

Ways of guidance

I have written several times that the ways and means of attaining guidance, which stands for guidance from the Exalted God, are three. Firstly, that a lost soul might receive guidance just through the Book of God. Secondly, that if he does not properly understand something from the Book of the Exalted God, then the light of the evidence of reason might show him the way. Thirdly, that if he is not satisfied even by the evidence of reason then heavenly signs should set his heart at rest. These are the three ways that have always been part of the law of God to grant tranquillity to His servants. That is to say, the first institution is the Books of Faith which reach the masses through oral and written traditions, and it is the duty of every believer to have faith in their reports and teachings. The perfect and most complete compendium of these is the Holy Quran. The second institution is reason and logic whose origin and source are rational arguments. The third institution is heavenly signs whose source, after the prophets, has always been the *imam of the age* and the *mujaddid of the time*. The true inheritors of those signs are the Prophets, on whom be peace. Then after the passage of a long time, when their miracles and signs, assuming the form of narratives, become ineffectual then God sends someone else, following in their example, in order that the wonderful miracles of prophethood do not become dead and ineffective as stories. Rather, those people [of later times] should also see the signs for themselves and revive their faith.

In short, there are only three true ways to believe in the existence of God and in the Straight Path. With the help of these, man gets deliverance from all doubts. If the Book of God and the miracles, signs and guidance contained therein, which to the ordinary people today are mere words, become doubtful to someone, then thousands of rational arguments appear in their support. If even the rational arguments remain unclear to a simple mind, then heavenly signs are also available to those who seek. But terribly unfortunate are those people who remain deprived of guidance in spite of these three ways being open.

In fact, our opponents, both within and outside our religion, are of this very type. For example, the Maulvis of this age were repeatedly shown from the Quran and the Hadith that Jesus had died, but they did not accept this. Then they were brought to shame by rational arguments, showing them that their belief [that Jesus is still alive] was entirely opposed to reason. They had no precedent that in the past anyone had descended from the sky. Then they were shown heavenly signs repeatedly and *God's argument was completed upon them*, but prejudice is such an evil that these people still do not discard this troublesome belief.

Belief in Divinity of Jesus fails all three tests

Similarly the Christian preachers stand accused by me on all these three scores, but still they do not like to give up their unfounded beliefs and cling to entirely useless and lifeless concepts. They are judged guilty by the three ways mentioned above because, for example, if one tries to search from the earlier teachings or from the evidence of Jews any trace of their corporal and limited god whom they call Jesus, not an iota of a teaching depicting such a god will be found. If the Jews had been given this teaching, it was not possible that all of their sects could have forgotten this essential precept on which depended their salvation, so that not even one party among them had remained true to it. Is it not a matter of surprise that such a glorious nation, which in every age had in its midst thousands of scholars and learned men, along with whom hundreds of prophets had been appearing, could have remained ignorant of a teaching which had been persistently granted to them over fourteen hundred years, and in every century hundreds of thousands of their people had been brought up according to it? And this teaching had been revealed through the prophet of each century, every one of their sects had followed it, and it had penetrated deep into their hearts and souls? Also, century after century, their prophets had taken great care to stress this teaching until the century arrived in which *a man claimed to be God* and then all those people utterly rejected that claim and

declared unanimously that it was *against the continuous teaching* which had been granted to them for fourteen hundred years in the Torah and other books through the prophets of God!

So what could be a stronger argument for the refutation of the Christian creed than that the very teaching which they consider true and from God belies their new belief, and is so clearly opposed to this doctrine of theirs that it never even crossed the mind of any Jew that Trinity was a part of this teaching. True, the Christian people try to clutch at prophecies, but this view is ludicrous and shameful because how could it be possible that the prophets, whose teachings of the Unity of God had been consistently handed down to the Jews, prophesied contrary to their teachings, and produced such a contradiction between their teachings and their prophecies that the former meant one thing and the latter meant something entirely different.

Teachings have precedence over prophecies

At this stage, it is very instructive for the thinking person to note that while prophecies contain figurative expressions and metaphors, for teachings it is essential that they are given clearly, with full explanation. Consequently, wherever there appears to be a contradiction between teachings and prophecy, the teachings must be given precedence, and if prophecy is at variance with teachings it should not be taken in its apparent sense but be made to accord and conform with the latter, thus removing the discrepancy. In any case, what the teaching says should take precedence because, apart from being clear and detailed, it is frequently put to use and therefore its aims and objects cannot at all remain obscure, unlike prophecies which generally remain in oblivion. So according to this firm principle, the Jews are absolutely in the right in this controversy against the Christians because the former gave the teachings precedence over the prophecies which they interpreted so as not to conflict with the teachings. However, the Christians have interpreted the

prophecies as entirely opposed to the teachings. Apart from this, the interpretation of the Jews is also sound for the reason that they have been learning from the prophets themselves. A sect of the prophet Yahya [John the Baptist], which exists in Syria even now, is also opposed to this belief of the Christians and supports the Jews; and this is another argument that the Christians are in the wrong. In short, on the basis of the recorded traditions, the doctrine of the Christians is extremely feeble, indeed shameful.

Test of reason

As for the second way for the recognition of truth, which is by means of reason, it repels the Christian creed from afar. The Christians admit that the people to whom the doctrine of Trinity has not been preached will be judged [before God] according to the criterion of the Unity of God as contained in the Quran and the Torah, and they will not be judged on the basis of [not believing in] Trinity. Thus, by this admission they bear plain witness that belief in Trinity is not in conformity with reason, for had it been so then, just as the uninformed people will be asked about the Unity of God, so also would they be questioned about Trinity.

Test of heavenly support

Now, after these two, the third way of the recognition of Truth comprises heavenly signs, i.e. it is imperative for a true religion that it should not be dependent only on narratives and stories, rather in every age the heavenly doors should be open for its recognition, and heavenly signs keep appearing, making it known that the religion comes from that living God Who always supports the Truth. Alas, this attribute is also not found in the Christian religion. On the other hand, it is said that signs and miracles no longer continue, but belong to the past. Instead of showing any fresh heavenly sign they put forward those matters which the present age considers as only fables and stories. It is evident that if at some time Jesus had shown signs to a few fishermen to prove his Divinity, then *as compared to those*

unlearned men the educated people of the present age need much more to see signs because they cannot understand the Divinity of a helpless man. Nor is there any logic or philosophy which can prove the claim to Divinity of a person even whose prayer, said for a whole night long, was not accepted and who proved during the course of his life that his soul was lacking in strength as well as knowledge. So if Jesus is even now a living god and hears his worshippers, he should, by means of his heavenly signs, help his followers who are quite unjustifiably insisting on an unreasonable belief. Man, for his satisfaction, has always been in need of witnessing heavenly signs. His soul has always been hungering and thirsting after recognizing his God through heavenly signs, thereby getting deliverance from the disputations of the atheists, natural philosophers and heretics. A true religion does not at all close the door of heavenly signs on seekers after God.

Now when I see that in the Christian religion all the three ways of obtaining knowledge of God are non-existent I wonder what basis they have for laying stress on the worship of Jesus. How unfortunate it is that heavenly doors are closed on them, rational arguments are repelling them away, and scriptural documents which they should have presented containing the consistent teachings of the former prophets are not to be found with them. Even then there is no fear of God in their hearts. Human wisdom lies in adopting a religion on whose principles as to obtaining knowledge of God there is general agreement, reason should also testify to it, and moreover heavenly doors should not be closed on that religion. It appears after consideration that the Christian religion is devoid of all these three features. Its way for finding God is so peculiar that neither did the Jews follow it nor did any other heavenly Book in the world teach it. And as for the testimony of reason, in Europe itself the more the people advance in rational knowledge, the more they deride and ridicule this belief.

The fact is that rational beliefs have a universal application

because they are derived from universal principles. Therefore if a thinker were to accept that Jesus is god, then since arguments apply without limitation, he has to agree that there must also have been millions of such gods previously, and could also be in the future. And this is false.

As for heavenly signs, even if all the Christian clergymen called upon the Messiah till they perished, still they would not get any sign from on High. For, the Messiah could only show a sign if he were God, but he is humble, powerless and unaware of their supplication. And even if he were aware, what could he do?

The only religion in the world embodying such qualities is *Islam*. If in every religion the superfluous matters relating to finding God are removed, and the element of the worship of created things is set aside, then whatever remains is the Islamic concept of the Unity of God. This shows that the Islamic Unity of God has been accepted by all. So, it is in much danger that these people place themselves by not accepting a truth which is universally acknowledged, and following beliefs which are merely their own claims and devoid of general recognition. On the Day of Judgment, if Jesus were to tell them that he was not God, and to ask them why they attributed godhead to him, where will they go, and with whom will they plead their case?

Four religious views refute Trinity

In accusing the Christians, God has produced four witnesses for their refutation. *Firstly*, the Jews who have been bearing witness for about three and a half thousand years that they were never taught the doctrine of Trinity, nor did any prophet prophesy that God, or a son of God in the real sense, would appear on earth. *Secondly*, the followers of Yahya, i.e. John the Baptist, who still live in Syria, consider Jesus to be merely a human being and a prophet and a disciple of John the Baptist, in accordance with their ancient teachings. *Thirdly*, there is the Unitarian sect of the Christians, also frequently referred to in the Holy Quran. In the third century, the Roman emperor arranged a debate between

this sect and believers in the Trinity, and as the Unitarian sect was victorious the emperor adopted their creed. *Fourthly*, our Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, and the Holy Quran, both bore witness that the Messiah, son of Mary, was by no means God nor the son of God, but a prophet of God.

Divine signs received by Hazrat Mirza

In addition to this, thousands of righteous persons up to now have been bearing witness, having received revelation from God, that the Messiah, son of Mary, was a humble servant and prophet of God. Accordingly, to bear witness against the Christians of this age *God has raised me* and has commanded me to explain to people that to declare the son of Mary as God is a falsehood and the way of heresy. He has honoured me with His communication and revelation. He has sent me with many signs, and He has manifested many extraordinary events in my support. In fact, due to His grace and bounty my company is a Godly one. A person who stays in this company for a length of time, with sincere purpose, pure motive, and perseverance in his quest, will, I am certain, believe in God in the end, even if he were an atheist.

It is the duty of a Christian who is God-fearing, and is hungering and thirsting to find the True God, to throw away useless fables and stories, and as a seeker of visible proofs to stay in my company for a time. Then he will realize how God, the Master of the earth and heaven, manifests His signs to him. But alas, very few are such persons who are really in search of God and are striving day and night to reach Him. *O ye Christians!* remember that the Messiah, son of Mary, is by no means God, not at all; be not unjust to your souls; ascribe not God's greatness to His creatures. I shudder to hear that you call upon a *weak, created being* as God. Come towards the *true God*, so that everything may be well with you and your end is good.

Taking of oaths according to the Christians

The readers can also derive this religious benefit at this point that whereas the Christian clergymen claim that only they possess purity of the soul and pure light, while other communities are entirely engrossed in vice, yet this claim of theirs has always been proved to be false and against facts. On the contrary, the truth is that among them also there are many people who lead shameful lives. They have distorted the teaching of the Gospels to such an extent that there is one picture in theory and quite the opposite picture in practice. We do not see that a Christian clergyman, having received a slap on one cheek, turns the other also. In fact, many of them institute false cases, and on account of dire impatience and spite, take very small matters to courts of law. And then they mount pressure upon pressure for the authorities to punish their enemies.

Consider just this case, how sheer falsehood was fabricated, and how these honourable preachers of the Gospels have taken *oaths* to have me involved in a murder case. Dr. Clarke, Waris Din, Abdur Rahim, Prem Das and Yusuf Khan, all these Christian gentlemen are the men who have taken oath *on the Gospels* in this shameful case. These are the honourable men who, in Atham's case, were saying repeatedly: "In our religion, it is not at all right *to take an oath*, so why should Atham have taken an oath?" In fact, Dr. Clarke had written in a poster in a very insulting manner: "According to our religion, to take an oath is just like eating *pork* according to the Muslims". So these persons have established how far their words and deeds match each other. What did I expect from Abdullah Atham? Just this, that he should appear before a gathering of the fair-minded and state on oath that he did not become overawed by the greatness of Islam, as stipulated in my condition. As he was not truthful, he did not dare take the oath. If the excuse were: "We take oath only in a court, not anywhere else", then firstly the excuse is not mentioned in their books. The Gospels nowhere say that taking of oath is permissible only when you are summoned by force

in a court. In fact, oaths were permitted generally and the Messiah himself took an oath without appearing in a court, and so did their Paul always used to take oath. And even if we add from ourselves the condition of appearing in a court then even this condition cannot benefit them, for a court does not necessarily mean the court of law of an official judge. In fact, the meeting of such fair-minded people and arbiters who can declare the truth impartially and throw the blame on the liar is undoubtedly the meeting of a court, to which he had been called. The beauty is that, according to the Christian books, for the taking of an oath there is no such condition as being called to a court of law by force. On the other hand, wherever an oath is helpful in the settling of a dispute, on such an occasion, according to their religion, the taking of oath becomes imperative.

Apart from this, Dr. Clarke took an oath in our case. *Which court had called him by force to take this oath? He himself placed the case before the court, and so the oath was administered.* Alas, how much the Christian clergymen had prolonged the dispute on this very question of oath! How much had Atham avoided taking the oath although it was absolutely necessary for him to take the oath in order to prove that the condition in the revealed prophecy had not been fulfilled in him. I had even offered to pay four thousand rupees if he took this oath and there was no new condition from our side. From the very first day, there was the condition in the revelation that if he in his heart inclined towards the truth of Islam and accepted its greatness, he would be saved from death. His being saved from death during the prescribed period required a clarification in the eyes of justice as to whether he had not fulfilled the condition. Further, the extent of fear that he manifested with his words and deeds certainly led to the conclusion at least that he was overawed by the greatness of Islam. That is why I had advertised repeatedly that if he was not terrified then he should take an oath to prove that he was outside the scope of the revealed condition. Not only did I realize from the existing

circumstances but also God informed me that he was certainly terrified. Also Atham had confirmed my revelation by his restless behaviour. Hence, if the Christians did not for certain accept his fear and abandoning of his earlier stand then at least they should have pondered over the following: Atham avoided the oath, he admitted getting terrified, giving as the reason the false calumnies fabricated by himself, sometimes he said that a snake was made to follow him, sometimes that swordsmen had attacked him, and sometimes he mentioned people armed with spears and guns, but he gave no proof whatsoever. All these matters made him answerable in the eyes of the law. It was his responsibility to produce evidence in support of these absurd fabrications, and his acquittal lay in at least taking an oath, but from this he ran away as a man flees from a lion.

Further, the second part of the prophecy threw still more light on the truth of my revelation. For, the second prophecy said that if Atham, having taken advantage of the revealed condition, yet concealed the true information, then he should die soon, and the days of his life would be very few. This prophecy also had been notified among hundreds of thousands of men by posters. So this is exactly how it happened, and Atham died within six months of our last Notification. All these things put the Christian clergymen to great shame, for Atham did neither take an oath, nor did he substantiate his false accusations through a suit, nor did he advance any proof in respect of the aspersions which he had fabricated in order to throw a veil on the condition contained in the revelation. Consequently, all these acts of his resulted in immense shame for the Christian clergymen.

Further prophecies fulfilled

Apart from this, the Christians had to face another humiliation, namely, that Atham died very soon in accordance with my second prophecy, after concealing the testimony. Then, in addition to this, another humiliation was that Lekhram was killed within the time limit, in accordance with my prophecy.

And as had been specified in the prophecy that he would be killed on the day next to 'Id, so did it happen. All these facts were such that due to them the reverend gentlemen had been put to gross discomfort. These people had always been preaching in the streets that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, on whom be peace and the blessings of Allah, did neither make any prophecy nor show any miracle. However, as against this, God showed them miracles as well as prophecies one after another. They saw with their own eyes that on the occasion of the Conference of Religions at Lahore, I had notified in advance that God had told me: "*Your paper will be supreme*". This prophecy was fulfilled as confirmed by hundreds of thousands of people, so much so that even the Christian newspaper, *The Civil and Military Gazette*, also testified to this. In a miraculous manner did my article triumph over all.¹⁹ So this was not a matter of small shame for the Christian gentlemen, that they received wound after wound on account of the fulfilment of my prophecies.

19. *Publisher's Note*: This conference was held in December 1896. Hazrat Mirza's paper, referred to here, was later published in book-form and was also translated into English and published as the famous book *The Teachings of Islam*.