Lord, bestow on me increase of knowledge.

(Holy Qur’ān, 20:115)
About Al-Nahl

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Articles/Essays for the Al-Nahl

Literary contributions for publication in the Al-Nahl can be sent to the Editor at his address below.

It will be helpful if the contributions are saved onto a diskette in IBM compatible PC readable ASCII text format (text only with line breaks), MS Publisher, or in Microsoft Word for Windows and the diskette or CD is sent, or contents are e-mailed or attached to an e-mail.

References to other publications should include as much of the following as can be available: the name of the publication, volume and number, name of the author, the date and place of publication, the name of the publisher, and the page number(s).

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SINCERITY OF HOLY PROPHET

Just look at the sincerity and loyalty of the Holy Prophet, sallallaho alaihi wa sallam. He faced every evil movement and underwent all sorts of hardships; but he did not mind. It was this sincerity and loyalty which attracted the grace of God who said: *innallaha wa malaikat aboo yosalloona alannabiyyi yaa-ayyohallazeena aamanoo salloo alaihi wa saltimoo taslima*. That is, God the Almighty and all His angels send blessings for the Prophet; O ye who believe, you should pray for him for God’s blessings on him.

This verse shows that the actions of the Holy Prophet were such that God did not use any words for their appreciation. Of course God could do that, but He did not do it. It was because his deeds could not be brought into any limitations. This kind of verse has not been revealed in respect of any other Prophet. So much of sincerity and loyalty were ingrained in his soul and so pleasing were his deeds in the sight of God, that God commanded the people to always (then and in the future) pray for him in gratitude to what he did for the world. If we look into the pages of history—before him as well as after—we cannot find anyone with the same kind of sincerity and loyalty. How much did Jesus Christ influence his followers (very little)? Everybody can understand how difficult it is to reform a single man of evil ways; it is very hard to pull out the old habits. But the Holy Prophet Mohammad, sallallaho alaihi wa sallam, got thousands of people reformed—these people were worse than the animals; some of them did not make any distinction between their mothers and sisters, as the animals also make no distinction (for their, sexual lust). They used to usurp the belongings of the orphans, and of the dead people, etc. Some of them worshipped the stars, some were atheists, some of them worshipped the matter in different forms. What was the Island of Arabia? It was inhabited by multiple religions. Of course the result was that the Holy Quran had to mention teachings on all aspects. Every false belief that is there in the world is disproved through these teachings.

It is the outcome of the great wisdom of God.

Since this perfect Book (the Holy Quran) had to effect a complete reformation, it was essential that when it was revealed, there should have existed a complete malady at the place of its revelation so that it could give prescription for every illness. This island (Arabia) had people with complete sickness who had all sorts of spiritual maladies which could ever be found then or in the future. It is for this reason that the Holy Quran is a perfect Shariat. When the other books were revealed neither there existed necessity nor the books contained complete and perfect teachings.

(Malfoozat Vol. 1, p. 36)

GRADUAL TRAINING

You should wake up at night and pray to
God that He may guide you onto the path that leads to Him. The Companions of the Holy Prophet, sallallaho alaihi wa sallam, also had a gradual training. What were they in the beginning? They were like seeds sown in the earth. Then the Holy Prophet sallallaho alaihi wa sallam watered and prayed for them. The seed was good and the soil was also good. The watering (by the Holy Prophet) produced very good fruit. Just what the Holy Prophet did they followed him and did the same. They never waited for the day or the night. You people should repent sincerely; wake up for Tahajjud prayer, pray and set your hearts right. You should do away with your shortcomings and make your words and actions in complete conformity with the will of God. You should remember that he who will keep this advice in view all the time and will pray in a practical manner and put his needs before God, will be blessed by God and he will find a change (for the better) in his heart. Do not be despaired of God. (Malfoozat Vol. 1, p. 44)

TWO KINDS OF BLINDNESS

Blindness is of two kinds. One is physical blindness and the other is connected with the heart. As for the physical blindness, it has no effect on the faith but the blindness of the heart does affect the faith. That is why it is very essential that one should constantly pray to God with great humility that He may grant him sincere spiritual realization and true insight and save him from the doubts that the Satan causes.

There are many doubts that the satan causes in the hearts. The most dangerous of them and which becomes a source of loss of this world as well as the next world, is connected with the next world, for, a greater part of virtuous deeds and truthfulness, is linked, along with other factors with the belief in the next world. When a man takes the next world as no more than stories then there can be no doubt about it that he has become unacceptable and he is lost to both the worlds. (Malfoozat Vol. 1, p. 51)

KEEP YOURSELF IN READINESS

Look at the Companions of the Holy Prophet, sallallaho alaihi wa sallam; is it because they were the lovers of luxurious lives that they won a victory against their opponents? No, it was not so. Even in the previous scriptures it is mentioned that these people would be the worshippers of God during the night and they would be fasting during the day. They spent their nights in the remembrance of God. The following verse of the Holy Quran describes their life in full details:

wa min ribaatil khaili turhiboona bihee aduwallahi wa aduwwakum and ya ayyohallazeena aamanusbiroo wa saabiroo wa rabitoo. You should keep your horses on the borders tied and in readiness so that your opponents may be frightened by this preparation of yours. O you who believe, you should be patient and you should be prepared.

The word Ribaat is used for the horses which are tied on the borders in readiness (for an attack). God the Almighty commands the believers to keep themselves in readiness to defend themselves against the attack of the enemy and this word Ribaat is used by Him to draw their attention that they have to be in perfect readiness.

There were two duties that had been assigned to them: to face the enemy and to struggle for the spiritual upliftment. The lexicons tell us that Ribaat means one’s self
as well as the human heart. Here it is interesting to note that only such horses can prove useful as are well trained and well groomed. Now a days they (the horses) are trained the same way as the children are trained—with great care. If they are not trained they would not prove useful in the least, rather they would become harmful and dangerous.

It also indicates that the human beings (ribaat) should also be well educated and their capacities should be such as would follow the commands of God. For, if they are not like this, they would not prove useful on the battlefield—the battlefield where man has to confront the satan who is his most deadly enemy. This battle is going on all the time. (Malfoozat Vol. 1, p. 52)

**PEN NOT SWORD**

You should understand it well that the need of the time is not the wielding of the sword; it is the pen that has to be used. The doubts that our opponents have expressed about Islam and the assaults that different sciences have made, have drawn my attention to the fact that equipped with the weapon of the pen, I should enter the battlefield and show them the miraculous bravery of Islam and its powers. I could never have been capable of entering this field, but it is the grace of God that has helped me and it really is a great Mercy for me that He likes a humble man like me to become a manifestation of the honor of this religion. Once I counted the objections that the opponents have raised against Islam and I think the number was no less than three thousand, and this number must have increased by now.

Let nobody think that Islam is so week a religion that it can become the target of three thousand objections. It is not so. These objections have been raised by the people who lack understanding and who are ignorant. I should like to tell you that as I counted these objections I also pondered over them and have come to the conclusion that there are unique truths hidden under the cover of these objections—these truths could not be sighted by them (the opponents) because of their lack of insight and in fact it does happen in the wisdom of God that wherever an objector stumbles, there lies a great treasure of truths and spiritual secrets. I have been commissioned to uncover these treasures and to wipe away the dirt of objections from the glittering jewels. God is very jealous of it; He wishes that the honor of the Holy Quran must be made pure and sacred by removing every objection that the dirty minded people have slung on it. (Malfoozat Vol. 1, p. 57)

**WORLDLY SCIENCES**

It is very essential that in order to serve religion you should acquire the knowledge of the worldly sciences as well—the latest ones, for that matter. And you should struggle for this purpose. At the same time, I should like to give a warning—and it is based on my personal experience—those who have striven to acquire one sided knowledge and that they do not have time and mind to spend some time with the spiritual people—nor do they have any light of spirituality in themselves—they have stumbled and gone far away from Islam. Instead of making these sciences
subservient to Islam, they have tried in vain to make Islam subservient to these sciences and they have started feeling that they are the people responsible for the fulfillment of the needs of the religion.

But you should remember that the religion can be served only by such people as have divine light in them. The truth is that these sciences are being taught like the life of the Padres and in the form of a philosophy. The result is that the one who tries to acquire these sciences, remains a devout Muslim for a short while—because of the good impression that he had about this religion—but later on he starts moving away from it. Then a time comes when he abandons all the rituals of Islam and gets himself cut off from it.

Some of them who have acquired these sciences have become leaders of the nation but they do not understand the secret of this all important matter. The acquisition of these sciences can be useful only if one is very sincere and wishes to serve religion and has been in the company of somebody who has been granted divine wisdom.

INTELLECTUAL MATURITY

Some people say: “What has the Holy Quran presented to the world that can be said to be new and different from other Books. Its teaching is no different from that of the Torah.” It is because of this shortsightedness that the Christians had to write the books “Needlessness of the Holy Quran” (Adam zoroarat-i-Quran). Had they been really and truly wise and had they possessed insight, they would not have been led astray. This type of people say: “The Torah says that you should not commit adultery. Same thing is mentioned in the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran teaches the Oneness of God, so does the Torah. What, then, is the difference between the teachings of the two.”

On the surface of it, this is a complicated question and if it is posed to someone who is ignorant of the significance of the teachings of Islam, he would be baffled. The fact is that answer to this kind of questions—which are obtuse and baffling—are taught by God Himself. These are the Quranic spiritual secrets which are disclosed at their appropriate times.

There is no doubt about it that there is a similarity between the Torah and the Holy Quran; we do not deny this. But the Torah has just taken the contents which are devoid of proofs and convincing arguments and explanations. But so far as the Holy Quran is concerned, it deals with all the things intellectually. The reason for this is that the human capacity had not reached higher levels up to the time of Torah; when the Holy Quran was revealed, the capacity had reached its peak and, intellectual, understanding had become mature, that being the case; the Holy Quran adopted the method (of expounding things), which could explain the goodness of the good morals. It does not only explain these things, it gives sound proofs of what it says; that makes the intellectual people understand better, and their denial becomes difficult. As I have just now said, when the Holy Quran was revealed, intellectual capacity of man had become mature; that was not the case at the time of the Torah. Mankind had been making progress since the days of Hazrat Adam, peace be on him, and this evolution continued till it was the time of the Holy Prophet, sal1allaho alaihi wa sallam, when this evolution reached its perfection. (Malfoozat Vol. 1, p. 82)

From The Discourses, Freetown, pp. 8-15.
Words of Wisdom

Foreword by Sahibzadah M.M. Ahmad, Amir U.S.A.

Words of Wisdom is a collection of sayings and Traditions of the Holy Prophet, Muhammad, sallallahu ‘ala’hi wasallam dealing with the daily life. It has been published by Majlis Ansarullah, U.S.A. Arabic text is given with English transliteration and Urdu and English translations. The book includes a discussion of types of ahadith, books of ahadith, and their compilers.

Some important dates and events in the life of the Holy Prophet, Muhammad, sallallahu ‘ala’hi wasallam, have also been included.

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My family and I moved into a house in the suburbs of New York some years ago. Before that I had always lived in apartments and inner-city houses. Upon coming to Westbury, I was advised by friends and neighbors that before buying furniture, rugs, curtains or other home accessories, I must look after the lawn and garden. The value of a house, indeed the neighborhood, depends largely on the appearance of the lawn and the greenery.

The Green Thumb

So we got a lawnmower before we looked at the rugs and bought plants and fertilizer before we put meat on the table. I spent most of my weekends weeding, cleaning, mowing and fertilizing the lawn. And I watered with a hose every summer day.

Over the next year or so, I cleared an area about 25’ x 6’ that was in direct sunlight in my backyard, and tilled it, removing all clumps and clods, rocks and roots; and developed it into a vegetable patch. I planted tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, squash and herbs. I also dabbled into growing annual flowering plants, perennial shrubs and evergreens, summer and fall bulbs, container gardening. I bought books on gardening and went to botanical gardens and flower shows. I must admit that all this book knowledge and spending of scarce resources did not make my garden anyway near equal of others in my neighborhood, and the reason for this escaped me at the time.

One day, exhausted from strenuous weeding activity, I sat down for a daras session with my family. We came to this verse, No. 26 from Sura al-Baqarah

وَتَشْرَىَ الْذِّينَ أَعْمَلُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّالِحَاتِ

أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ بَرَزَّقُواْ مِنْ فَوْضُورٍ زَرَقَاْ قَالُواْ

هَذَا الَّذِي رَزَقْتَنَّ مِنْ فَوْضُورٍ وَأَتَوْاْ بِمَثْلِهِ

وَهُمْ فِيهِ آمِنُونَ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ فِيهِمْ مُطَهَّرَةٌ

And give glad tidings to those who believe and do good works that for them are gardens beneath which flow streams. Whenever they are given a portion of fruit therefrom, they will say, ‘This is what was given us before,’ and gifts mutually resembling shall be brought to them. And they will have therein pure mates, and therein will they abide.

In view of my keen interest, if not vast experience, of puttering around in the backyard, my children asked of me a more detailed explanation about the similitude of promised gardens served by running streams. With the Grace of the Almighty, I was able to get an insight that I had not heard of before.

Why A Garden?

In this verse, No. 26 of Al-Baqarah, Allah Tabarak wa Ta’ala gives us the good news of a garden. The word Jannatun has been used to represent a garden 75 times in the singular and 69 times in the plural as Jannat. It is derived from Janna that means it veiled, concealed or covered a thing. So Jannatun may mean a garden of dense trees, an orchid, or a garden of luxuriant and dense verdure.
The Garden in the Qur’an is also defined by its antonym, which is always An-nār or fire.

The commentary tells us that the jannah signifies blessings which are hidden from our eyes or that the mercy of God that will offer its dwellers a cover from the heat of the fire of hell; also that soil of the Garden represents our faith and the running stream are our good deeds.

What, then, is the significance Allah has chosen a garden as a reward for the doers of good? How does a garden differ from other natural growth? What makes a garden distinct from a jungle, a forest, glen, dale, verdant valley, oasis, a clump of bushes or a bunch of trees on a grassy knoll?

Natural Growth Vs. Planned Verdure

A natural verdant growth depends upon the necessary elements to be present and to be in harmony for its propagation. Whenever and wherever the climate, rainfall, soil conditions and the animal life come into a balance, a productive ecology develops which results in a self-propagating system. Examples include the rain forest of Brazil, date palm oasis in the desert, the Black Forest of the Central Europe and the jungles of Malaya and Siam. These phenomena are quite self-sufficient and require no management from humans. The hand of man has only served to create problems whenever it tampers with the delicate natural balance. A garden on the other hand is something very different. It is never a natural phenomenon, and is always, without exception, the result of concerted efforts by man.

Site Selection

The site is selected with due regard to the direction of the wind and incidence of sunlight. Its soil is tested and properly prepared; there is always a provision for irrigation or watering by canals or spraying, as it cannot depend entirely upon the vagaries of rainfall. Only selected plants are grown here. Each plant is chosen for its adaptability and desirability. Most importantly, a garden is not self-propagating like the jungles and forests of the world, but requires constant work by man for its existence, maintenance and growth. Referring to the verse when I read: This is what was given us aforetime, and they will be given gifts mutually resembling. I understood it meant that my lowly gardening in the backyard may also be full of significance other than that of the tomatoes, tulips, etc.

Soil and Amendments

You see, I learnt that the first thing to do is examine the physical and chemical properties of your soil. The soil can be clayey, loamy or sandy, acidic or alkaline. I discovered that one kind of soil really has no merit over any other kind, as all soils can be amended by the addition of organic matter, and the pH balance can be adjusted by adding limestone or sulfur! All that matters is that the soil be properly prepared to accept a seed or seedling of a young plant. It should be porous enough to allow roots to have room to grow. Also, the soil should be prepared to receive water or irrigation.

In Qur’anic analogy we can liken the soil to our selves that we are born with. While it is true that we do not choose our ancestors, parents, chromosomes, genetic characteristics or the environment in our
formative and adolescent years, we can certainly prepare ourselves for the implantation of good ideas and good intention by the addition of faith or Īmān: the acceptance of a reality which we do not understand. This is the amendment to the soil, by which we can correct the character of our soil and we fertilize our soil by the next step of Iqāmus-Salāt, or establishment of a system of worship. This is necessary because unless the texture and porosity of our soil is not made safe from erosion and dislodgment, we will be unable to receive and retain the rainfall of divine grace. This very fact is set forth as parable in verses 265 and 266 of Sura Al-Baqarah:

بِاِلْمَنْ ِصَدِقَاتِكُمْ َتُبْطِلُواْ أَلَآ أَمَنُوْاْ اَلْذِيَ أَيﱡهَآ يَأَوْمُ َوَلَا َرَآئِيَةَ ﻏَلَّلٍ ﻤَأَلَ َوَأَذى َعَلَيْهِ ﺑِأَوْلِدٍ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّنَ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّنْ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّنْ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّنْ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّنْ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّنْ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّنْ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّنْ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّنْ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّنْ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّنْ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّنْ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّنْ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّنْ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّنْ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّنْ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّنْ ﻤَأَثَرِيَّn

You will agree that beside the other factors the salient difference in both examples cited is that the absence of ‘belief in Allah and the Last Day’ results in absolute instability of the soil and it washes away with heavy rain. Whereas the firmness of faith results in multiplication of fruit and makes a little rain go a long way.

Tilling & Plowing

In my backyard, when I prepared the vegetable patch I had to dig up deep and clear the earth of all undesirable growth. I had to remove the large rocks, and break the clods of soil to aerate it. I also removed old roots and diseased wood of previous plants. I installed wooden barriers against encroachment from neighboring wild vegetation. I then cultivated, spaded and raked the soil evenly. It was hard, backbreaking work. It was certainly no picnic. But all this work was the most important part of laying the foundation for the future garden. The emphasis is on WORK.
In our Islamic terminology, you may call it the Jihad of one’s soul against itself. The same preparations of the spiritual soil will involve the rooting out of old inhibition and pre-conceived notions that we have accumulated through our heritage, our culture and our environment. This work in turning over and cultivating the spiritual soil will aerate our souls and make them receptive to fresh ideas and established truths. We can achieve this by studying the Qur’an, the Hadith, by reading the books and speeches of the Promised Messiah and his successors, and by being involved spiritually and intellectually with moral and religion matters.

Plants & Growing

The stage is now set in my backyard to start seeding the vegetables and flowerbeds. I also buy seedlings and bedding plants from the nurseries and sometimes I transplant established potted bushes. The seeds require the least investment and offer the most rewarding experience. All other plantation cost more, but has less risk of not sprouting or not being established. After the seeding has been accomplished, there is little that I or any other gardener can do. This is the moment of sublime faith. All readings, experiments and scientific theory can bring you to this point, but the sprouting of the seed is under Allah’s command alone!

The seed in our spiritual garden, in my humble opinion, is an intention to be good. One Hadith Qudsi says: ‘Actions are judged by intentions.’ So every action must have a considered intent to support it, Allah then allows this intention to sprout and it is then up to us to nurture its growth. Following the planting we can only 'Seek (His) assistance with prayer and patient perseverance.' (2:46)

Take Five and Think

I must pause here to take stock of our progress. We have covered the selection of a location, the analysis of the soil, amendments and fertilization, cultivating and cleaning and finally we have selected and planted a seed, and are waiting for it to grow. In my life I have found myself at this point many a time. I notice that I have a firm faith in Allah. I have the due reverence for the person and practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu ‘alaihi wa sallam). I believe in all the claims of the Promised Messiah, and am arguably an intelligent person. I offer my prayers whenever convenient, and have the best of intentions to everybody and to learn (!). Why then my garden is such a sorry spectacle and why is it always on the decline and needs so much care to revive it?

Obviously I may have had belief but I was deficient in the continuous and regular infusion of righteous deeds. We read in Sura Al-Anam verse 100 and again in Sura Ra’d verse 5 that Allah has created all vegetative
growth from water. What then is the way to guarantee that your garden will always have water for its growth and will not be dependent upon the vicissitudes of the weather? The answer lies in artificial irrigation or watering by a hose spray or by a lawn sprinkler. These methods are quite workable and produce adequate results.

**Irrigation!**

I, of course, forget to water regularly. By watering infrequently, I made the irrigation not consistent or uniform. The results were uneven size of flowers, bushes with an irregular shape, tomatoes that had streaks in them and cucumbers with middle sections that look like coca cola bottles.

Al Baqarah verse 26 tells us that rivers running beneath it do the spiritual watering of the Garden or that it is served by running streams. And what are these running streams? ‘Jannatin tajrī min taṭthal-anhār’ occurs at least 42 times and is an ever-recurring description in the Holy Qur’an of the garden promised to those who do good deeds. It is invariably associated as a reward for the Muṭṭaqa, for those who believe and do deeds of righteousness and for those who obey Allah and His messenger. You will notice that while the garden is built upon our faith, what keeps it green and everlasting is the running stream of our righteous deeds.

**Working the Soil**

To recapitulate, our beliefs and our reading and research into what was aided by whom at what time, etc.; only help us build a firm foundation of the spiritual garden. Our good intentions are the seeds we plant there and what brings forth the produce is only the hard work or our righteous deeds. And what are these righteous deeds?

There are everyday acts of communication and dealing with our fellow human beings done with a spirit of ‘Adlī wal-Ībānī wal-ittā’i dhīl-qurbā or working with equity, with kindness and the best stage, dealing with strangers as if they were family. And avoiding, Al-Ībāhā’i wal-munkari wal-baghī, those acts, which are indecent, acts, which are hateful and loathsome, and acts that show disregard of God’s commandments and society’s laws and customs.

**Weeding!**

I am reminded by my older son to say something about weeds as it is his unenviable duty to pull out the pesky parasites. In any garden where the soil has been prepared properly, it has been worked and fertilized; it is not only the selected seed that grows but also all kinds of unwanted vegetation, commonly called weeds.

*A man of words and not of deeds*

Is like a garden full of weeds

These plants follow the same cycle of growth, and are nurtured by the same good soil, fertilizer and watering, but produce nothing but their useless foliage. They take up space where the useful plants could grow and drain the soil of its resources. In Sura Ibrahim verse 25 there is a beautiful parable

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طِينِيَّةً كَسُّحْرٍ طِينِيَّةً أُصِلُّهَا ثَأَبٌ وَفِرْعُوبًا فِي السَّمَاءٍ

‘Have you not considered how Allah compares a holy word to a good tree whose each root is firm and whose branches spread out to the very sky?’
The verse 27 says:

وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةِ حِبْيَةٍ

秦ِبِّيْثَةٍ آَﻠِﻤَةٍ

وَمَثَلُ اِجْﺘُثْْتْ

Kh*b*th* آَل*يمَةٍ

of the evil word is

Kh*b*th* آَل*يمَةٍ

an evil tree which can be uprooted

Kh*b*th* آَل*يمَةٍ

far above the earth, it has no

Kh*b*th* آَل*يمَةٍ

stability.

The likeness of the evil word is

Kh*b*th* آَل*يمَةٍ

an evil tree which can be uprooted

Kh*b*th* آَل*يمَةٍ

far above the earth, it has no

Kh*b*th* آَل*يمَةٍ

stability.

The Fruit of Our Labors

We come now to the questions which we could ask ourselves in the beginning too, as to why garden at all? Why not buy the produce from the supermarket and get the foliage and the flowers from the florists and the nurseries? Why go through the rigmarole of tilling, planting, weeding, pruning and grafting? The answer is in the counter question, when was the last time you bit into a really delicious peach, the juice bursting through the skin and the flavor filling the house, or ate corn which was so fresh that it needed no cooking? In short, gardening gives you the freshest fruit in its proper season, with no chemicals or artificial sweeteners, sugar, or preservatives. The pleasures of sowing and watching things grow, along with the enjoyment of reaping your homegrown fruits are just by products. There is also the added benefit of exercise for the body. This statement may beg the question, but you have to experience it to understand it.

On the spiritual side, the benefits are similar. While it is true that you can reach the conclusion to be a moral person by education and realization of enlightened self-interest, those acts of righteousness neither have the flavor nor the permanency of the acts of charity and kindness that are done, solely for seeking pleasure of Allah, and strengthening your souls. All other sources of enlightenment are limited by the frailties of their human originators. It is Allah the Limitless One Who can guide us to unimaginable pleasures of His Garden.

In conclusion, we read in the last verse of Sura Al Fath:

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as sown corn that sendeth forth its shoot and strengtheneth it and riseth firm upon its stalk, delighting the sowers that He may enrage the disbelievers with (the sight of) them. Allah hath promised, unto such of them as believe and do good works, forgiveness and immense reward.

**Spiritual Gardening**

...as sown corn that sendeth forth its shoot and strengtheneth it and riseth firm upon its stalk, delighting the sowers that He may enrage the disbelievers with (the sight of) them. Allah hath promised, unto such of them as believe and do good works, forgiveness and immense reward.

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OSMAN

The Committee of six appointed by Omar chose Osman as Khalifa. Osman was one of the early Muslims. He was a merchant and wealthiest among the Qureish. A man of mild temper, he was highly respected for his piety. Twice he migrated from Mecca, first with the party of Muslims which at the Prophet’s bidding left for Abyssinia, and the second time when there was a general exodus to Medina. He married two daughters of the Holy Prophet, the second after the death of the first.

Osman took part in every battle except Badr. His wife, Ruqiyya, daughter of the Prophet, lay ill. He stayed behind to look after her. He had the Prophet’s orders to do so. The Prophet counted him as one of the companions of Badr.

Osman spent money freely to win the pleasure of God and His Prophet. When the Prophet prepared for Tabuk, he had very meager means. Osman gave 1,000 gold coins in ready cash, 1,000 camels and 50 horses. That was the greatest gift ever made by one individual.

There was scarcity of water in Medina. Good drinking water could be had only from one well. It was owned by a Jew. He charged very high rates. Muslims were too poor to meet the cost. The Prophet said that the person who would buy it off for Muslims would earn Paradise. Osman purchased the well. He had to pay a heavy price but he let everybody have water from it without cost.

Osman was constantly in the company of the Prophet. At Hudaibiya he went as his envoy to the Meccans. It was rumored that they had killed him. The Prophet swore to avenge his death. He assembled all his companions under a tree to make a pact with them to that effect. Each companion gave his hand in the hand of the Prophet. The Prophet placed his own right hand on his left declaring it as Osman’s hand.

LETTER TO GOVERNORS

Osman’s first act as Khalif was to issue a letter to the governors and civil officers. It said:

Allah has commanded that rulers should be guardians of the people. They should not be collectors of taxes only. The best justice is that you should give thought to the affairs of Muslims. Give them their dues and get your dues from them. You owe duties to non-Muslims too. Give them their dues and take from them your dues. Next turn to the enemy. Achieve victory over him but always keep the promises you make.

In another letter he reminded the generals and troops of the rules laid down by Omar. In a message to the Muslims, he warned them against love of worldly goods, against taking to the ways of foreigners and against taking slave-girls as wives.

REVOLTS SUPPRESSED

Many of the distant provinces had been conquered. But Islam had no local strength
there. Large armies could not be kept in far-
off places. There were therefore, revolts in
Azerbaijan, Armenia, Tabristan and in Fars
and Khorasan. Walid bin Uqba marched on
Azerbaijan. Peace was restored there. Abdullah bin Amr also joined the force. The
rebels were routed after many battles.

An army marched to the north of Iran. It
pushed as far as the Caspian Sea.

Ibn Umar crushed the rebels of Fars. The
Sassanides were no more on the map. There
was no trouble in Iran after that.

Ibn Amr restored order in Kohistan, and
Nishapur. Ahanaf bin Qais marched to Merv
and gave the country settled administration
and stability.

Abdur RahmanSamrah conquered Kabul
and Zabalistan. The frontiers of the Muslim
State now touched Sindh.

ADVANCE IN AFRICA

The Romans had departed from Egypt. But
they had still many friends in the land, who
wanted them back in power. There were not
many Muslim troops in Alexandria. The
Byzantine Emperor was easily persuaded to
reconquer Egypt. Arabs had no navy. Byzantium had a powerful fleet. It was
decided by the Byzantines to attack Alexandria from the sea. The plan was
carried out and it succeeded. Civil population
was on the side of the old rulers. Only the
Copts were hostile. They had suffered greatly
under the heels of Byzantium. The Romans
now decided to punish them. This further
enraged the Copts. They gave warm support
to Amr bin al-As when he marched from
Fustat to meet the enemy half-way. Amr won
open victory after a grave fight. The Romans
took shelter in the fort. But Muslims pressed
them hard. The fort was stormed and
Alexandria was won back to the Muslim
Empire.

MARCH TO MAGHREB

Abdullah bin Abi Sarah took over as
governor shortly afterwards. When he had
settled down, he sought permission to march
to the Maghreb. A unit was sent from
Medina to help him. Hasan, Husain, and the
four famous Abdullahs enlisted. Muslims
conquered Barqa. Jarjir of Yaqubia gave
them battle at Sabitla in northern Tunis. The
Romans were well armed and in large
numbers. A tough fight took place. In the
thick of the battle, Ibn Zobair hit on a daring
plan. With a party of picked soldiers he
dashed forward. Instantly he was in the heart
of the enemy force. Before they could collect
their wits, Ibn Zobair had slain the Roman
commander. The enemy force lost heart and
fled. The Muslim army pushed forward, took
hold of the coastal areas and conquered the
country as far as Tangier.

MUSLIMS HAVE A NAVY

On the Syrian front, Muaviya was very
alert. He wanted very much to have a navy.
He was permitted to build one. When a
powerful navy was fitted out, Muaviya
attacked Cyprus. The Island made peace. It
agreed to pay tribute. It further agreed to
grant transit rights to Muslim armies.

In the war with Byzantium, the Muslim
navy did many a heroic deed. Abdullah bin
Qais Harsi, the first Admiral, was a man of
great valor. He was engaged in fifty battles
with Romans but never lost a single
combatant. In one action, the Muslims
arrayed their ships pat with one another.
They then fought the enemy as land forces do
on battleground. Romans were defeated.
Their navy was crippled and captured.
Muslims were now feared as much on the sea as on the land. Europe trembled in awe. The Muslim empire in Africa was henceforth safe.

Muslims treated the Africans with great kindness. Africans were surprised beyond measure. Thousands joined Islam and swore to fight the Byzantines who had treated them as beasts.

**THE KHALIF, A POPULAR FIGURE**

The first six years of Osman’s terms were very peaceful. The Khalif was very popular.

Hasan Basri visited Medina in early youth. He says:

> I heard Osman deliver his sermon. I was nearly of age then. I have not seen a purer, cleaner, and handsomer face than his. He would say, ‘O people, bring gifts and alms for the poor.’ People would pile up gifts and alms before him. He would then say, ‘O people bring clothes for the poor.’ They would bring heaps of clothes. He would then give these away to the poor. He would then say, ‘O people, bring perfumes for the poor.’ People would bring to him scents, otto, musk and amber. He would dole these out to the poor.

The Khalif was loved and even feared. A poet of the period says:

> O breakers of law, do not eat loot in the period of Osman. You know well that he slays the guilty under the law of the Quran, and enforces its commands on the limbs and bodies of the people.

**UNITY OF MUSLIMS ASSAILED**

But things changed. The peace of the land was disturbed. Muslims were suddenly faced with internal disorder. Unity of Islam, was hurt. Many disturbances and battles took place.

**CAUSES OF UNREST**

It appears that all this was not sudden. It further appears that it was unavoidable. Islam had reached the highest point of glory. The best people were the companions of the Prophet. The elderly among them were passing away. Their lines were thus getting thin. On the other hand, thousands of converts were daily joining Islam. For a time, the zeal of faith kept them steady. But they had not seen the hardships that the Companions had faced. They had not lived under the personal shadow of the Prophet. The number of these converts was increasing every day. Arrangements to train them could not keep pace with the speed of conversions. They belonged to different countries. They differed in their culture and traditions. They felt that Islam gave better conditions of life. They found that it gave simple and sane teachings. But they did not have to suffer for it. Therefore they did not have any depth of feeling for the new faith. Many converts did not know Arabic. Many young Arabs were impressed by foreign ideas. Medina was busy in wars. The needs of the army were pressing. New territories had to be administered. Frontiers had to be watched and frontiers were moving further and far. Wealth was pouring in. The Companions cared little for its charm. But the young wanted to enjoy life. So money became
important to some of them.

**DISGRUNTLED YOUTH**

These were not the only causes. The new generation was jealous of the old. The old were held in high esteem. The Companions were the councilors of the Khalif. Umar kept them at Medina. Only a few were allowed to go to the battle front. He felt that they had won enough honors. He gave chance to others. But Osman lifted the ban.

Since power rested with few, some of the young did not like it. They wanted jobs, salaries and authority. They little realized that Khilafat was a religious institution that it imposed on rulers a hard duty both in respect of men and God; and that Islamic-rule was the rule of law. They wanted to change the order of things. They did not understand the meaning of Khilafat. And they had little use for it. But they were afraid of open revolt. They were not organized. Nor were they very daring. They began with finding fault with Governors of Provinces. The practice grew in big cities. They did not like the harsh justice of courts. The misguided talked ill of officers. They also turned against non-Muslim subjects and loved to annex their property.

**VIOLENT WAY TO POWER**

The conditions in Medina were fairly satisfactory. A large body. of the Prophet’s companions was still there. But the shape of things in other territories was different. A party of young men had taken to dacoity in Kufa. They slew one Ali ibn-al-Haimiyan. His neighbors captured them. Abdu Sharih, a companion and his son saw the incident. They testified. Under Osman’s orders, the dacoits were slain by Walid bin Uqba, the Governor. Some culprits belonged to good families, a clear indication that the incident was more than a case of simple dacoity. It was aimed to create panic. This was the violent way to power.

In Egypt a new convert was very active. He is known as Ibnul Suda and also as Abdullah bin Saba. He was a very cool and clever man. Posing as an enthusiast, he made a study tour of the entire land. He was gifted with great knowledge of men. Also, he knew the art of polished speech. He established contacts everywhere. He chose the men he wanted. He looked mainly for ex-convicts and their close relatives.

This soft-spoken ex-Jew visited Basrah. There he made friends with Ibn Jabla, a dacoit. He was under house arrest. Ibn Saba stayed as his guest. There he collected a group of persons who were angry with the government.

In the beginning, he would not speak plainly. In fact, he posed as a devout follower of the faith. But gradually he injected poison in the minds of men. The governor of Basrah, Abdullah bin Amir, ordered him out of the town. He had watched his ways and knew he was dangerous.

Ibn Saba next shifted to Kufa. This city had a strong element of undesirables. They did not like their good governor Walid bin Uqba. His hand weighed hard on evil-doers. He had only recently slain a number of killers. Their relations hated him bitterly. They wanted to avenge on him. They hit upon a plan one day. They quietly removed the ring of Uqba from his finger while he was asleep. Then they set out to Medina. There they accused Walid of drinking. Walid was dismissed. The Khalif appointed Said bin Aas as governor.
UNDESIRABLES EXILED

He reported to the Khalif the conditions in the city. The undesirables had made life hard for respectable people. Osman ordered that their ringleaders should be deported to Syria. Malik Ushtar, Sabit bin Qais, Kamal bin Zaid and some others were sent over to Muaviya in Damascus. He tried to put the fear of law into them but failed. They were next sent to Abdur Rahman Khalid, commissioner of Ems. He took them severely to task. They lived there peacefully for a while.

Ibn Saba now moved to Syria. There he started a new line. He met some old companions of the Prophet. He pleaded with them that the treasury money was the property of Muslims. But, he pointed out, Muaviya called it Allah’s property so that he could exclude the other Muslims from it. Abu Zar Ghafari, a simple and sincere wealth-hater agreed with him. But Abu Darda and Ibada bin Samit disapproved of his talk. He found the place too hot for him and returned to Egypt. There he found many willing workers. Egypt was far away from Medina. It had not caught yet the spirit of Islam. Here he made a different appeal. He preached the view that Khilafat was solely the right of Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet.

DISCONTENTED ELEMENTS ORGANIZED

Ibn Saba’s device to run down governors met only a partial success. It encouraged powerful elements in different centers. He gradually succeeded in linking these centers of discontent. Soon the trouble became statewide. It had found a leader and a purpose.

Ibn Saba now gave his comrades a new idea. A new attack was launched against governors. Letters against one governor were sent to the people of the other province. This went on for some time. People in every province began to believe that their brethren in the other province were suffering great hardships. Such letters were also addressed to people in Medina.

There was grave anxiety among the Companions of the Prophet. They expressed their fears to the Khalif.

KHALIF INVESTIGATES

The Khalif sent deputies to investigate. Osman bin Zaid to Basrah, Muhammad bin Muslim to Kufa, Abdullah bin Omar to Syria, and Ammar bin Yasir to Egypt. There was peace, reported the first three. Ammar bin Yasir was an honest but simple man. He was given a great welcome by Ibn Saba’s party. They were very sweet of tongue with him. Ammar was deceived. He readily believed all they said against Ibn Abi Sarah, the governor. Ammar bin Yasir personally disliked the man.

OSMAN’S LETTER TO PUBLIC

Osman addressed a letter to the Muslim public. He said:

My relatives have no better right than other Muslims. I learn from some people of Medina that officers abuse and beat the public. I declare by means of this letter that anyone who has been privately abused and beaten should meet me on the occasion of Hajj at Mecca. He should
take his revenge there from me and my officers or forgive.

This letter created a big stir in the country. Muslims were deeply moved.

**GOVERNORS’ CONFERENCE**

Osman next called his governors to Medina. He wanted to know if the complaints were really untrue. They assured him that there was no truth in the reports. He then asked their views. They proposed that he should crush the bad elements with an iron hand. Osman said: “Troubles will raise their head. The Prophet said so. It is with mildness and love that they can be delayed.” He said that he would give them no good cause and deal by the trouble-makers gently. “Allah knows I have done my best to do good. It will be a happy thing if Osman passed away before the inevitable flood of trouble comes over Islam.”

**TROUBLE IN KUFA**

After the Hajj, Muaviya stopped at Medina. He begged Osman to go with him to Syria. The Khalif said he would not give up the nearness of the Prophet at any cost. Muaviya next proposed to send troops to Medina to protect him. Osman said he would not put any burden on the treasury for his person’s sake. Then Muaviya asked him to give him powers to deal with his enemies if he was slain. Osman said, “What is destined must come to pass. I will not do that. For: you are harsh and I fear you would be hard on the Muslims.”

In the meantime some trouble took place in Kufa. Malik bin Ushtar suddenly returned to the city. He said he had come from Medina. He claimed to have met Sa’d bin al-Aas, the governor, on the way. He incited the people against him, alleging that Sa’d bin al-Aas had threatened to insult the women of Kufa on resumption of the office of governor. The masses went wild with anger. They did not want Sa’d back, they thundered. Crowds rushed out to tell Sa’d off. Deputy governor Amr bin al-Jarid tried to calm them down. He made an appeal for patience. Qaqa bin Amr told him that fools would not listen to words. What they needed was the sword. “And that day is not distant when the sword will be on them. They will then bleat like goats and long for the return of these days. But God will not restore this blessing ever.”

When Sa’d bin al-Aas came, the crowd that had turned out to hoot him down, told him to get off. He turned back. Sa’d reported to the Khalif that the Kufiies wanted Abu Musa al-Ashari as their governor. Osman said: “They shall have him. They are after me. By God I will give them no excuse. I will be patient with them as I was commanded by the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be on him).”

Abu Musa al-Ashari, the new governor, in his inaugural address to the citizens of Kufa, said, “O ye people, never in future turn up with such demands. Remain within the ranks and obey and be patient, and take no hasty steps. You have a leader among you.” Then they asked him to lead the prayer. He refused. He said he would not until they respected the orders of the Khalif. He warned them against disunity. He said when Muslims were under an Imam (leader), none should create division among them. If anybody made the attempt, he should be slain. That was the Prophet’s command, he said.

**CALM BEFORE THE STORM**

There was peace in Kufa now. But trouble-makers were busy. They decided to form a
body of men drawn from all provinces. They were to wait on the Khalif and accuse him of certain faults. They would publicly say every where that the Khalif had been proved guilty. They accordingly set out. When they were near Medina, Osman sent two agents to find out their intentions. They reported back that the trouble-makers would first accuse the Khalif, next they would return and tell the people they had proved his guilt, face to face. They would finally set out for Hajj but would, instead, enter Medina, hold Osman prisoner. He would then either have to resign or die.

When the Khalif heard this, he laughed and prayed to God to lead them aright. The agents also reported that only three men of Medina were with them. One was Ammar bin Yasir. But this man never took any active part. In fact he kept indoors. The other was Muhammad bin Abu Bakr. He was a stupid youth and thought much of himself. The third was Muhammad bin Hazifa. He was an orphan boy brought up by Osman. But he was very angry with the Khalif because he had refused to give him a job. Hazifa however took no part at any later stage.

**PLOT DISCLOSED**

Osman then summoned to his presence the entire group of trouble-makers. He also invited the Companions of the Prophet. When all were assembled, he told them the whole story.

The two agents confirmed the details. The Companions demanded with one voice death penalty for the evil doers. Osman did not agree. He said, he was for granting the mischief-makers full pardon. He would only counsel them and meet all their objections. He would take no action against them, unless they broke the law.

Next, he took up their accusations. one by one. He said that one related to his prayer at Mina. He had not shortened it to half as he should have done in accordance with the practice of the Prophet and the injunction of the Quran. He said he owned property at the place and was obligated to offer full prayers there. The other charge related to the public pasture land. He said, it was not of his making. The pasture land was already there and it was of no personal benefit to him. He had only two camels which did not graze there, though, before he became Khalif, he had the biggest herd in the whole of Arabia.

He next took up the charge that he gave offices to young men. He reminded them that the Prophet had done the same. He was only following his worthy example. Another charge related to generous gifts to his relations. Osman said that he gave away freely of his own wealth and that he had every right to do so. The Companions fully agreed with him on every point. They again insisted that the mischief makers should be put to death.

**IBN SABA SHOWS HIS HAND**

The evil-mongers were silenced. But they were not happy at heart. They turned up again at the gates of Medina. One group came from Basrah, another from Kufa and a third from Egypt. Abdullah bin Saba was with them. He had come out in the open now. Clearly there was something big in his mind. The intentions of these people were now clear. They knew that if they failed, they
would be forgiven. Osman would not be hard on them. And if they succeeded, they would have the best of everything. Some of them believed that the Companions of the Prophet were behind them. So they advanced boldly to the capital. But they learnt that Medina was prepared to fight them. The evil-doers decided to come into open clash at once. So they camped outside, at Zulkhashab and Zulmarvah.

Next they decided to feel the pulse of Medina. They sent their emissaries to meet Ali, Talha and Zobair. When they met Ali, he was commanding a force outside Medina. They told him that they wanted to remove Osman and that if they succeeded would he agree to become the next Khalif? Ali said: “May God disgrace you! Go back. I have heard the blessed Prophet of Allah curse the campers of Zulkhashab and Zulmarvah.” They promised to go back. Next they saw Zobair and Talha. Their answers were the same as that of Ali.

REBELS DISPERSE

Thoroughly disappointed, they expressed their regrets and asked only one favor. They wanted a new governor in Egypt. The request was granted. Muhammad bin Abu Bakr was appointed. They went away happy and started out in groups apparently bound for different directions. Some left for Basrah, some for Kufa and others for Egypt. Medina felt greatly relieved. The citizens’ force was dispersed.

REBELS RE-ENTER MEDINA

Not many days after, the rebels suddenly re-entered Medina. They posted pickets on many points and at the mosque too. Citizens were ordered about. Assemblies were forbidden.

Medina was taken by surprise. The elder companions however took the rebels to task. Ali, Muhammad bin Muslim, Talha and Zobair asked them why they had invaded Medina. The rebels said they had got proof that Osman had played foul with them. They said they had caught a man with an official letter to the governor of Egypt, ordering him to punish the rebel leaders, to slay some, to flog some and to shave the beards of some. The letter, they said, bore the seal of the Khalif. When Ali heard this he said that the story had been clearly made up in Medina. “How did ye, O people of Kufa and Basrah know that Egyptians had got hold of such a letter? You were so far away from one another, going in different directions. And how is it that you are back so soon?” The same questions were put by Muhammad bin Muslim. The rebels had no explanation to give. Their only answer was that Osman should resign.

The rebels next approached Osman. They told him the same story. He said there was no such letter. He further said that a letter could be forged and a seal could also be made. They were required to produce witnesses. They had none. Osman went to the extent of repeating his denial on oath. To the Companions it was clear that the rebels were bent on mischief.

One party of Egyptians asked for Ali’s help in removing Osman. Ali refused to be a party to any of their schemes. They were very much disappointed. Some of the group asked Ali why he had been writing to them in that case. Ali was surprised. He said he had never written to them at any time. Now it was the turn of the Egyptians to feel
surprised. They exchanged glances at one another. They were amazed that they had been relying so much on this man, but at the last moment he had backed out.

The truth however was that Ali had never been in touch with the rebels. Egyptians had put some clever brains behind the revolt. They also had expert forgers of handwriting with them. Only few knew the inside story. The rest blindly believed what the few told them. They had been served with the story that Osman was not popular with the Companions. They had also been assured of Ali’s backing.

**KHALIF’S ADVICE TO REBELS**

The rebels tightened their hold on Medina. They now knew they could not get help from the Companions. But they could not give up their aims either. They were afraid of the Prophet’s Companions. Therefore, they kept strict watch over them. In the mosque they would not let the Companions sit close together. In spite of this Osman would go to the mosque openly. On Friday, after prayers, Osman advised the rebels in the following words:

“O enemies of Islam, fear God. All the citizens of Medina know that the Holy Prophet has cursed you. Repent therefore and wash your sins with good deeds. For God does not remove sin except through acts of virtue.”

Muhammad bin Muslim Ansari and Zaid bin Sabir supported Osman. But the rebels forced them to sit down. Then one of the evildoers snatched the staff of the Prophet from the hands of the Khalif and broke it into two pieces. Next the rebels threw stones at the mosque and at the Companions. Osman was hurt and was carried home unconscious. The mosque was the Prophet’s mosque.

**KHALIF A PRISONER**

The rebels next decided to hold Osman a prisoner in his own house. Nobody was allowed to see him and nothing was allowed to be brought to him, neither food nor drink. Osman sent a neighbor to Ali, Talha, Zobair and to the wives of the Prophet, asking them to arrange water supply for his household.

**ALI’S WARNING TO REBELS**

Ali contacted the rebels and warned them: “O you people, you are doing what neither Muslims nor non-Muslims would ever do. Do not stop food and drink from going to Osman. Even Romans and Iranians give food and drink to their prisoners. What harm has Osman done to you that you have confined him to his house. Do you want to take his life?”

The rebels refused to listen. Umm Habiba, wife of the Prophet and mother of the Muslims, brought a skin full of water to Osman’s house. She was riding a mule. The rebels beat the animal. Umm Habiba narrowly escaped a fall. When Ayesha heard this, she made ready to leave for Hajj. She also tried to take Muhammad bin Abu Bakr along with her. He refused. She said, “I am helpless. If I had the power, I would have not let the schemes of these people succeed.”

Ali arranged supply of water to Osman’s house and busied himself in various ways in reducing the Khalif’s hardships. He also did his best to dissuade the rebels from their evil intentions.

One day Osman ascended the roof of his
house. Addressing the rebels, he asked if it was not a fact that he had bought the sweet water well for Muslims. They replied, “No doubt.” He next asked why he had not even as much share in it as any other Muslim had. Then he asked them if it was not true that he had bought some land to extend the mosque. They said, “It is true.” He asked why then they would not let him pray there?”

As the time for Hajj (pilgrimage) drew near some Muslims of Medina started leaving for Mecca. The rebels decided to put more pressure on Osman. They started throwing stones at his house. Again addressing them, the Khalif said.

“I am the only one guilty in your eyes. What is the fault of others? For, the stones you throw are likely to hit them.” They said, they had not thrown any stone. “Who did?,’” he asked. “God,” answered back the rebels. “You lie,” said the aged Khalif, “God’s stones would never miss.”

Osman sent Abdullah bin Abbas to Mecca, as leader of the Hajj. He gave him a letter which was to be read out to Muslims gathered in the holy place. It said.

“I invite you to Allah and remind you of His gifts. Some people are making trouble at present. They want to divide Muslims into parties. But they have never given any thought to the matter that Allah Himself appoints His khilafis. Allah says, ‘Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good deeds that He will certainly make them Khalifs in the earth.’ Further, they have not valued unity; while Allah has commanded, ‘Hold fast to the rope of Allah together.’ They believed in the reports of my accusers, and ignored the commandments of the Quran. ‘O ye who believe, if an evil-doer brings you a report, then make sure about its veracity.’ And they cared little for the pact they had made with me. But Allah says to the Holy Prophet, ‘Verily, those who made pact with thee, they make pact with God.’ I am the deputy of the Holy Prophet and no people can progress without a leader.”

When the letter was read in Mecca, there was great anger among the Muslims assembled there. They decided to fight the rebels. Some said there never was a better cause for Jihad, a holy war. Osman had also sent letters to provincial governors. There was agitation everywhere. Muslims were getting ready to march on Medina. Mughira bin Al-Akhnas was the first person to enter the city. He had come to fight the rebels. The rebels were now very much alarmed. They sent an agent to Osman demanding his resignation. The Khalif said in reply that he would not even if they tore him to bits. He said that Khilafat was a shirt that God had made him wear. He would never take it off. The agent, on return, told his party. “By God, we are in the grip of a big calamity. By God, we cannot escape from Muslims unless we slay Osman, and his murder is not lawful.”

OSMAN’S LAST ADDRESS

Mughira bin Al-Akhnas was not the only person ready to fight the rebels. There were many others. They had collected outside the house of Osman. He let them in and told them to go back to their homes. Bidding them farewell, he asked them to call Ali, Talha, Zubair and others who had not been permitted to see him. All were soon there. Osman then went up on the roof. He asked the Companions to come closer. They did. There was gloom gripping all hearts on that day. Even the rebels seemed affected when
Osman asked the Companions to sit down. Even the rebels followed their example. Addressing the companions, Osman said:

“O people of Medina, I leave you to the care of God. I pray to Him to make a better arrangement of Khilafat after me. From today I will not come out until God decides about me. I will not give power to anyone to rule over you in your religious and worldly matters. I leave it to Allah to choose for that anybody it pleases Him.” Then he asked them not to run risks for him.

FIGHT RAGES AROUND KHALIF’S HOUSE
Some obeyed, for the Companions had ever been used to obeying. But some felt it wrong to leave the Khalif unprotected. It was clear to them that the rebels were determined to kill Osman. It was also clear to them that it was their duty to defend the Khalif. They therefore stood firm. They kept watch inside the house. The rebels set fire to the door. The defending Muslims came out with drawn swords. There were Hasan, Husain, Muhammad bin Talha, Abdullah bin Zobair, Mughira bin al-Akhnas, Abu Huraira, and others. In the midst of the fight, Hasan was heard chanting, “Their faith is not my faith. I will fight them as far as the top of mount Shimam.” Muhammad bin Talha sang aloud: “I am the son of the man who defended (the Prophet) at Uhud and defeated the hosts though they were many.”

Abu Huraira said to the rebels, “O my people, I call you to safety. What is wrong with you that you call me to the fire?”

OSMAN SLAIN
A bitter fight raged outside the gate. The rebels stealthily entered the house by jumping over a neighbor’s wall. They found the Khalif reading the Holy Quran. Muhammad bin Abu Bakr caught hold of his beard. Osman said to him, “Nephew, if your father were alive, he won’t do that.” Muhammad bin Abu Bakr felt ashamed and withdrew. Ghaflqi, the leader of Egyptians, hit the Khalif with an iron rod on his head. He also kicked away the Holy Quran. Next Sudan bin Hamman attacked him with a sword. Osman warded off the attack with his bare hand. His hand was cut. He said, “By God, this hand was the first to write the Holy Quran.” His wife, Naile, then intervened. Sudan attacked her. Half of her hand was also cut off. The slayer next gave Osman a sword thrust. To finish the evil deed, he pressed the throat of the writhing Khalif till he breathed his last.

TREASURY LOoted
The murderers of the Khalif then looted his property and later the treasury. They did not allow anybody to enter the house. It was with great difficulty that some Companions managed to bury the Khalif’s dead body in the cover of dark.

Osman was fairly advanced in years at the time of his death. He ruled as Khalif for twelve years. Tall, handsome, fair, and broad-chested, Osman was a man of great piety. And very kind-hearted. His forgiving nature cost him his life. He refused to resign and he refused to sanction armed action by one group of Muslims against another.

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Glossary

abu: father of
ahadith: Plural of hadith.
Ahmadiyyat: Muslim sect believing Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to be the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, peace be on him ‘alaihissalam: peace be on him
al-naat (pronounced annat): the bee
amir: a committee of workers
ayyadahul hu ta’l binhil-‘aziz, : May Allah support him with His Mighty Help
chaudhary: President.
sahaba: Companions (of the Holy Prophet Mohammad, sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam, and of the Promised Messiah, ‘alaihissalam.)
shahid: Martyr; also, witness
shura: advisory council.
Sindhi: rightousness
zakat: Prescribed alms.

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Ansar Pledge
Ash-hadu allāh ilāhā illallāhū wa ash-hadu anna muhammadan ‘abdūhū wa rasūlūh
I solemnly promise that I shall endeavor, till the end of my life, for the consolidation and propagation of Islam and Ahmadiyyat, and for upholding the institution of Khilafat. I shall also be prepared to offer the greatest sacrifice for this cause. Moreover, I shall urge all my children to remain true to Khilafat-i-Ahmadiyya. Inshāllāh.

Periodicals
Al-Nahl: Published quarterly. See inside for subscription information.

Publications
Salat Poster: 18x24” Color, Arabic with English transliteration and English translation, $2/copy.
Words of Wisdom (Dr. Karimullah Zirvi, Majeed A. Mian, Syed Sajid Ahmad): A collection of ahadith. $5.
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Nā‘ib Sadr Saf Duvam: ..................... Munum Ahmad Naeem

2003

Arākīn-i-Khusūsī
(Special Members)
Ahsanullah Zafar, Munir Hamid, Masoud Ahmad Malik, Karimullah Zirvi
Dr. Ahsan Zafar, Amir USA, addressing 2003 Leadership conference, with Nasir Mahmood Malik, Sadr Majlis Ansarullah USA, on his right and Maulana Mukhtar Ahmad Cheema on his left.