**October 16, 1916**

**Four Principles of Success: Belief, Righteous deeds, Exhortation of Truth and Patience**

I bear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.



By the time! —



Surely man is in loss,



Except those who believe and do good and exhort one another to Truth, and exhort one another to patience. (103:1-3)

Every chapter of the Holy Quran is in itself a complete book that discusses a subject in its entirety. This is a short chapter of the Holy Quran comprised of only three verses nevertheless it shows the Muslims a path to success.

**What is the meaning of the Arabic word *Asr*?**

Ordinarily the word *Asr* means time but specifically it indicates the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. If we think about it both of these meanings do not conflict with each other. The time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad is a condensation or summation of all the time periods. People find it difficult to understand when a specific meaning is applied in a general sense. In their mind it seems to be a contradiction.

It is easy to understand that the time of the Holy Prophet provides us with a condensed representation of all time periods. The conclusions that we draw after pondering upon all the time periods can be seen in the life of the Holy Prophet and his blessed time.

This chapter provides testimony of time to prove the veracity of some facts and consequences of certain actions. It is stated:

If you ponder upon the passage of time you will come to the conclusion that, “man is at a loss,” with four exceptions. Those who possess these qualities i.e., they believe, do good deeds, exhort truth and patience.

**Causes of Loss and the Way to Success**

Those who do not possess these four qualities are generally observed to be at a loss. For acquisition of any knowledge there are certain core principles of belief. By following these principles, one is able to acquire the knowledge and only those people are successful who adhere to the correct principles.

**Basis of Salvation in Different Religions**

There are some religions like Christianity where faith is all that is required. There is no need for deeds. In their perception acceptance of faith is the key to salvation. The question arises how can we succeed by following the wrong principle? There are other religions that take a small step forward beyond mere belief and also require righteous deeds to be an essential component of salvation.

**Duties of Muslims**

Allah the Most High enjoins Muslims that it is not enough to believe and do good deeds. In addition some other actions are also required. These are to exhort one another towards Truth and to remain patient in carrying out this duty. The person who exhorts someone to be patient has to be patient himself otherwise his exhortation is worthless.

**Propagation of Islam is the Key to Success**

The Holy Quran in the hands of Muslims is the Truth. In order to be successful, it is essential to put its teachings into practice and then propagate the message to others. It is also crucial to overcome the difficulties that hamper this path with patience. Without these essential steps success cannot be achieved. If an individual becomes a monk in some isolated corner of the globe and spends the rest of his life performing monastic rituals and considers himself saved, he is certainly mistaken. He does not come out of loss and succeed until he conveys the truth he has acquired to others. The Holy Quran does not teach us merely to be dutiful but to be the leader of the dutiful. It describes the dutiful asking their Lord:

And make us leaders for those who guard against evil. (25:74)

The Holy Quran wants man to reach an exalted spiritual state that takes him towards the path of success and saves him from loss.

**Success comes by facing Difficulties with Patience**

One can only succeed in overcoming difficulties by remaining steadfast and not becoming anxious. This verse, however, does not tell us not to become anxious but says:

And exhort one another to Truth, and exhort one another to patience.

When one is encouraging others towards Truth, the quality of patience has already become a part of his nature. In exhorting the Truth, one has already faced trials and tribulations. Under these circumstances patience is essential to encourage others to accept the Truth and teach them to be patient.

 **Excellent Example of the Holy Prophet**

Let us take the time period of the Holy Prophet as the significance of *wal-Asr*. The greatest propagator of Truth in the world has been the Holy Prophet. He had to face the most severe persecution and hardship. Throughout these difficulties he did not lose patience and call for the destruction of his opponents. Another prophet (Noah) under difficult circumstances prayed thus:

My Lord, leave not of the disbelievers any dweller on the land. (71:26)

The time when the Holy Prophet went to *Taif* to propagate the message of Islam was a period of extreme hardship. He was facing extreme persecution at Makkah. His uncle Abu Talib had passed away and his wife Khadija (may Allah be pleased with her) had also died. She had been the first one to accept his message and encouraged him with these consoling words:

Nay, By Allah, Allah will never bring you to disgrace, for you unite the ties of relationship and bear the burden of the weak and earn for the destitute and honor the guest and help in real distress.

With the passage of these two there was no bar to hold the Holy Prophet’s persecution at the hands of the Makkan disbelievers. Their inequities and oppression grew stronger. It was at this juncture that he journeyed to the city of *Taif* to convey the message of Islam. Their response was hostile and belligerent and they pelted him with stones. Because of the injuries he sustained, blood was flowing down to his ankles as he patiently made his way back. It is written that an angel appeared before the Holy Prophet and said:

O! Muhammad, if you command the angel of the mountain, he would bring down the mountain upon these people and destroy them

The Holy Prophet’s reply was:

No, I am certain that from amongst the progeny of these people will be those who are sympathetic to the cause of Islam.

This was the degree of his resolution and fortitude, a manifestation of his big heart and the profoundly forgiving nature of his soul.

**Most Exalted and Highest Stage of Spiritual Development**

Exhorting each other to patience is the highest stage of development for the spiritual wayfarer. Doing of good deeds is needed for the development of the soul but beyond this exhortation of Truth and patience is essential for its perfection.

As an organization we are at this time facing difficulties. Keeping the subject matter of this verse in mind, I am exhorting you to be patient. We have before us the historical example of a nation who faced the greatest degree of persecution and torment for the sake of Truth. We have not faced the type of difficulties honored companions of the Holy Prophet encountered. They had their necks cut off and remained steadfast, not wavering a bit in their quest to propagate the Truth. So why is it that although we are not facing the same degree of hardship we are not being patient?

Our work is not just this that we believe and do good deeds. Our greatest duty is to:

Exhort one another to Truth.

If exhortation of the Truth is our objective then we have also to put into practice the Quranic injunction:

Exhort one another to patience.

The work of propagation of the Truth cannot be accomplished without it.

We observe how the worldly oppose those who propagate the truth. They torment you and subject you to name calling and abuse. Our job is to ignore all these impediments and difficulties and stay focused on the real objective.

Let us consider the example of a person who builds a house. Construction of the house can reach completion only if given full attention. The builders share the task of collecting the bricks, bringing in the mortar and leveling the ground etc. A cooperative and sustained effort is needed to complete the task. If the builders start arguing, fighting and tormenting each other the structure will not be completed. Similarly, we have been given the task of raising a building. Instead of bringing in the mortar and bricks if we start wasting our time in mutual strife, creating impediments in the way or perturbing each other we will not succeed in reaching our goal of completing the building.

**Difficulties One has to Face in the Way of Truth**

One has to face great tribulations and afflictions in propagating the Truth. Under such conditions not only is it imperative to bear such hardship but remain silent in face of abuse and insult. I am telling you that such difficulties are not going to be limited to you but will also extend to your loved ones and possessions. The Holy Quran has defined Patience in these terms:



And We shall certainly try you with something of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits. And give good news to the patient,



Who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: Surely we are Allah’s, and to Him we shall return.



Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord; and those are the followers of the right course. (2:155-157)

**The Greatest Task**

Be ready to bear all these losses. This is how you become patient. There is a highly exalted objective before us, the task of propagating Islam. We may spend a day or a lifetime in not recognizing and accepting this responsibility. The greatest task is carrying the message of Islam to the people. If we have not as yet prepared ourselves for this task, then every moment we are at a loss. For a person who becomes a student to learn something, age is no longer a barrier and there is no harm in trying to acquire knowledge. Merely having large number of members is of no benefit. A few are better than the hundreds and thousands who gather together and do not understand how to accomplish the task. So remember well, the most important task at this time is to carry the message of Islam to the world.

**The** **Second and the Third Objective**

It is also our duty to correct those who are misinterpreting the teachings of Islam. We have been burdened by a third responsibility at this time. A great portion of this community that is responsible for the task of propagating Islam has deviated from the right path. It has also become our responsibility to make an attempt at their reformation.

**The Majority of the Followers of Mian Sahib[[1]](#footnote-1) do not agree with his Deviant Beliefs**

I assure you that the majority of the followers of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad do not agree with these deviant beliefs. Although at this time they have taken the pledge of Mian Sahib and are practically silent. If you probe their hearts you will find their beliefs are against these deviant views. There is a majority of such people amongst the followers of Mian Sahib. There are few deviants who are following the path of those who went astray amongst previous nations.

**The Son of the Spiritual Mentor (*Pir*)**

We should first try to break the silence of those who do not agree with these deviant views. Unfortunately this idea has taken root in their hearts that it is inappropriate to oppose the son of a spiritual mentor. They do not realize that beliefs have no connection with the physical inheritance or progeny. Remember well that the multitude of his followers you see agree with us in their beliefs. The need is to make them break their vow of silence. It is also our duty to correct those who have these deviant beliefs. First, however, we have to bring understanding to the majority who agree with us regarding the principles of belief.

**Abuse to be tolerated with Patience**

We will have to face difficulties in accomplishing this task. All of us have to be ready to take up all three of these responsibilities and bear all the hardship that you may encounter. If someone shows abusive behavior towards you, it does not affect your character. We should remain focused in propagating the truth and not answer abuse with abuse. While we care so much for our ego that we cannot remain silent towards abuse, why is it that we do not have similar passion for the cause of the Holy Prophet? Do you not see people hurling abuse at him? Look at the condition of the honored companions. We have not faced similar treatment as was meted out to them by the disbelievers. Behold how patient and steadfast they were under those trying circumstances!

**The Distinction between Truth and Falsehood**

It is not the way of the Truthful to be abusive. This is a sign of falsehood. I am saying that until you reach a stage where such verbal abuse brings pleasure to your heart you have not reached the spiritual excellence of those who:

Exhort one another to patience.

In Two years (since the split) your faith has been strengthened in God that He does not let the Truth go to waste. In the end it is the Truth that prevails.

There has been amongst the Muslims a sect called the Blameworthy sect (*Malamtiyya*)[[2]](#footnote-2). They would come up with all kind of strategies and do illegal acts to elicit verbal abuse, because in their mind the sign of sanctity was to tolerate such abuse. For this they would commit wrong doing.

If someone has to hear verbal abuse in doing the right and upholding the Truth, then what more could he desire?

**The Greatest Goal**

I am telling you that every individual who sets forth to accomplish a task first makes a plan to outline his goals. The most important of these objectives for you should be to propagate the message of Truth. Nobody stops you from pursuing your worldly occupations. If this is your prime objective, it won’t matter where you are or what you are doing. You will be doing this work along with your worldly pursuits. Just remember this as your purpose and objective in life and chart out new programs to accomplish this goal. You will then save yourself from the loss that has engulfed the rest of the world.

**Fruits of Effort in the form of Heavenly Blessings**

Being given the opportunity to accomplish a goal is in the hands of Allah the Most High. Giving of sermons and sending out preachers will not achieve anything. Unless someone makes an effort and Allah the Most High gives him the opportunity, nothing can be accomplished. One should continue to strive to the best of his ability. When Allah wishes something to happen, He provides the means for it. Who could have imagined that Maulana Syed Muhammad Ahsan Sahib would join us? It was Allah the Most High who blessed his attention to divert in our favor. A small effort can result in huge returns. Our Hazrat Hakim Nuruddin Sahib used to say that he once asked a follower of Christianity that you make so much effort to spread an erroneous doctrine. His reply was that the little success we have is because of this enormous effort! God is not miserly in these matters. Anyone who makes an effort is rewarded with some success. The sign of truth is that even a slight effort brings in manifold returns. You should continue to supplicate and put in an effort.

1. This refers to Mian Mahmud Ahmad, for details see the Split in the Ahmadiyya movement by MMA. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The ***Malāmatiyya***(ملامتية) or ***Malamatis*** were a [Muslim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim) mystic group active in 9th century [Greater Khorasan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_Khorasan). Their root word of their name is the [Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language) word *malāmah* (ملامة) "blame". The *Malamatiyya* believed in the value of self-blame, that piety should be a private matter and that being held in good esteem would lead to worldly attachment. They concealed their knowledge and made sure their faults would be known, reminding them of their imperfection. The *Malamati* is one for whom the doctrine of "spiritual states" is fraught with subtle deceptions of the most despicable kind; he despises personal piety, not because he is focused on the perceptions or reactions of people, but as a consistent involuntary witness of his own "pious hypocrisy".[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malamatiyya#cite_note-1)

*"Malamati"* can also refer to a method of teaching within Sufism based on taking blame. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)