



KASSIM ALI
EVER LIVING GUIDE

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I am a direct descendant of Prophet Mohammad and a large number of the Mohamadan Faith today numbering about 20 millions acknowledge me as their spiritual head. They pay me tribute and worship me who has the blood of their Prophet in my veins.

—AGA KHAN



EVER LIVING GUIDE

...abundant from the world. According to the Holy Quran: "We never see that who believe in us before you" (Al-Quran, the Imaaleh before that for centuries, for thousands of years before the advent of Prophet Mohammad, there were some wise men, illumined by Divine Grace, for the guidance of people and thus Abraham, Moses, Jesus and all the Prophets of Israel are accepted by them. They even admit that there were similar Divinely-inspired messengers in other countries—Certain Buddha, Confucius, Krishna in India, Socrates in Greece, the wise men of China and many other sages and saints amongst peoples and dynasties of which we have now lost track. Thus, "There was no community left without a Divine Guide" (Al-Quran, XXXV: 24), and that man's soul has never been left without a specially inspired messenger from the Lord that sent him to earth and is the Universe.

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PREFACE

In this small booklet are given the fundamental principles of Imami Ismaili sect of Islam as to their conception of Divine Light on earth for the guidance of mankind.

The Ismailis otherwise known as the followers of their Imam-e-Zaman, H. R. H. Prince Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan (III), derive this name from Hazrat Ismail, sixth direct and lineal descendant of Prophet Mohammed (may peace and mercy of God be upon him) through his successor and beloved son-in-law first Imam Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib.

According to them Divine Guidance is an ancient and perpetual - ever living institution. All the Prophets were *da'ees* of their times who guided people with the order of the Almighty, as God said, "We made them Guides to lead people by Our orders" -(Al-Quran, XXI : 73). A living Prophet had always remained on earth to guide mankind according to time and there was no such time when this living Guide was

absent from the world. According to the Holy Quran : "*Mo'mins* are those who believe in what was revealed to you and what was revealed before you" -(II : 4), the Ismailis believe that 'for centuries, for thousands of years before the advent of Prophet Mohammed, there arose from time to time messengers, illumined by Divine Grace,'* for the guidance of people and thus Abraham, Moses, Jesus and all the Prophets of Israel are accepted by them. They even admit that 'there were similar Divinely-inspired messengers in other countries - Gautama Buddha, Shri Krishna and Shri Ram in India, Socrates in Greece, the wise men of China and many other sages and saints amongst peoples and civilizations of which we have now lost trace'.* Thus, "there was no community left without a Divine Guide" -(Al-Quran, XXXV : 24), and that 'man's soul has never been left without a specially inspired messenger from the Soul that sustains, embraces and is the Universe.'"

Like all other Prophets, the great Prophet Mohammed the final messenger, the Absolute, came on earth to guide mankind and he brought the final chosen religion of God - Islam.

* Memoirs of H. R. H. Prince Aga Khan P. 174

According to the Ismailis, Divine Guidance did not disappear with the Prophet's death, but continued through his successors appointed by him. God says, "O Prophet! We have sent you as Guide to the path of God, a Warner..... and an EVER Bright Lamp."

(Al-Quran, XXXIII : 45).

This Ever Bright Lamp would not extinguish with the Prophet's physically leaving this world but his light of guidance continued on in an unbroken line of his successors: *Zorriyyatan ba'zuha mim ba'z*, meaning successors one after the other from father to son. These successors are *A-imma* (Imams) through 1st Imam Ali al-Murtada ibn Abi Talib, 'whom Prophet in his life time said would be to him as Aaron was to Moses, his brother and right-hand man, in the veins of whose decendants the Prophet's own blood would flow, appeared destined to be that true successor'* : *Emir ul-mo'menin* and *Imam ul-Muslimin*, i. e. both temporal and spiritual sovereign - the positions held by the Prophet himself. The Ismailis therefore believe that after the Prophet, Divine power, guidance and leadership manifested in Hazrat Ali the first Imam and other Imams

after him in direct line of succession, the 48th successor in this unbroken link being the present Imam Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan.

The ancient and sacred mission of messengers of God i. e. "*Da'wat-ul-haq*" was kept alive by *A-imma* (Imams) - the successors of Prophet Mohammed through *da'ees* or *pirs* appointed by them and sent to all the parts of the world. Salaman Farsi, Abuzer al-Ghaffari were *da'ees* who propagated Faith in the days of 1st Imam Ali al-Murtada. *Da'ees* Sufiani and Halwani were deputed by 5th Imam Ja'far-us-Sadiq to North Africa. Ibn Hawshab was the chief *da'ee* in the days of 10th Imam Razi Abdullah with head quarters at Yemen and he was responsible for sending *da'ee* Abu Abdullah *a-shii* to North Africa who propagated the holy Faith and subsequently established Ismaili empire in *Ifrikiya* which resulted in the Fatimide Caliphate in North Africa and later in Egypt for about 200 years. 11th Imam Mehdi (the first Fatimide Caliph) sent Ibn Hathim to Sind in 883 A.D. Al-Muyyad-fid-din Ash-Shirazi, Nasir-e-Khusro, Syed Nuruddin (or Pir Sat Gur Noor as known in Indo-Pak) and Hassan bin Sabbah were great *da'ees* of those times. The Ismailis were responsible for the propagation of Islam

* Memoirs of H. R. H. Prince Aga Khan P. 178

in Europe, in Italy and Hungary. Wide propagation of the Faith of Islam was made in the days of eighth Fatimide Caliph and 18th Imam Mustansirbillah who sent Nasir-e-Khusro to Central Asia (Afghanistan & Badakhshan) and Syed Nooruddin to India and Hassan b. Sabbah to Iran who later on established Ismaili rule in Alamut - in the mountains of Elburz. After the fall of Alamut empire in the days of 27th Imam Ruknuddin Khurshah, Imams from Shams-ud-din Mohammed (28th) to 45th Imam Shah Khalilullah resided in the rest of Iran with no temporal rule. yet the work of *Da'wat* was carried on as usual. *Da'ee* Sadruddin (or Pir Sadardin as known in Indo-Pak) who was sent by Imam Islamshah to India, propagated the Faith of Islam which resulted in lacs of Ismaili Muslims who are to be found in India, Pakistan, Burma and Africa.

These Ismailis of India, Pakistan, Burma and Africa were given name of *Khoja* by *da'ee* (Pir) Sadardin who brought their forefathers to Islam.

Today the Ismaili Muslims are found scattered in Syria, Southern Egypt, in Yemen, Iraq, Mahalat of Iran and other parts, Persian Gulf, Pakistan, India, Africa, Burma, Afghani-

stan in Kabul itself; there are many in Russia and Central Asia, China around Yarkand, Kashgar and in many villages and settlements in Sinkiang and even in South America and Indonesia. This shows the tremendous work of the propagation of the Faith of Islam by the Ismaili Missionaries sent all over by the Imam of the time.

H. R. H. Prince Aga Khan is the present and 48th hereditary Imam of the Ismailis whose Imamatus has been longest of all the 48 Imams. His descent from Prophet Mohammed (may peace of God be on him) even Prophet Hazrat Adam can be traced from the attached genealogical chart.

At the end of the chapters on 'Ever Living Guide' are given a few messages of H. R. H. Prince Aga Khan as regards to the fundamentals of Ismaili sect and their relations with other brother Muslim sects.

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Kassim Ali

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...then enter into His mercy from Him and grant
us the will guide them to Himself by TRUE PATH."

(S: 174-175)

According to the above verses Divine
is stated to be the Almighty's proof in
a world who is to remain amongst the man-
kind to guide them to the True Path. And that,
those who put faith in Him and hold fast stron-
gly to His rope i. e. follow His Guide with firm
faith, He (through His Guide) would lead them
to enter into the mercy of their Lord and take
them back to Him. These verses also clarify
that the path which is traced by this Divine
Guide is the only TRUE PATH—'Siraat-ul-Mus-

Prophets & Imams: Vicars of God.

The office of the Divine Guide began with
the creation of mankind. Hazrat Adam was
sent as the Prophet - the Messenger of Al-
mighty Allah. In the same way all the Prophets
appointed by the Almighty came on earth
carrying that Divine Authority for the guid-
ance of mankind. And this 'Authority' shall
not remain in the world as is clear from the
following verses of the Quran:

EVER LIVING GUIDE

I. Manifestation of Divine Light.

God the All-Powerful created mankind on
earth. He in His infinite mercy bestowed a
Guide to remain in the world amongst the
people in order to show them the right path so
that they may not go astray, but return to Him
and achieve eternal peace.

اِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَاِنَّا اِلَيْهِ رٰجِعُونَ

"Verily we belong to God and we shall return
to Him." (Al-Quran II : 156)

The following verses of Holy Quran give
us complete idea of Divine Light on earth for
the guidance of people and their salvation
through that Divine Guide. God says:

اِنَّمَا الْاِنْسَانُ لِرَبِّهِ لَكٰفِرٌ وَاَنْزَلْنَا الْاِنْفِرَاطَ نُوْرًا مَّهِيْنًا وَاِنَّا الَّذِيْنَ اَسْمٰوَاتُ بِاللّٰهِ
وَاحْتَضَمُوْا بِوَكِيْلٍ حٰقِلٍ فِىْ رُءُوْسِهِمْ وَكَطِيْلٍ رَّبَّنَا الَّذِيْ هُمْ اِلَيْهِ مُسْتَقِيْمًا

"O ye people, verily Proof has come to you
from your Lord and we have sent you MANIFEST
LIGHT (Noor-an-Mobin). Then, for those who
believe in God and take firm hold of Him, He will

make them enter into His mercy from Him and grace;
and He will guide them to Himself by TRUE PATH."

(IV : 174-175)

According to the above verses Divine Guide is stated to be the Almighty's proof in the world who is to remain amongst the mankind to guide them to the True Path. And that, those who put faith in Him and hold fast strongly to His rope i. e. follow His Guide with firm faith, He (through His Guide) would lead them to enter into the mercy of their Lord and take them back to Him. These verses also clarify that the path which is traced by this Divine Guide is the only TRUE PATH—'Sirat-ul-Mustaqeem.'

II. Prophets & Imams : Vicars of God.

The office of the Divine Guide began with the creation of mankind. Hazrat Adam was sent as the Prophet—the Messenger of Almighty Allah. In the same way all the Prophets appointed by the Almighty came on earth carrying that Divine Authority for the guidance of mankind. And this 'Authority' shall ever remain in the world as is clear from the following verses of the Quran :

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ بَعَثْنَا مِن بَيْنِهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَوَعَدَ اللَّهُ صَبِيحًا عَلَيْهِمُ

"Verily God has chosen Adam and Noah: and Abraham's descendants and Imran's¹ descendants above the people of the world one after another in the lineage and God both hears and knows." (III : 33-34)

The great mystic poet of Iran, Jalaluddin Rumi writes, how Almighty Allah sent down His Light on earth. He says in his *Mathnavi* :

كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ نَقَشَ أُولِيَا سِت ۖ كَوْدِ بِلِ نُوْرُوْرٍ شَيْدِ خُدَا سِت

"How God spread his Light"² is reference to *Atliya*—(Prophets and Imams):

Which is the proof of the light of Divine Sun. (425)³

This Divine Guide is from God and is therefore appointed by Him. It is not left to the will of people to elect any Imam according to their choice. If it were so they could have as well elected any Prophet. But we find that it is not so. God has Himself chosen Prophets to be His representatives as said in the

- (1) Imran refers to Abu Talib father of Hazrat Ali (Tafseer Umdatul Bayan).
- (2) Al-Quran, XXV : 45
- (3) Verses' numbers quoted herein are serial numbers as given in Translation of *Mathnavi* (Vol. I) by R. A. Nicholson (1934).

Holy Quran :

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ اٰمِرًا يَهْدُوْنَ بِاَمْرِنَا

"We have appointed them Imams (Guide) and they are to guide with Our orders." (XXI : 73)

Prophets in turn made *nass* (spiritual appointment) on their successors. Adam appointed Seth as his *wasi* (successor); Noah appointed Sam, Abraham made *nass* on Ismael; Moses appointed Aaron (Haroon) and Jesus appointed Sham'un. In the same way Prophet Mohammed (may peace of God be upon him), according to the Divine tradition kept up by his predecessors appointed Ali al-Murtada ibn Abi Talib to be his successor as the 1st Imam. This line of Imamatus is to continue for ever through the progeny of Ali from father to son and is appointed by Imam of the time himself. Prophets and Imams are God's representatives and are not of people and therefore cannot be elected by them.

God says :

لَنْ يَّغْيِرَ اللهُ سُنَّتَ الْاَلْوَيْيْبِيْنَ اِلَّا

"There cannot be change in My tradition."

(XXXV : 43)

As all Prophets did appoint their *wasi*, likewise Prophet Mohammed (may peace of

God be on him) kept up the Divine tradition and did appoint his successor before materially leaving this world.

Therefore those who believe in God, it is incumbent for them to have immediate belief in the Divine Guide appointed by Him.

In the first line of ayat referred to previously on page 1 (IV : 174) when it is said that "Proof has come to you from your Lord", it means that it is only through this Divine Guide on earth that mankind was able to know of the unlimited powers of Almighty Allah and also receive His mercy. Therefore, truly if there were no Divine Guide present amongst the people in the world, in a short time there would be no influence left in the faith in Him and it would disappear entirely. If there were no Imam present, everything would be in chaos and disorder in the spiritual life of the mankind and everybody would turn infidel. The Divine Guide - Prophet & Imam - is a substitute for the Almighty and is therefore said to be the Proof of God on earth.

Jalaluddin Rumi in his *Mathnavi* says :

مؤنکدش در پیش دین و دگر کے یار : نلیجے باید از دماں یادگار

"Since union with the Beloved (God) has vanished from our eyes;

We must needs have a vicar as memorial of Him (i. e. one who will recall Him to our memory)." (671)

چونکہ گل رفت و گلستان شد خراب ÷ بوئے گل را از کج جویم؟ از گلاب

"Since the rose is past and the garden ravaged;
From whom shall we get the perfume of the
rose? From Rose-water." (672)

چوں خدا اندر نیاید در عیال ÷ نائبِ حقند این پیغمبران

"In as much as God comes not into sight;
These Prophets are the vicars of God." (673)

This is made more clear when God says :

أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

"Obey God, His Apostle and those in Divine
Authority amongst you." (IV : 59)

Obedience to God, His Apostle and the Divine Authority (Imam) is not the belief in three but one and one authority. The Holy Quran says, "There is only one 'Hakim' for you." So this ayat conveys that God is represented through His Prophets and *Oolul amr* who is Imam of the time. The obedience to God is that which is expressed to Prophet and Imam who should be considered as Light of the Almighty on earth and there should not be

the least suspicion about this. 'This is clear from sura *Noor* in which God says :

يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورٍ مَنِ يَشَاءُ

"God guides to His Light whom He loves."

III. Prophets & Imams are Super-human.

Though in the same material body as ordinary human beings, Prophet and Imam carry Divine Light (*Noor*) and are exalted. Imam Ja'far-us-Sadiq once said, "We have certain positions with God in some of which we are He and He is we, and in some others we are we and He is He." Therefore only those who are *surat parast* (form worshipers) deny this and consider Prophet and Imam like themselves. Non-believers used to say for the Prophet of Islam, 'Is he our Prophet who eats what we eat and moves in the streets?' This is referred to in Holy Quran:

أَنْظُرْ تَيْفٌ شَرٌّ كُنُودَاتِ الْأَمْثَالِ فَصَلُّوا عَلَايَسْتَجِيبُوعُونَ سَبِيلًا

"See (O Prophet!) how they strike out for thee parables and (thus) go astray and can not find a way." (XXV : 9)

Jalaluddin Rumi correctly says :

محمد عالمیوں میں سببِ گمراہ شد ÷ کم کے زاہد اہل حق آگاہ شد

"On this account the whole world is gone astray;

Scarcely any one is cognisant of God's *Abdal* (substitutes)." (264)

ہمسری با انبیاء برداشتند : اولیاء را آنچه خود پنداشتند

"They set up (a claim) of equality with Prophets;

They supposed the saints to be like themselves." (265)

ایں نہ دانستند ایشان از منے : ہست فرتے در میاں از منے

"In (their) blindness they did not perceive that there is an infinite difference between (them)." (267)

Rumi further discusses this and says, how can an ordinary human being compare with his own, the actions of Prophets and Imams? The holy men are also garbed in the same material dress as ordinary human being, yet he says:

کار پاکانرا قیاس از خود مگیر : گر چه باشد نوشتن شیر و شیر

"Do not measure the actions of holy men by (the analogy of) yourself;

Though 'Sher' (lion) and شیر (milk) are similar in writing." (263)

Giving more examples he says :

ہر دو گوں ز خوردند از محل : یک شد زان زیش زان دیگر عمل

"Both species of '*zan-bur*' ate and drank from the (same) place;

But from that one (the hornet) came a sting, and from this other (the bee) honey." (268)

ہر دو گوں آہو گیا خوردند و آب : زیں کے سرگیں شد زان مشکاب

"Both species of deer ate grass and drank water;

From this one came dung, and from that one pure musk." (269)

ہر دو گوں خوردند از یک آبخورد : ایں یکے خالی و آن پڑ از شکر

"Both reeds drank from the same water-source: (But) this one is empty, and that one full of sugar." (270)

ہر دو صورت گز بہم مانند راست : آب تلخ و آب شیریں را صفاست

"If both resemble each other in aspect, it may be (so) :

Bitter water and sweet water have (the same) clearness." (275)

The above examples tell us how the Prophets and Imams should be considered as super-human and as *Abdal-e-Haq* i. e. Substitutes of God carrying Divine Light in them.

IV. Meaning of 'Tawheed' (Unity of faith).

Obedience to God means carrying out the orders of God which were conveyed by His Messenger - Prophet. So till there is no

faith in Prophet, obedience to Him is not possible. God says in Holy Quran, "*Man uti-ir Rasul faqad Ata' Allah*" (IV : 80), meaning "He who obeyed Prophet, obeyed Allah." It means obedience to God was only possible through obedience to Prophet and his obedience was rightly obedience to Allah. And when Prophet appointed Imam (*Oolul amr*) to be his successor, obedience to God was only possible through obedience to Imam of the time, who is present generation after generation. The position of *Oolul amr minkum* never dies out but continues on through the descendants of Prophet Mohammed - *A-imma* (Imams) - through Ali al-Murtada. Speaking about *Vilayat* (Divine Authority) of Allah, Prophet and his Successor, God says in Holy Quran :

إِنَّمَا أَوْفَّقُوا اللَّهَ دَرَسُوهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يَقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَ
هُم رَاغِبُونَ

"O believers, your Guide is Allah, His Apostle and those believers who said prayers and gave alms in *ruku*." (V : 55)

In the famous book "*Al Kash-shaf*"¹ it is given that this ayat was revealed about Ali al-

(1) A Famous Sunni Tafseer of the Quran.

Murtada who gave alms while in *ruku*. It is narrated that once when Hazrat Ali was offering his prayers and he was in his *ruku*, a beggar came and asked for alms. At once Hazrat Ali stretched out his right hand at the beggar who removed the ring which Ali had on the last finger. At this the above ayat was revealed.

So the obedience to God, Prophet and *Oolul amr minkum* - the successors of Prophet Mohammed is enjoined upon *mo'mins*. In this way, faith in God, Prophet and Imam was the correct meaning of *tawheed*. Faith in God is incomplete without the faith in His Manifests - Prophets and Imams. If faith in God was a complete religion without believing and obeying Prophet and Imam, there would have been no necessity of sending Prophet Mohammed to Arabs. Arabs did believe in one God, but the righteousness could only reach them through the Prophet when they followed him. God says in Holy Quran:

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ
حَرَجًا مِّنْكَ وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَيْهِمْ

"Certainly by the Lord they will not be considered as *mo'mins* unless they refer their disputes to you (Prophet) and are no: discontented with your decision

and submit to you entirely."

(IV : 65)

Thus we see that faith in God is only complete through faith in Prophet and after him Imam who has been ever present in the world.

V *Prophet & Imam are same in essence.*

Prophet Mohammed (may peace of God be upon him) has said :

إِحْفَظُونِي فِي وَرَثَتِي
أَنَا وَعَلَىٰ مِنْ نَوْءِي رَاجِعِي
أَنَا مِنْ عَلِيٍّ وَعَلِيٌّ مِنِّي

"Preserve me through my descendants (Imams)."

"Ali and I are from the same Divine Light."

"I am from Ali and Ali is from me."

According to this, there should be no discrimination between the Prophet and his successors. The following incident would bear witness to these sayings of the Prophet.

In A. H. 10, a Christian deputation, hearing the wide propagation of Islam, from Najran came to the Prophet of Islam for religious discussion in order to show that they were correct and thus discredit Islam. Prophet gave them convincing arguments but they would not submit. At this came revelation from God:

فَقُلْ لَعَنَّاؤُنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَنِي إِدْرِيسَ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ الْكَاذِبِينَ
فَقُلْ لَعَنَّاؤُنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَنِي إِدْرِيسَ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ الْكَاذِبِينَ

"Say (to them, O Prophet!) come let us gather together - our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves; then let us earnestly pray and invoke curse of God on those who lie."

(III : 61)

According to the above order from the Almighty, the Prophet had to take his sons, some one from women and for "selves" some one like his own. Hazrat Ayesha relates¹ that upon the above revelation, the Prophet with his *kisa* (blanket) went and sat in open ground when came his grandsons Hzt. Hassan and Husein ibn Ali b. Abi Talib. He took them inside his blanket. Then came Hzt. Fatima, the beloved daughter of the Prophet, followed by Hzt. Ali al-Murtada. Thus sat Prophet & Ali (*Anfusna* - "selves"), Hassan & Hussein (*Abnaena* - "sons") and Hzt. Fatima (*Nisae-na* - from "women") covered in one blanket. These five (*Panj-tan*) are thereafter known as *Ashab-ul-Kisa* - "the people of blanket." The Prophet prayed to the Almighty to shower

1. See Tafseer "Al Kash-shaf" Vol. I (p. 369) Printed at Istiqaam Press.

blessings on this group which was the only treasure belonging to him and said to them :

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

"Verily God desires to purify you, O *Ahl-e-bait*, and always keeps you far from all impurities."

(XXXIII : 33)

From that time they are also known as *Panj-tan-Pak*. This clarified that the Prophet and Ali were of one *nafs* - just like two branches of one and the same tree.

Thus the Prophet and his successors - Imams should not be seen with a different angle but considered as one *Noor*. Authority of *manub* cannot be different from that of *naseeb*.

Rumi says :

نے غلط گفتیم کہ نائب ماموب ہے اگر دو پنداری قیاس آید نہ خوب

"Nay, I have said (this wrongly), for if you suppose that *naseeb* - vicar and *manub* - he who is represented by the vicar are two, it (such a thought) is bad, not good." (674)

نے دو باشند تا وقتی صورت پرست ہے پیش او یک گشت کہ صورت پرست

"Nay, they are two as long as you are a form worshipper; (but) they have become one to him who has escaped from (consciousness of) form." (675)

VI. The last Prophet appoints his successor.

There was not a single moment left when Divine Guide was absent from the world or had disappeared. Every Prophet in his lifetime proclaimed publicly that he had the Prophet-hood of God with him and he never disappeared. Hazrat Issa - Jesus Christ, while leaving this material world informed his people, "I shall pray to Father and He shall send you another comforter who shall abide by you *FOR EVER*." Prophet Mohammed followed him. In his lifetime he revived the faith of *mo'mins*, guided them to the True Path but did not leave the world without declaring his successor. He declared the Imamate (spiritual mastership) of Ali ibn Abi Talib to be guide for his people after him.

At the farewell pilgrimage to Mecca (*Hajjat-ul-wida*), the Prophet addressed a huge gathering giving them last advices as regards firm belief in Faith, keeping rights of their wives, mercy towards slaves, fellow feeling amongst each other and so on. After finishing this farewell message, the Prophet started for Medina. Perhaps there was something still left out to be said to his people. On his way to Medina, came revelation from the Almighty:

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ مَا بَلَّغْتَ يُسَلِّطِ اللَّهُ
 يَفِيضْكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنْ أَنْتَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ ۝

"O Apostle ! deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and verily if you did not do this, you have not delivered His Message and God will protect you from the people; surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people." (V : 67)

Upon this, writes Fakhruddin ar-Razi in his book "Tafseer-e-Kabir" (p. 431) that the Prophet at once collected all the people at a central place known as *Ghadeer Khumm*. Standing on a raised platform, the Prophet took Ali ibn Abi Talib by his hand and declared:

مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاهُ فَهُوَ مَوْلَى مَوْلَاهُ

"Ali is the master of those who consider me as their master."

He then prayed:

"O Lord ! be friend to him who befriends Ali and be enemy to him who is enemy to Ali."

Further he said to his people:

"I am leaving behind me two things : the Book of God and my descendants. They are tied with a long rope and can not be separated till the day of Judgment. Verily if you cling to them, you will never go astray."

(Muslim Vol. II p. 230)

Turning to Ali he said,

"O Ali ! you are my brother, my successor, my representative and father of the Imams from my descendants."

Fakhruddin ar-Razi further writes:

It was Omer b. Khattab who first congratulated Ali al-Murtada to be his and every *mo'min's* master. He was followed by all the men, women and children present there who took oath of allegiance with Ali and accepted him as their master. When this task was completed, the last but not the least Voice came from the Almighty saying:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتِمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَالْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

"This day I have perfected your religion and completed my favours on you and have chosen Islam as a religion for you." (V : 3)

This clearly shows that on the declaration of Ali by the Prophet as his successor and executor of his wills, his mission was an accomplished work as on this depended the future progress of Islamic world, the maintenance of unity amongst the Muslims brought about by the Prophet with great hardships.

The above day is known in history as "*Yom-ul-Ghadeer*" on which the Prophet decla-

red the mastership of Ali al-Murtada over the *mo'mins*.

Ahmed bin Hambal, one of the four Sunni Imams, has mentioned this incident in his well-known book "Masnadul Kabeer", quotes Barra bin Azib one of the *as-haab* (companion) of the Prophet saying, "We were in the company of the Prophet when he halted at the *Ghadeer Khumm* and led the congregational prayer. After finishing the prayer the Prophet took the hand of Ali and raised it up saying, 'Am I not dearer to the *mo'mins* than their own souls?' They said 'Yes.' Again he said, 'Ali is the master of the one who acknowledges me to be his master. O God, love those who love Ali and hate those who hate Ali.' After hearing this, Omar bin Khattab went up to Ali and said, 'Congratulations to you, O son of Abu Talib, you have become the master of every male and female *mo'min*.'"¹

Besides the above public declaration by the Prophet, he had on various occasions cleared the position of Ali with himself as his successor.

In the 9th Hijri, the Prophet took an army to Tabuk (Syria) to nip in the bud the

1. Life & Lectures of Al-Muayyad fid-din Ash-Shirazi by Jawad Al-Muscati & A. m. Moulvi (p. 145)

war like attitude of the Roman Emperor. This time the Prophet did not take Ali with him but left him in charge of Medina during his absence. The hypocrites began taunting Ali that he was frightened and so on. Ali complained about the unbearable taunts to the Prophet when he said :

يَا عَلِيُّ أَنْتَ بِرَبِّي بِمَنْزِلَةِ هَارُونَ مِنْ مُوسَى

"O Ali! your position with me is same as was Haroon's to Moosa."

This showed that as Haroon succeeded Moosa, Ali was to succeed the Prophet.

The Prophet left this material world but the light of his Prophethood did not vanish. It is a perpetual "Lamp" for the guidance of mankind. God says in Holy Quran :

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ۚ وَذَرَأْنَا إِلَى اللَّهِ جِذْرًا مِمَّا بَدَأَ بِهِ
كَمَا يَسْرَأُ أَجْمَعِينَ آه

"O Prophet, truly we have sent thee as a witness, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner, and as a *da'ee* (one who invites people) to the Path of God with His order and as Everbright Lamp." (XXXIII : 45)

This shows that the "Light" carried by the Prophet would not disappear with his materially leaving this world but continue through

his descendants. Light of his Prophethood was not limited to his lifetime but continued on through his descendants—Ali and his successors appointed by him.

Again in *hadith-e-qudsi* God says, "O Prophet! if it were not for you we would not have created the world." It proves that without the presence of the Prophet's Light on earth, it (the earth) had no meaning and would not remain. But the existence of the earth till today shows that Light of the Prophet is ever present. Though physically he is not with us, his Light continues on through his successors — Imam of time, who is always present amongst the people on earth carrying the same Divine Light.

This Divine Lamp for the guidance of mankind by the Almighty is everbright from the Prophet to Ali and Ali to his descendants in lineage. In sura *Noor* while speaking of God's Light as a Lamp, God Says :

اللَّهُ نُورًا وَالسَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ نُورًا وَمَنْ نُورًا وَمَنْ نُورًا وَمَنْ نُورًا وَمَنْ نُورًا وَمَنْ نُورًا
 اللَّهُ نُورًا وَالسَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ نُورًا وَمَنْ نُورًا وَمَنْ نُورًا وَمَنْ نُورًا وَمَنْ نُورًا وَمَنْ نُورًا
 اللَّهُ نُورًا وَالسَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ نُورًا وَمَنْ نُورًا وَمَنْ نُورًا وَمَنْ نُورًا وَمَنْ نُورًا وَمَنْ نُورًا

"Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth:

His light is as a niche in which is a lamp, and the lamp is in a glass, the glass is as though it were a glittering star; it is lit from a blessed tree, an Olive neither of the east nor of the west, the oil of which would well-nigh give light though no fire touched it.—light upon light:—Allah guides to His light whom He pleases"

(XXIV:35)

Rumi has thus said :

پدر نور و پسر نور است مشهور : این فهم کن نور علی نور

"It is well known that (God's) Light from father (comes) to son;

Understand from this 'Light upon Light'."

Although the Prophet is absent materially, he is always alive in the hearts of *mo'mins* through his successors who are ever present in the world to keep his Faith alive.

Holy Quran also bears witness of this Everbright Lamp when it says :

وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً بَازِيَةً فِي عَقِبِهِ

"And God has created the "WORD"

to remain everliving in his (i. e. Prophet's) progeny."

(XLIII : 28)

By this perpetual line of succession to Prophet Mohammed, generation after generation, the Faith was ensured to remain living for ever with development in the path of

achieving its ultimate aims.

VII TIMELY GUIDANCE.

Imams have always been present to guide mankind according to the changed times. Conditions prevailing thousands of years ago were different from those at present and in years to come the conditions will totally change. At different times, there are new difficulties and fresh issues arise, and every time an Imam is present to give a solution thereof. Guidance ought to suit the times. Almighty Allah sent four different Holy Books at different times. The first Book "Taurat" revealed on Prophet Moses was true but revelation of three subsequent Books shows that fresh and timely guidance was always necessary to keep Faith alive and extending. "Just as fresh food is essential for the progress of material body, in the same way fresh guidance was also necessary for spiritual advancement."¹ Again we see that the Quran was not revealed as a whole at one time but portion by portion according to the necessities and circumstances prevailing at that time. In this way a living Imam is always

(1) This was remarked by Imam Mohammed-ul-Baqir when a Christian Missionary was preaching his religion - religion of Jesus Christ.

present to give timely guidance. Islam is a dynamic Religion and not static. Although there has been contradiction in guidance by Imam of the time, as we find so many ayats of the Quran in contradiction to those revealed before (*nasikh - mansukh*), the spirit of the Quran is always kept up by the Imam. Ultimate aim is the same inspite of contradiction, and that is why Prophet Mohammed has shown the path of his descendants (*Itrat*) along with the Holy Book - Quran. The world, man's life, body is also in contradiction; in that way there can be changed and fresh guidance according to the change of times to suit the spiritual life. The Prophet of Islam also ordered his followers accordingly.

There is a famous *hadith* of the Prophet that, then in Arabia if they gave up one percent of the laws and customs, they would be ruined and the time would come when if they kept more than one percent of those laws and customs, they would be ruined. This saying of Prophet Mohammed is sufficient to give clear idea of timely guidance and this was only possible through a Living Imam of the time.

VIII OATH OF ALLEGIANCE (*Baiyat*)

Islam is a systematic religion. At all

times, Allah's *mo'mins* were asked to take oath of allegiance to His Messenger - *Rasul* and follow the path traced by him. All the Prophets did so and at the time of leaving this material world, appointed a successor who would execute this work after him. So did Prophet Mohammed. Taking oath of allegiance on the hands of Prophet was as if taking oath to the Almighty which is according to the following ayat in which God says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِي فِي يَدِ اللَّهِ قُلُوبُ أَيْدِيهِمْ

"(O Prophet!), Verily those who take oath of allegiance to you are in reality taking *baiyat* (oath) to God. God's hand is upon their hands."

(XLVIII : 10)

Also in the following verse God says :

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِآبَاتٍ لَهُمْ فِي حَيَاتِهِمْ

"Verily God purchases from His *mo'mins* their bodies and belongings so that He may give them *jannat* (Paradise) in turn."

(IX : III)

As two merchants sign a 'give & take' trade agreement so also *mo'mins* were enjoined to make spiritual contract with their spiritual master - Prophet & Imam according to above ayats.

When Prophet Mohammed declared *Mowla*

Ali to be his successor, as we have mentioned before, all men, women and children present at the *Khumm-e-Ghadeer*, in the presence of the Prophet, took oath of allegiance on the hands of the Commander of the Faithful - Hazrat Ali. Likewise, Imams have always appointed their successors to take the oath (*baiyat*) from the *mo'mins*. If Imam of the time were not to be present, how could this be possible? Even if there was a gap in the existence of Imam for a few years and Imam were not to be present, what would be the fate of those who died during that period? Then their fate would be the death of ignorance as the Prophet has said, "Those who die without taking *baiyat* to *Imam-e-zaman* (Imam of the time), die the death of ignorance."

IX Imam - Source of *mo'min's najat* (Salvation)

Holy Quran says :

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

"Verily we belong to God and to Him we will return."

(II : 156)

All the souls on earth separated from the Ocean of the Almighty seek salvation i. e. 'Return to Him.' It is a common prayer of all Muslims after each *Namaz* :

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ السَّلَامُ وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ وَإِلَيْكَ يَرْجِعُ السَّلَامُ حَتَّى تَارِكَتَ
بِالسَّلَامِ وَأَدْخَلْنَا دَارَ السَّلَامِ

"O God, thou art (ocean of) Peace. Peace cometh from Thee and it returns to Thee. O Lord, give us life (here) full of Peace and (thereafter) enter us in the House of Peace."

But how could this be achieved? A drop cannot fly and reach ocean. It has to take help of a medium i. e. a river which is from ocean and is returning to ocean. So also a *mo'min* requires a medium to reach the Almighty's Ocean, which is his destination.

For this God says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

"O *mo'mins*, fear God and search for a medium to reach Him and follow His path so as to achieve salvation." (V: 35)

We have seen above that all the Prophets came on the earth to guide people and lead them to the Almighty. They were source of *mo'min's najat* (salvation). Likewise Imams have been the media for *mo'mins* to reach the Almighty. To fear God is for the purpose that a *mo'min* is not left far off from his Lord and for

that he has to bring faith in the Imam of his time and follow him so as to reach the destination. The following ayat also conveys this idea:

يُودَعُونَ كُلٌّ مِنْهُمْ إِلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ

"When we shall call all groups of people through their Imam." (XVII: 71)

It means that everybody could enter the 'House of Peace' only through the Imam of his time. Spiritual meaning of the ayat

إِنَّا إِلَهُكُمْ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ رَاجِعُونَ

is that:

Allah is the Ocean. Ali, during his life on earth, was the river separated from the Ocean of the Almighty and flowing back towards its origin, overcoming all material resistances. Again, all the *mo'mins* are small streams starting from the earth then joining the Ocean with river. After death, the perfect *mo'min* is not separated from Imam and with the river he joins the Ocean as all rivers ultimately return to ocean after passing through various obstacles of stones, rocks, etc. etc.

Jalaluddin Rumi giving example of a tree says, "Imam is like a branch of tree, separated

from tree and again returning to it." This is how Ali is from Allah i.e. *Aliyyullah* as we say *Nabiyyullah* i.e. *Nabi* - Prophet from Allah.

Just as sun removes the darkness of night, Imam is that light with whose help man's spiritual darkness i.e. ignorance of the next world is removed. In the words of Rumi, "He is the Sun of souls and not of sky; with whose light are living the humun beings and the angels."

Also he says:

کوئے نامیدی مرو امید با ست نہ شوے تاریکی مرد خورشید با ست

"Go not to the neighbour of despair, there are hopes;

Go not in the direction of darkness, there are Suns." (724)

For the spiritual advancement, believers have to follow the path traced by Imam of the time who is *najatul mu'mineen wal mu'minat*. i.e. Source of salvation for *mo'min* men and women. Therefore Prophet Mohammed has said:

تین مات و کفر عرف امام زمانہ مات میتة جاهلیة و انما اهل بی فی النار

"He who died without knowing his Imam of the time, died the death of ignorance and his place is hell-fire."

And says Rumi:

ہر کرد امان عیشے نابرد نہ زان زشار اور بے ہوشدہ

"Whosoever has lacked (such) a skirt of love is left without share in that strown largesse of light." (762)

Imam Ja'far-us-Sadiq throws light on this when he says, "We (Imams) are the gates of God. We are the medium for His people. He who approaches Him through us is brought near Him. He who seeks our intercession is interceded for. He who seeks His favours through us is favoured by Him. He who turns away from us goes astray."¹

Holy Quran also says:

وَكَيْفَ الْبُرْجَانِ الْعَلِيِّ وَأَنْوَالِ الْبُيُوتِ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا

"Virtue lies in entering the House through gates." (II : 189)

X *Imam - Centre Nerve for mo'mins.*

Existence of a living Imam enables *mo'mins* to be unicolourified and to remain as one unit : create fellow feelings and love each other. For understanding this we go back to the days of the Prophet. We read in history that the Arabs who though believed in one God, yet were disunited amongst themselves. Each

1. "Kitabul Himma" by Qazi an-Noaman - translation by Jawad al-Muscatai and A. M. Moulvi p. 42.

group had its own leader (god) whom they followed. Some considered themselves superior to others and there was distinction between them. Thus they remained scattered away and this resulted in regular fights and battles among them. All this was done away with when Almighty Allah sent Holy Prophet Mohammed (may peace of God be upon him), who removed all distinctions from amongst them and made them brothers and love each other which was in true sense the meaning of being under one banner. This is referred to in Holy Quran as under :-

وَأَعْتَبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُبَدِّلُونَ الْآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنِّي أَخْلَقْتُكُمْ وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَعْتَبُونَ
أَعْدَاءَ أَلْفِ بَيْنٍ فَتَوْبِعُوا نَبِيَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ أَتَقُونَ

“Cling to the Rope of God together and do not be disunited amongst yourselves, and remind yourselves of the blessings of God on you. When you were enemies. He united you in feeling, and by His blessings you became brothers.”
(III : 103)

We observe that people did believe in one God but spirit of unity amongst them was given by the Prophet. And if after the Prophet, there was no Imam - the uniting force (*markaz*) for *mo'mins*, they would be scattered again and revert to the old days of ignorance

as is said in Holy Quran :

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ لَلنَّبِيِّينَ عَلَيْكُمْ آخِرُ نَبِيٍّ

“Mohammed is no more than an Apostle; many were the Apostles that passed away before him. If he died or was slain, will ye then turn back on your heels ?”
(III : 144)

It shows that even after the Prophet, there was a *markaz* left amongst his followers for their unity.

In the days of Prophet Mohammed there were no groups or *firqas* in Islam because if there was any *ikhtilaf* (difference of opinion) between *mo'mins* they referred to the Prophet and his decision was whole-heartedly accepted by all. Thus as there did not remain *ikhtilaf* there was no possibility of disuniting and forming *firqas*. History bears this and has shown that *firqas* in Islam resulted only when Muslims left the *markaz* and took their own way according to their own individual interpretations of the Quran and *Sunna*. *Mo'mins* could remain one unit by believing in one God, one Book, one Prophet and one Imam. In case of *ikhtilaf* they are ordered to refer to the Living Guide. God says :

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّبِعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ وَأُولَى الْأُمُورِ مِنْكُمْ قُلْ إِن تَنَازَعْتُمْ

فِي شَيْءٍ فَسُدُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ

“O ye who believe, obey God and the Messenger and those in Divine Authority amongst you. If you quarrel over a thing, then refer to God and the Messenger.” (IV : 59)

Reference to God was only possible through Prophet Mohammed and then only unity of faith could be achieved. In this way Imams—successors of Prophet Mohammed have always remained present amongst the people to be their nerve centre, to keep them under one banner as one unit which in other words is called *Jamaet*. According to *hadith sharif*:

يَدُ اللَّهِ مَعَ الْجَمَاعَةِ

“God’s hands are with *Jamaet*,” that is with those who are united. While asking his people to cling to the Rope of Imamat, Prophet Mohammed said, “So long as you cling to these two things: Book of God (Quran) and my *Itrat* (descendants), you will never go astray.” (*Hadith-e-Siqlain*)

It is only Imam in Divine link who is knower of everything and who can solve the difficulties. God says:

وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِندَ خَصِيصَتِهِ فِي إِمَامِهِ مُبِينٌ

“And we have enumerated everything in *Imam-e-mobin* — the Manifest Imam.”

(XXXVI : 12)

Imam-e-mobin is non^other than Living Imam of the time who is to be referred to in case of all disputes. As the differences existing amongst various sects are mainly due to the individual interpretations of Holy Quran, the solution is possible only by referring to Living Imam and not the Book itself.

Again God says in Holy Quran :

سْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

“Ask *Ahl-Zikr* whatever you do not know.” (XVI : 43)

There are many verses in the Quran which have hidden meaning. Those verses if seen only with exoteric meaning are absurd e. g. God swears by horse, fig, guava etc. God forbid, how could these things be superior or comparable to Allah the All-High? But these have hidden meaning — *taweel*, which is known to Imams only. This is referred to in the Quran :

وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ

“And no body knows its *taweel* except God and those who are well grounded in knowledge.” (III : 7)

Imam Ja'far-us-Sadiq when asked as to who were *rasekhoon fil I'lm*, replied :

تَحَنُّنٌ وَرَأْفَةٌ وَرَأْسُ حُجْرَةٍ فِي الْعِلْمِ

"Really we (Imams) are *rasekhoon fil I'lm* i.e. well grounded in knowledge."

This is very clearly understood from the ayat referred to previously when God says, "If you quarrel over anything then refer to God and His Messenger." That is why after *Rasul*-Prophet, this Divine Authority was passed on to his successors: Ali and his descendants-Imams. Thus the Imams occupy a unifying position - the *markaz* on whom all can look to. Who was to be referred to in all misunderstandings and quarrels if there was no Living Imam? With every Book that was revealed, a Messenger of God was present to give correct interpretation. In case of the Quran also, if there was no one authority - as Living Imam, hundreds of people would have hundreds of interpretations and everybody would consider his own as correct and this would result in friction and disunity. There were no *fiqas* till there was one interpreter. Rope of God is nothing but one 'Imam' to whom all those who cling, will be free from danger of disunity and enmity.

They will live like brothers to each other and sons of one and the same Spiritual Father - Almighty Allah.

XI Obedience to Imam.

For those who are *mo'mins*, it is quite essential for them to have firm faith in Imam of the time and sacrifice whatever necessary in fulfilment of obedience to him as commanded by Holy Quran :

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِي

"And strive in his path."

(V : 35)

A *mo'min* cannot argue or discuss over a thing ordered by the Imam. He should not put his interpretation on what he hears from the Imam. He should say nothing on his own account. He should not allow his imagination to influence his mind in these matters.¹ How can a *mo'min* argue over the commands of of Imam when it is said in the Quran, for *mo'mins* :

وَمَا أَوْثَقْتُمُ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

"And We have not given you anything from knowledge except a little."

(XVII : 85)

(1) Qazi an-Noaman's "Kitabul Himma" p. 46

Handwritten note: *Handwritten note: He should not put his interpretation on what he hears from the Imam. He should say nothing on his own account. He should not allow his imagination to influence his mind in these matters. 1945*

And for Imam :

وَكَلَّمَ نَسِيءًا أَحْسَنَ لَهُ فِي إِمَامِهِ مُبِينٌ

"And We have enumerated everything in Manifest Imam."
(XXXVI : 12)

It is therefore possible that orders of the Imam with his high wisdom may not be quite easily followed by followers who have limited wisdom. Imam understands what a follower does not and cannot with his limited knowledge. It is for these reasons that followers should but have implicit faith in the Imam and whole heartedly submit to his commands without having a least doubt in his guidance. **Islam means submission.** The following ayat enlightens us fully in this respect :

فَلَا وَرَيْكَ لَا يُوَسِّوْنَ خِطْبَتَكَ إِلَّا نَجْوَىٰ مُنْمَنًا لَا يَسْمَعُ الْإِنسِيءُ حَرْجًا
مِمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَكَيْفَ لَوْ أَنَّمَا

"Certainly by the Lord, they will not be considered as *mo'mins* unless they refer their disputes to you and are not discontented with your decision and submit to you entirely."
(IV : 65)

Jalaluddin Rumi correctly says :

دامن او گيرد تو سبگال به تارهي از آفت آخري مان

"Lay hold of his skirt most quickly without misgiving:

That you may be saved of troubles of the last days."

But obedience arises out of love. So I would not close without the fundamental thing in religion : "Love for the Imam."

XII Love for Imam.

Love for Imam of the time is enjoined upon *mo'mins* by the Quran. Almighty Allah says :

قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

"Say (O Prophet ! to the people) that I do not ask for any reward (for my guidance) except love for my kith and kin."
(XLII : 23)

Imam Ja'far-us-Sadiq when asked for explaining this verse, said : "It is the duty of every *mo'min* to love us (Imams) who are the *ahl-e-bait* the kith and kin of Mohammed."

It is through the love for Imams that a *mo'min* is able to express love for his Lord—Almighty Allah and earn His pleasure and blessings. In sura Aali-Imran (III : 30) it is said,

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ

"Say, if you love God, then follow me; God will love you and forgive your sins."

There are many ways open for a *mo'min* to express love for his Imam. It is love that helps a *mo'min* to draw near to the Imam and be enlightened. Wise men of religion have advised *mo'mins*: 'Sacrifice in the path of the Imam what is dear to you.' This has clear bearing from the following verses of Holy Quran:

كُن تَتَّأَلُوا إِلَهِكُمْ حَتَّى تَنْفَعُوا وَإِمَامًا يَحْتَبُونَ

"Verily you will not attain righteousness unless you spend what you love the most." (III : 92)

Ali b. Abi Talib once said, "The prayers are a habit, fasts - patience; test a believer with money." 'Thus those who love the Imams, should be sincere in their love towards them and should pay them their dues. It is the duty of the lover to love his beloved with sincerity.'¹

Religion is but Love. Imam Ja'far-us-Sadiq says :

هل الدين إلا المحبة

"Can religion be without Love?"

Therefore in the words of Rumi, "Choose the love of that Living One who is everlasting."

1. Qazi an-Noaman's "Kitabul Himna" p. 23.

Also:

مهر یا کال در میاں جان نشاں : دل میدہ الیکم ہر دل خوشاں

"Plant the love of the Holy Ones within your spirit;

Do not give your heart (to aught) save to the love of them whose hearts are glad." (723)

The following verses of *Mathnavi* will summarize the writings hereof :

حق فشاں آن نور را بر جانہا : مقلان برداشتہ دانانہا

"God hath scattered that light over (all) spirits; (but only) the fortunate have held up their skirts (to receive it)." (760)

دان نثار نور ہر کو یا نہ : روستے از غیر خدا بر تافتہ

"And he (that is fortunate), having gained that strown largesse of Light; has turned his face away from all except God."

اندیس وادی مروے ایس دلیل : کا آحبت الکا فلیس توچوں خلیل

"Do not go in this valley without this Guide; Say, like Khalil (Abraham): 'I love not them that set.'" (426)

MESSAGES

from

H.R.H. Prince Sultan Mohamed Shah Aga Khan.

Doctrines of Islam.

"The Holy Prophet of Islam is to us Muslims the last and greatest messenger from the Creator, and through him man is to find salvation in both this world and the next. Our reasons for holding firmly to this faith (and it is essential to remember that the Prophet asked for faith - Iman - and not like some other religious teachers for *Iqan*, a point that should be remembered by all Muslims) are that this message is in its nature the essence of man's spiritual nature. The great religious teachers before and since Muhammad have all limited the area of truth by excluding either some or all of their predecessors. Muhammad, on the other hand, by a full recognition of all his predecessors and by admitting that no people, race, or nation had been left without some kind of Divine illumination, gave his Faith universality in the past, and in fact made it co-existent with human history.

"If, now, we turn from its historic back-

ground to its doctrines and to its possibility of development in the future, we will find the same potential universality. Take the central principle of "*Allah O Akbar.*" Here we find on one side divinity, on the other side infinity. For what is the greater: time, space, the starry heavens, intelligence, knowledge?—whatever existence goes there His greatness extends. Greatness here, to anyone who understands the implications of the Arabic language, does not mean "greatness" as literally translated into English. It means that every thing else is within the womb of the greater—everything else is maintained and sustained by Divine Power, including the furthest spaces of imagination.

"Muhammad told mankind first that the infinite sustainer and container of all existence had justice, mercy, and love as well; secondly, that man through these qualities and through gentleness and kindness, prayer, awe or wonder could get—howsoever infinitesimal proportion—direct communion with the all-embracing power in which he lived and moved and had his being."

USULAT. "Not only non-Muslims but

some Muslims, appalled by the extent and variety of the non-essentials (*Furuat*) have almost followed the example of the man who is emptying the waste water from the tub threw the baby with it out of the window. They have almost thrown out the *Usulat* (essentials). If Islam is ever to fulfil its mission it must have a universality not only in space, namely, throughout the earth, but in time, namely, as long as mankind exists on this globe.

"We maintain that the Prophet only ordered prayer, fasting and gentleness in all human relations, kindness and consideration for all beasts and animals from the smallest worm to the largest mammal. By the institution of the *Ulu'l-amr* - who can be interpreted as Imam and Caliph - and by placing obedience to *Ulu'l-amr* immediately after that to God and Prophet, he ensured that the Faith would ever remain living, extending, developing with science, knowledge, art and industry.

"If, rightly, the Muslims have kept till now to the forms of prayer and fasting as practised at the time of the Prophet, it should not be forgotten that it is not the forms of prayer and fasting that have been commanded, but the

facts, and we are entitled to adjust the forms to the facts of life as circumstances changed. It is the same Prophet who advises his followers ever to remain *Ibnu'l-Waqt* (i.e. children of the time and period in which they were on earth), and it must be the natural ambition of every Muslim to practise and represent his Faith according to the standard of the *Waqt* or space - time."

(Extract from 'Foreward' by H. R. H. Prince Aga Khan to book "Muhammad a mercy to nation" By Al-Hajj Qasim Ali Jairazbhoy).

Ismailis - the Shiah of Aly.

"As there is some misunderstanding as to the attitude of the Ismailis, I feel it necessary to make the point clear.

"Originally after the death of the Prophet, the Muslims were united and there was no question of Shiah and Sunni till after the murder of Khalifa Osman. Then the world of Islam was divided into two branches which in Arabic means two *Shiahs*, namely two sections, one was known as the *Shiahs* of Hazarat Aly, the other as the *Shiahs* of Muavia. These two remained till such time as Imam Hasan made his peace with Muavia when Muavia became

undisputed Caliph and the *Shiahs* of Muavia became the great central stream of Islam and the majority, while the *Shiahs* of Hazarat Aly remained as the other section. To that section of Hazarat Aly the Ismailis belong.

"They take the view that as Hazarat Aly, having himself co-operated with the first three Khaliphs, it is not now for us to judge the three first Khaliphs but to respect their memory as Hazarat Aly himself did it all his life according to historians even in Persia.

"We believe that the Imamatus belongs to the House of Prophet but that for reasons best known to himself, Hazarat Aly did not raise the question during the lifetime of the first three Khaliphs and that is good enough for us not to raise the question which he did not raise himself.

"In this way though *Shiahs* of Aly we can sincerely join in the prayer that Allah may in His great mercy forgive the sins of all Muslims." (1950).

Oolul amr minkum.

Final reconciliation between Shiahs and Sunni doctrines recalled.

"It is more than ever necessary that the

foundation of Imami Ismailism should be understood by the new generation of Ismailies throughout the world. If those who believe that Hazrat Ali was the rightful successor of the Prophet to be the *Oolul amr minkum* must accept the principle of that succession for the same reason they accept in the case of Hazrat Ali his rightful Imam descendants.

"The Imami Ismailies maintain that the position of the *Oolul amr minkum* never dies out and this succession goes on till the day of Judgment on earth. For this reason Ismailies celebrate the exceptionally long Imamatus as they would celebrate every ascension to the spiritual throne of the Imamatus in each century. In the present Imamatus the final reconciliation between the Shiahs and Sunni doctrines has been publicly proclaimed by myself on exactly the same lines as Hazrat Ali did at the death of the Prophet and during the first thirty years after that. The political and worldly Caliphate was accepted by Hazrat Ali in favour of the three first Caliphs voluntarily and with goodwill for the protection of the interests of the Muslims throughout the world.

"We Ismailies now in the same spirit

accept the Caliphate of the first Caliphs and such other Caliphs as during the last thirteen centuries helped the cause of Islam, politically, socially and from a worldly point of view. On the other hand the spiritual Imam remained with Hazrat Ali and remains with his direct descendants always alive till the day of Judgment. That a spiritual succession to the Imam makes the Imam the *Oolul amr minkum* always according to the Quran and though he has his moral claim to the Caliphate as well, always he can, like Hazrat Ali himself, owing to the conditions of the world, accept and support such worldly authorities as the Imam believes help the cause of Islam. Thus a final reconciliation without upsetting either Sunni or Shiah doctrines has been proclaimed always by me as the faith of all the Ismailies." (1954).

True Islamic Charity (Brotherhood)

1. "Though Ismailis have been always staunch and firm believers in the truth of their own faith in the Imam Holy Succession, they have never, like some other sects, gone to the other extreme of condemning brother Muslims who have other interpretations of the Divine Message of our Holy Prophet.

"Ismailis have always believed and have been taught in each generation by their Imams that they hold the rightful interpretation of the succession to the Holy Prophet, but that is no reason why other Muslims, who believe differently, should not be accepted as brothers in Islam and dear in person and prayed for and never publicly or privately condemned, leave alone abused.

"I hope that in these days when the Muslims have to hold together in view of all the dangers, external and internal, from all quarters, I hope and believe and pray that Ismailis may show their true Islamic charity in thought and prayer for the benefit and happiness of all Muslims, men, women and children of all sects." (Cairo, 1955)

2. ".....It is the pride of the Ismailis that we firmly believe that the world of spiritual enlightenment has come as a truth from the inception of Islam to this day with the Imam and carries with it as one of its necessary consequences: love, tenderness, kindness and gentleness towards first, our brother and sister Muslims of all sects and, secondly, to those who live in righteousness, conscience and

justice towards their fellow men." (Cairo, 1955-Platinum Jubilee *Irshad*).

3. "Islamic union can only come if all sects respect each other just as we Ismailis following Hazrat Ali's example respect Ahl-e-Sunnat." (14th August, 1950)

4. "May Muslims pray one day entirely for all Muslims in the world as brothers in faith and feel same." (1940)



