From Badr, 21 November 1907, page 8.

Translator’s Note: In the translation below, we have printed in bold the repeated words “and until”, occurring in the first paragraph. This is to enable all the points to be easily discerned. The division into paragraphs is also to facilitate reading. The image of the article from Badr follows the translation.

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A New Writing by the Promised Messiah

Philosophy of Revelation

A member of the Jama’at has written to the Promised Messiah, mentioning some of his own revelations and the infiltration into them at one time of devilish influence, and his dreams and visions. In reply the holy Hazrat has written him a letter, in which he has explained clearly who are those people who receive true revelation. For general benefit, that letter is published as below.

Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatu-hu

I have read the whole of your letter. I do not deny that man can have the privilege of receiving communication from God. However, I do say that it is a very difficult matter. Until a man reaches the state of fana, and he remains truthful while under severe trials from God, and he suffers death many times, and he bears harshness of all sorts in the way of God, and until every kind of egotism and desire for fame is removed from him, and until a true transformation takes place within him, and until he is so absorbed in seeking the pleasure of God that he himself remains as nothing, and until he shows such perseverance to God that he remains patient in the face of tribulations coming upon him like rain, and until he acquires a true connection with God so that all selfish and low desires perish, and until the fight with his self-accusing spirit comes to an end, and until a fire is kindled within him so that he makes God’s pleasure his entire and perfect aim, all his other aspirations becoming extinct, and until a yearning and anxiety for the love of God necessarily arises in his heart, and until he is in reality slaughtered for the sake of God, and until an entire change comes over him, and until at times of severe tests, and to display the glory of God, he is ever prepared to sacrifice himself, and until all the roots of show and conceit, and of fury, envy and vanity in the soul are utterly removed from his heart, and until the influence of God is so powerful over him that he feels all other existence to be like a dead insect, neither seeking praise from it nor regretting condemnation by it, and until he offers before God a true and pure sacrifice of all his being and all his powers, and until he is alive not by the ordinary spirit but by God’s company, and until he is prepared to lose everything by his own hand for His sake, and until there is generated in him true and perfect love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and until he is truly and fully devoted to raising aloft the name of Islam, until then he cannot, absolutely not, have the privilege of receiving communication from God.

God the Most High has referred to this in two short verses: “He is indeed successful who purifies it, and he indeed fails who corrupts it” (the Quran, 91:9–10). The very mental constitution of such people is special. The amount of sorrows they have to bear, and the
repetitive, terribly severe tests with which they are tried, and the long series of failures they have to witness, no one else possesses that kind of heart and mind. If anyone else were to face even a little sorrow, out of the constant sorrows they face, he would die or become insane. Therefore, you must never entertain the desire, out of your own self, to receive revelation from God. At the time of such desire, the devil gets an opportunity and wants to destroy you. Your goal and objective must always be to attain purity of the soul and righteousness in accordance with the will of God, and to perform good deeds which please Him. When God is pleased, then at that time, if His wisdom and purpose allow it, He will grant it Himself. It must never be considered as your real goal because that is the basis of destruction. The real goal should be that you are granted the ability to adhere to the commandments of God in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Quran, you attain purification of the soul, the love of God the Most High and His greatness be firmly established in your heart, and you hate sin. God has taught the same prayer: “Guide us on the right path, the path of those upon You have bestowed favours”. Thus here, God has not said that you should pray to receive revelation. Rather, He has said that you should pray to find the right path, the path of those persons who ultimately were privileged with reward from God.

It is not the work of the individual to wish to receive revelation, nor is there any merit for him in it. In fact, it is the act of God, not a good deed performed by man for which he hopes for reward. Then, considering that man suffers from these problems, that sometimes he comes to think of the talk of his own soul as being revelation, and sometimes he is trapped in the clutches of the devil and thinks of that as being revelation, it shows how dangerous is this path. Without powerful testimonies from God, how can such revelations be acceptable? Gravely ill-fated are those persons who never ponder over their own condition, as to which are the matters in which they need to pass the test in God’s eyes, and which are the tribulations they must pass through before their fidelity can be proved in God’s eyes? Before traversing these deep ravines, they become desirous of receiving revelation. They must abstain from this, and concentrate on seeking repentance and forgiveness. Without full righteousness, full sacrifice of life, and full engrossment in God, revelation is a drum-beat and highly deadly and a fatal poison. Man hears the voice of him to whom he is near. So you must first become near to God and distant from the devil, so that you hear the voice of God.

Humbly, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad