the fold of Islam. This statement depicted the same inferiority complex that existed in Nūḥ's^{as} nation. It was foolishly being implied that people with relatively lesser social status remain disreputed even though they had accepted God. Religion would be honored only when the whites would join it, and without the

whites, the religion would not be honored. I felt nauseous after hearing such rubbish and insane talk. The Holy Quran explains that even thousands of years ago, God's intelligent servants possessed such brilliant understanding that they realized where true greatness lies. They knew that when God blesses the poor, and those wrongly perceived to be insignificant, they gain the highest position and status in the world. Religion is honored by them coming into it, and if they leave the religion, it would be a disservice to the faith of God. Those who do not give any importance to religion do not dishonor the faith by not joining it. How can the doors of religion be closed to those who are honored by God? If they strive to grow in righteousness and to offer greater sacrifices, they cannot be stopped due to their color, nationality, or financial standing. These doors are not closed outwardly, but rather, the hearts are locked. Attitudes change; they are being treated unkindly. Instead of embracing them with love, they are kept at a distance. A curtain is drawn. Obviously, no one ever saw that the doors of any mosque were physically closed to any Ahmadi who came from these people. His entrance was never forbidden.

Nevertheless, if you honestly search your hearts, it is possible that you may find that, unfortunately, you had locked your soul's door to them. Or, if you had not locked it completely, you had at least half-closed it to them. You did not desire to keep it wide open so that they could gladly enter into it.

Due to this attitude, Jamā'at Ahmadiyya suffered a tremendous loss beyond your imagination. What a truthful statement Ḥaḍrat Nūḥ^{as} had made when he said:

If I drive them away, this would be such a great sin in God's sight that none among you would be able to help me when Allah's decree would be enforced.

What a glorious time it was—full of glad tidings—when Ḥaḍrat Muftī Muḥammad Sādiq^{ra} came here. He threw wide open the gates of Ahmadiyyat for those who are called the blacks, and received them warmly with open arms. In those days sending a telegram was a rare thing. Usually, people would write letters. Telegrams were sent only as an exception. Even on an urgent occasion, people would write a letter but ask the addressee to consider it as a telegram. It was a common practice to do so in the villages of the Punjab. In those days Ḥaḍrat Muftī Muḥammad Sādiq^{ra} got so excited that he started sending telegrams one after another to Qadian telling the Jamā'at about a revolution here and a revolution there. People were joining in great numbers, and entire communities were being converted. The *khuṭbāt* [Friday sermons] during that time of Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mā'ūd^{ra} were full of Allah's praise that a representative of a very poor community, whose workers did not have food in their homes, went to the richest country in the world and conveyed such good news that, by the grace of God, hearts of the people opened up

towards Islam. No one ever asked him whether they were blacks or whites who were joining Islam. No one ever asked Muftī Muḥammad Sādiq^{ra} what his policy and approach was—was he converting only the blacks and leaving the whites behind? Whoever came forward to join Ahmadiyyat was a servant of God, and as such, was greeted and embraced by the servants of God. Every newcomer brought with him blessings of righteousness. And every righteous person was enhanced in his light of righteousness all the more. If the pace of progress of that time was maintained, it would not be improbable that today, by the grace and mercy of God, a great number would have been in Ahmadiyyat or Islam, and America would have been distributing blessings to the world instead of being a source of all sorts of evil. The world would have been receiving mundane as well as spiritual blessings from here. This country would have emerged for the rest of the world as a great benefactor. It is such a great and powerful nation that if it adopts true Islamic civilization and values and links itself with *Khilāfat*, it will unmistakably become the greatest nation on Earth. No worldly intrigue or power will ever be able to subdue it. It will rise up with such a force that it will be impossible for the entire world to suppress it. The use of the words ‘rise up with such a force’ should not be interpreted literally as Islam does not allow any aggressiveness, forbids revolt, and teaches humility. It exhorts us to become humble human beings and tells us that God loves meekness and humility. But still, therein is a profound

secret. In consequence, the nations that become humble in the wake of God's love, they grow and acquire attributes of God's power. Upon them, God bestows His Greatness and Glorious Strength and thereafter, no other nation in the world can suppress them. Therefore, I am saying that today the course of human history would have been different; today the Sun of Islam would have risen from the land of America. You could have witnessed the prophecy that the Sun will rise from the West.

It is unfortunate that some, due to their own sick mentality, feel themselves superior over servants of God who are less privileged and treat them with arrogance. You may not be one of the insolent, yet you did not exhibit the desired love and affection to them. As the years went by, many false versions of Islam began to surface. Organizations came into existence in the name of Islam and were financed to propagate Islam in America. Nūḥ's^{as} statement proves them wrong since they did not come forward to propagate Islam until after they received vast amounts of money.

Therefore, their intention was not to help other nations through goodness, but instead, they were induced to undertake their work through the greed of money and wealth. Nevertheless, people in great numbers turned to these organizations which gained significance and strength because the Ahmadiyya Movement left the field open to them. But as these organizations lacked true and righteous leadership, they started to use new converts for wrong purposes. For

personal or political ends, they encouraged them to commit crimes and heinous deeds. They are given a wrong perception of righteousness, and are trained in an organized way to do things forbidden by Islam. Various people become Muslims under different labels, and each financier has his own personal or political axe to grind, knowing that they are a potent force. If this force had entered Ahmadiyyat, it would have become a much greater power because this would have been in the hands of God.

A power in the hands of people tends to be misused, but in the hands of God it becomes a source of countless and universal benevolence for the whole world. I cannot put the fault on anyone either of the past, or of the present. But I can say that in the narration of this incident of Nūḥ's^{as} time, the Holy Quran presents a universal truth. The Holy Quran, being the Word of God, looks at the hearts. Whatever is happening today has already occurred in Nūḥ's^{as} time, and can be repeated again, and therefore its truth can be tested by the results. I cannot attribute excesses to anyone, errors to any missionary, or faults to any newcomer. But I know for certain that a collective mistake has been committed, otherwise we would not have found Ahmadiyyat as it is today in the United States. Therefore, change your attitude, not because you want to gain the new converts, but if the present attitude prevails, you yourself will be annihilated. It will be futile to plan your actions just to increase your numbers. If you are being driven away from God due to a certain behavior, your

main concern should be your own selves. If you take care of others, and become Godly, God Himself will take care of others, and you won't need to devise plans to attract them. Open up your hearts toward God. To win His love, become righteous, humble, and compassionate towards human beings and try to make them yours. Beware of all kinds of arrogance in the same way as people are scared of touching a leper. Have a greater fear of arrogance than you fear a wild lion. There is nothing deadlier than insolence. It creeps in imperceptibly through concealed openings and overpowers you in entirety. And more often, the preachers of humility and claimants of meekness are themselves prey to arrogance. Therefore, it is extremely essential for immigrants to modify their outlook. They should be thankful to God that He has given them the opportunity in a foreign land to make fortunes that can be diverted towards the service of their faith. If this cannot be done, their coming here is useless. Rather, they have sold their souls and offspring to this country. Therefore, if God has bestowed plenty upon you, bow down before Him expressing thanks that He has filled your heart's desire. You longed for the provisions so that you could offer them to God. You asked for the wealth so that you could spend for the betterment of mankind. When you were empty-handed, you had a thousand desires. God has provided you with everything, now is the time to make your dreams come true, to attain all your wishes. With this feeling, your hearts will be filled with deep gratitude. Therefore, lift up

your deprived brothers—these deprived people and embrace them. For this is the way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas}. In the most magnificent way, he embodied all that he learned from the Holy Quran, and he left an unparalleled precept of extreme beauty for others to follow in this world. The Holy Prophet^{sas} has shown such a great love towards the poor that the *Aṣḥābuṣ-Ṣuffa*¹ came and started living in the mosque just for the sake of love for the Holy Prophet^{sas}. It was indeed an expression of love in response to the Holy Prophet's^{sas} love. Some people mistakenly think that *Aṣḥābuṣ-Ṣuffa* neither had any work nor any skills and they, like other indigents, flocked to a place where food was available. This is utterly untrue and a baseless notion. They were, in fact, men of knowledge and dignity. Many among them had skills to earn money, but out of sheer love, they offered themselves in entirety to the Holy Prophet^{sas}. They accepted poverty in exchange for his love because they know they would earn more of his love if they were poor. Look at Abu Hurairah^{ra}. He had lived a life of great style but, after accepting the Holy Prophet^{sas}, to compensate himself for what he had missed earlier, he stayed constantly at the mosque so that he would not miss any talk of his beloved master. The only way he could

1. In one corner of the Prophet's mosque in Madinah, a covered platform was prepared which was known as 'Suffah'. This served as the resting place of indigent Emigrants who dedicated themselves to the worship of Allah, the company of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, and recitation of the Holy Quran. They became known as *Aṣḥābuṣ-Ṣuffah*. [Publisher]

think of attaining this objective was that he should stay permanently at the mosque so that he could see the Prophet^{sas} whenever he came out, to listen to him whenever he spoke, and to be looking at his face all the time. Abu Hurairah^{ra}, because of his desire to be constantly on the lookout for the Holy Prophet^{sas}, did not move away from the mosque and, as a result, used to pass out because of starvation. This was the real cause of his poverty. And due to poverty, he earned more love from the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

The Holy Prophet^{sas} used to say, “If you wish to locate me, you will find me among the poor and the destitute.” Moreover, he observed that on the Day of Judgment, God would raise him up among the poor and the weak because he loved them abundantly. A companion asked the Holy Prophet^{sas} to pray that he be raised up on the Day of Judgment in his company. The Holy Prophet^{sas} inquired what specific quality did he possess. He replied that he loved the Holy Prophet^{sas} and had nothing else but love for him. The Holy Prophet^{sas} responded, “On the Day of Judgment, a person would be raised along with the one he loves.” Thus the Holy Prophet’s^{sas} assertion that he would be raised up among the poor proves that his love for the poor was greater than their reciprocal love. This was the reason why the poor flocked around him. Even the rich forsook their wealth and assembled around him. Because of their great love for the Holy Prophet^{sas}, people accepted to remain poor for the sake of his company. Consequently, they gained great treasures

and blessings from God, so much so that the richest among the Muslims, be he a monarch, take their names with great reverence and affection seeking God's blessing from them. These are the people that Ḥaḍrat Nūḥ^{as} talked about briefly. In short, to love the poor sincerely is an exemplary precept of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas}. As far as race and color are concerned, you know well the dignity bestowed on Ḥaḍrat Bilal^{ra}. He was a black man and a slave [soon freed after accepting Islam] too. But Ḥaḍrat Umar^{ra}, at the time when he was the Khalifah, would address him saying, "Our leader, Bilal," and showed great respect by standing up in his presence. What a magnificent religion it was for which the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} was chosen to be its mirror and who, in return, eliminated his own self and presented the Holy Quran all in all. The love and compassion of the Holy Prophet^{sas} for mankind, and particularly the poor, is reflected through the following incident.

There was a black person who was a very poor laborer, and his features were considered to be so grotesque that he was counted amongst the ugliest. Because of his repelling features, some people would not even look at him. Once he was standing alone and thinking with heavy heart about his depressing life. The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} happened to pass by and, approaching this man from behind, like a mother would do to her own child, he covered his eyes with his own hands to see whether or not he would recognize him. The man realized that no one except the Holy Prophet^{sas}

would behave so lovingly towards a miserable wretch like him. But seizing upon this rare opportunity, he started rubbing his sweaty body and odorous clothes with that of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, and started to touch and feel him with his hands. When asked by the Holy Prophet^{sas} whether he had recognized him, he said that no one but the Holy Prophet^{sas} would treat a poor person with such affection; and he was merely taking advantage of the good fortune to touch him, to hold him close, and to embrace his loving person with his hands. He said he was taking full advantage of a golden and rare opportunity. Afterwards, he said, “O Prophet of God, who else other than you would be so much concerned about the downtrodden? I am a wretched man of no value at all; no one will even buy me as a slave in the market.” On this, the Holy Prophet^{sas} replied, “No, not at all. God in heaven has owned you; you enjoy His love and respect.”

This is Islam. This is what we have learned from the Holy Prophet^{sas}. If you go out into the streets of America with this Islam, you will then certainly be the winners. No power of this world can arrest the influence of attraction and charm of this Islam. People will come to you for this Islam because you will then be indeed the true ambassadors of the Holy Prophet^{sas} rather than mere conveyors of a hollow message. The present-day world does not care for envoys who indulge in lip-service only. Today many heads of states falsely pretend to be emissaries of peace and love. Should you truly endeavor to represent and reflect the moral excellences of the Holy

Prophet^{sas}, then you will see how much dignity and glory God confers upon you. Learn to love these people. When I meet them the thought of any distinction of color never ever passes through my mind. I see them neither black nor white. I see them all full of God's Light.

I personally know that among them are those whose hearts are full of the love of God. They get up at night to offer the *Tabajjud*¹ prayer. In spite of being poor, they always come forward and are in the forefront in matters of financial sacrifices. Their love of Ahmadiyyat is reflected from their faces and in their eyes. Sometimes, losing control over their emotions, they embrace me crying, and between their sighing and sobbing, I cannot understand what they say. I see nothing in them other than God's light shining upon their faces. My heart goes out to them. My soul dances in their love. You have pledged allegiance at my hand, and I have made a pledge at the hand of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. You should become like this, or you will not be true to your pledge of allegiance. Until you adopt this attitude, you will not be able to bring change in the destiny of America. Hundreds of thousands of

1. *Tabajjud* is a voluntary prayer performed by followers of Islam. It is offered late at night, pre-dawn. It is not one of the five obligatory prayers required from Muslims, although the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} was recorded as performing the *Tabajjud* prayer regularly himself and encouraging his companions too. It is also a vehicle for achieving nearness to God, because at that hour, one gives up sleep and forsakes the comfort of one's bed to fall prostrating before one's Lord. [Publisher]

Pakistanis, Arabs, Indonesians, Malaysians, or Bengalis may come and settle down here, yet they cannot win this country until they come with the light of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. The people you may think to be low or those who are taken to be low by the world are, in fact, real gems with great potent force. To win God's love, they are ready to advance faster than others because they have a strong sense of deprivation. Other people who are content, because they have everything, become arrogant. As described earlier, Nūḥ^{as} informed his people that their wealth had made them blind; how could he show and convince them that God's blessings were not attracted by material possessions? Rather, they descend upon the deprived and the meek. Because of their sense of loss, God had sharpened the insight of the poor to recognize His blessings and accept those blessings when they descend upon them. Therefore, let them take advantage of this situation, and you should not stand in their way. Convey to them the message of love, beauty, and moral excellence of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. You will see how God changes their fortunes with His Grace and Bounty. These are the people who are wasting away their lives in alcoholism, music, and drugs. Out of the same people, many will join Ahmadiyyat, and you will see a dramatic change for the better in them.

There is an Ahmadi who was a musician by profession and in a short time became well known throughout America. According to musical critics, he was to become the all-time best. When he became an Ahmadi, he neither cared for music

nor did he crave for the wealth which his musical career would have brought him. He discarded it all. He is now a dervish. He offers *Tahajjud* prayers regularly. Tears flow from his eyes when he utters the name of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. He loves the Promised Messiah^{as} just as much as the Promised Messiah^{as} loved his master, the Holy Prophet^{sas}. He is an entirely transformed person. He is changed so much that the people cannot recognize what a gifted and talented man he is. I have known him for a long time and talked to him often. God listens to his prayers and answers them, and treats him with love and affection. You know not how many magnificent gems of great value are hidden here. And if, God forbid, we failed to appreciate their worth, God too will not care a single iota about us.

So transform yourselves and change the present state of affairs. For those Ahmadis that I am referring to, who have already transformed themselves and are very dear to me, because I know they are dear to God, my message is: try to attain grandeur of character through practicing real Islam. Learn to be self-confident. Islam teaches a very special mode of life. Islam tells you that you are free—free from all complexes including inferiority complex. When you find God with full conviction, there is no room left for feeling inadequate. Why do you become so oversensitive if someone views you either in a peculiar way or neglects you? Why was Ḥaḍrat Nūḥ^{as} not oversensitive, and why did his followers, who were poor, not take offense in a similar situation? These very verses

of the Holy Quran are also giving you a clear message: being God's glorious servant, Ḥaḍrat Nūḥ^{as} was extremely close to Him, and his handful of followers were so dear to Him that, for their sake, He annihilated all others in that land. The eminent personage of Nūḥ^{as} and his followers were severely ridiculed and looked down upon by others. The Holy Quran records their plight. When they were building the Ark the chiefs, as well as the vulgar people of that ill-fated nation, contemptuously cut bitter remarks and constantly mocked at them. They called them dense-headed, insane, and paupers who, in spite of being constantly ridiculed, claimed that they would be saved and the rest of the nation would be destroyed. Nevertheless, these persecuted few never suffered from any inferiority complex because their faith was firm and true. They knew that they were one with God, and consequently, they treated others with mercy.

If someone mistreats you, you do not have to feel frustrated and react in a negative way; rather, you should show mercy towards that person. If you react to someone's misbehavior by withdrawing yourselves from doing good, then you will draw yourself away from your own Lord. You will turn away from what is good for you, and you will display insincerity to yourselves.

Why then do you not understand that Islam belongs to you and God is yours? And if, in matters of morals and values, an outsider turns his back on God and Islam, what right do you have and what sense does it make that you too should

draw yourselves away from God and Islam? You should have a strong feeling that God has become yours, and you should not be concerned about what others think of you. When you inculcate this grandeur of character, then you will become dominant in this country. Leaving aside religious values, I can say on psychological grounds that it is imperative, for a nation to prosper, that it should get rid of its inferiority complex and it should advance on a straight path. It should be disinterested in other's attitudes toward it. It should not concern itself whether someone honors it or not. Such nations are born through Prophets of God who bring them up and train them in such a way that, not only do they survive, but flourish while other contemporary, dominant nations meet destruction. You are the fortunate nation, and therefore you should feel above the need of someone else embracing you. In fact, as God has chosen you for His Favors and Blessings, you are the one who should embrace others and show benevolence and graciousness by embracing others. Therefore, it is imperative that each and every Ahmadi should get rid of all sort of inferiority complexes. Those who are of a comparatively lighter color and who are financially better off, their feelings of inferiority complex can and will undoubtedly destroy them if they do not deviate from the present course. And those who are apparently considered to be of lower status, should they remain a victim of inferiority, this complex will also certainly destroy them. The Holy Prophet^{sas} has already divulged to us all profound facts of human nature.

The greatest psychologist ever born, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} knew God the best, and God—creator of human nature—taught him everything about human nature. The Holy Prophet^{sas} is the only true source of understanding human nature. It becomes easy to learn man's nature if one looks at man, free from all prejudice, through the eyes of God. Therefore, I am saying with perfect certainty and guidance, that there is none more knowledgeable than the Holy Prophet^{sas} in understanding human nature. No one before or after him can attain the height of his knowledge.

Once, he^{sas} said that among those disliked by God are those among the poor who despite their poverty are arrogant. This explains what inferiority complex really means. The poor who are being despised by others, if they respond with pride and arrogance, then this is because of their inferiority complex, for they begin to retaliate by looking down upon others. The Holy Prophet^{sas} said God dislikes such people too. In this case, instead of winning the love of God, they earn His wrath. If you are one with God, then by God, you are great, because he who attains nearness to God, he becomes great. Why then do you allow yourself to fall prey to a false inferiority complex? Why do you permit Satan to sow this harmful feeling in your hearts? Why do you give a chance to Satan to infuse erroneous thoughts in your mind that others are greater than you? If you infuse the feeling of true greatness in you and adopt the qualities of the character of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, I can tell you that no one can

succeed in creating any disharmony within the Ahmadiyya community.

Today some hypocrites, some foolish, some ignorant, and some planted by your opponents have infiltrated among you to create disunity and disharmony. Satan always tries to create such disorder. Remember that no power can bring disunity among true believers. Therefore, anyone, either due to his inferiority complex or under satanic influence, who attempts to bring ill feelings to your hearts against your brother, and consequently, if you feel that your love for your brother, or your respect and sense of obedience to a duly designated representative of the Jamā'at are affected, then beware that such a person is not from God—he is from Satan. Reject this person with full force. If everyone follows this way, no satanic influence can ever harm Ahmadiyyat. But I am surprised that some people are easily influenced, and bring to me such petty complaints. For example, a teacher gave passing grades to a student only because he was a Pakistani, or had a fair color, or he was rich, and our child was failed, though he was more deserving to win in the recitation of the Holy Quran, or a poem contest. I look at them in amazement. If that was indeed the case, why do you forget that you belong to God and God will treat you with love? If a nation or a person sacrifices his right for the sake of God, he is elevated in ranks in the sight of God. Even if you were mistreated in the manner described, you are still winners. Be merciful to that foolish

person who undeservingly received some prize. He is unaware of what he is really getting. The Holy Prophet^{sas} said:

When two parties bring their disputes to me, and one of them pleads the matter in a deceptively convincing fashion or in a cunning way so that I may give my verdict in favor of the undeserving party, do not think that the undeserving became deserving because of my decision. He indeed has earned merely a portion of Hell. He received nothing more than that.

Therefore, if the Holy Prophet^{sas} could conceivably (God forbid) give a wrong verdict based on misinformation, and my personal belief is that he would not do so, the story is by way of illustration only. It is then possible that other much smaller people can also make a wrong decision because of the lack of information. Therefore, when you react to such matters, you become guilty of two things: First, you entertained a suspicion against your brother; you do not really know why he made that particular decision. Secondly, you considered yourself inferior as if something was taken away from you. No one can take anything away from you. All these matters are based upon the pleasure of God, and no one can snatch away from you the pleasure of God. When you are denied of your deserving right, your status is raised in the sight of God. And he who wrongfully acquires someone else's share, his status is lowered in God's sight. Therefore, Islam is a well-secured sanctuary.

A true Muslim never feels any danger from any direction. Therefore, inculcate self-respect—which is a definite outcome of a strong relationship with God. Those who know how to live in humility, God walks with them. The Holy Prophet^{sas} knew his exalted status and commanded respect yet he was extremely humble. This is the balance created by Islam.

Humble as well as exalted, these attractive personalities manifest themselves and emerge on the horizon through Islam. May God bless America with such a community. All weaknesses may be removed by the sheer Grace of Allah. Try to examine your present condition by profound self-analysis. With compassion and love, after looking thoroughly into their condition, make your brothers understand it is urgent! A great task is in front of us. We are far behind the pace of time, and we need to address our weaknesses immediately to become a foot soldier in God's army. If we do not measure up to the challenge, then in place of winning others over, we will lose our own children to Satan. If you do not learn to grow and do not attempt to make your society dominant over the other society, the other will definitely overcome you. You will become weak and less in numbers. Take heed from these lessons of history. These are immutable laws that are being taught to us by human history. You will not be treated differently. This is a nation's unalterable destiny—past and future. Therefore, re-examine the situation with prayers and seeking forgiveness, and develop strength of character based upon humbleness. Anyone who apparently belongs to a specific

group should resolve that he will attribute himself to the Holy Prophet^{sas} in such a way that the superficiality of different colors disappears completely and there remains not even the thinnest veil between brothers. May Allah give us the strength to achieve this goal. *Āmīn*.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Please note that, in the translation that follows, words given in parentheses () are the words of Ḥaḍrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^{rtā}, the fourth Khalifah of the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. If any explanatory words or phrases are added by the translators for the purpose of clarification, they are put in square brackets []. Footnotes given by the publisher are marked '[Publisher]'.

References to the Holy Quran contain the name of the *sūrah* [i.e. chapter] followed by a chapter:verse citation, e.g. *Sūrah al-Jumu'ah*, 62:4, and count *Bismillāhir-Raḥmānir-Raḥīm* ['In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful'] as the first verse in every chapter that begins with it.

The following abbreviations have been used:

sas *ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam*, meaning 'peace and blessings of Allah be upon him', is written after the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas}.

- as *‘alaihis-salām*, meaning ‘peace be on him’, is written after the names of Prophets other than the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas}.
- ra *raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu/‘anhā/‘anhum*, meaning ‘may Allah be pleased with him/her/them’, is written after the names of the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} or of the Promised Messiah^{as}.
- rta *raḥmatullāh ‘alaihi/‘alaihā/‘alaihim*, meaning ‘may Allah shower His mercy upon him/her/them’, is written after the names of those deceased pious Muslims who are not Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} or of the Promised Messiah^{as}.
- aba *ayyadahullāhu Ta‘āla binaṣrihil-‘Azīz*, meaning ‘may Allah the Almighty help him with His powerful support’, is written after the name of the present head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}, Khalīfatul-Masīḥ V.

Readers are urged to recite the full salutations when reading the book. In general, we have adopted the following system established by the Royal Asiatic Society for our transliteration.

- ا at the beginning of a word, pronounced as *a*, *i*, *u* preceded by a very slight aspiration, like *h* in the English word *honor*.
- ث *th* – pronounced like *th* in the English word *thing*.
- ح *h* – a guttural aspirate, stronger than *h*.
- خ *kh* – pronounced like the Scottish *ch* in *loch*.
- ذ *dh* – pronounced like the English *th* in *that*.
- ص *s* – strongly articulated *s*.
- ض *d* – similar to the English *th* in *this*.
- ط *t* – strongly articulated palatal *t*.
- ظ *z* – strongly articulated *z*.
- ع ‘ – a strong guttural, the pronunciation of which must be learnt by the ear.
- غ *gh* – a sound similar to the French *r* in *grasseye*, and to the German *r*. It requires the muscles of the throat to be in the ‘gargling’ position to pronounce it.
- ق *q* – a deep guttural *k* sound.
- ء ’ – a sort of catch in the voice.

Short vowels are represented by:

- a* for $\overset{\text{˘}}{\text{—}}$ (like *u* in *bud*).
- i* for — (like *i* in *bid*).
- u* for $\overset{\text{˘}}{\text{—}}$ (like *oo* in *wood*).

Long vowels by:

\bar{a} for —^{\prime} or $\bar{\text{—}}$ (like *a* in *father*).

\bar{i} for $\text{ع} \text{—}^{\prime}$ or —^{\prime} (like *ee* in *deep*).

\bar{u} for $\text{و} \text{—}^{\prime}$ (like *oo* in *root*).

Other vowels by:

ai for $\text{ع} \text{—}^{\prime}$ (like *i* in *site*).

au for $\text{و} \text{—}^{\prime}$ (resembling *ou* in *sound*).

The consonants not included in the above list have the same phonetic value as in the principal languages of Europe. As noted above, the single quotation mark ‘ is used for transliterating ع which is distinct from the apostrophe ’ used for ء.

We have not transliterated some Arabic words which have become part of English language, e.g. Islam, Quran, Hadith, Mahdi, jihad, Ramadan, and ummah. The Royal Asiatic Society’s rules of transliteration for names of persons, places, and other terms, are not followed throughout the book as many of the names contain non-Arabic characters and carry a local transliteration and pronunciation style.

GLOSSARY

Aṣḥābuṣ-Ṣuffah—In one corner of the Prophet's mosque in Madinah, a covered platform was prepared which was known as 'Suffah'. This served as the resting place of indigent Emigrants who dedicated themselves to the worship of Allah, the company of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, and recitation of the Holy Quran. They became known as *Aṣḥābuṣ-Ṣuffah*.

Dervish—A person who leaves all the pleasures and comforts of this world and devotes his life to God.

Ḥaḍrat—A term of respect used to show honor and reverence for a person of established righteousness and piety. The literal meaning is: His/Her Holiness, Worship, Eminence, etc. It is also used for God in the superlative sense.

Holy Prophet^{sas}—A title used exclusively for the Founder of Islam, Ḥaḍrat Muhammad^{sas}.

Holy Quran—The final and perfect Scripture revealed by Allah for the guidance of mankind for all times to come. It was revealed word by word to the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} over a period of twenty-three years.

Jama'at—Defined as community. In general, the Jama'at refers to the entire community of Ahmadi Muslims.

Jamia'—Understood as group, but more commonly university. *Jamia'* refers to universities established around the world by the Ahmadiyya Community to train and educate missionaries and scholars.

Khalifah—Caliph is derived from the Arabic word *khalifah*, which means ‘successor’. In Islamic terminology, the word righteous *khalifah* is applied to one of the four *khulafā’* who continued the mission of the Holy Prophet of Islam. Ahmadi Muslims refer to a successor of the Promised Messiah^{as} as *Khalīfatul-Masīh*. *Khulafaa’* is the plural of *khalifah*.

Khutbah—A sermon delivered by a Muslim Imam. Typically given at a mosque during the Friday prayer, or at other special occasions.

Muhammad^{sas}—Founder of Islam. *see* Holy Prophet^{sas}.

Musleh-e-Ma’ūd—Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīh II, Mirza Bashirud-Din Mahmud Ahmad^{ra} (1889–1965), was the second successor of the Promised Messiah^{as}. He is also called *Musleh-e-Ma’ūd* (Promised Son)

because he was born in accordance with the prophecy made by the Promised Messiah^{as} in 1886 concerning the birth of a righteous son who would be endowed with unique abilities and attributes.

Sunnah—Sayings and actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas}.

Sūrah—A chapter of the Holy Quran.

Tabligh—Defined as proselytizing. *Tabligh* refers to propagating the message of Islam.

Tahajjud—A voluntary prayer performed by followers of Islam. It is offered late at night, pre-dawn. It is not one of the five obligatory prayers required from Muslims. It is also a vehicle for achieving nearness to God, because at that hour, one gives up sleep and forsakes the comfort of one’s bed to fall prostrating before one’s Lord.