# The Damascus Sermon

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.*

We too offer the praise and thanks and gifts that all animate creatures offer through the tongues of their beings and lives to their Creator, the Necessarily Existent One, Who said:

Do not despair of God’s mercy[[1]](#footnote-1).

And never-ending blessings and peace be upon our Prophet, Muhammad the Elect of God (Upon whom blessings and peace), who said:

*“I came to perfect morality.”*[[2]](#footnote-2)

That is, *“An important reason for my being sent to mankind by Almighty God was to perfect good conduct and morality, and deliver mankind from immorality and vice.”*

Having offered praise to God and sought His blessings for His Messenger, I say this: O my Arab brothers who are listening here in the Umayyad Mosque! I have not mounted this pulpit, which is far above my station, in order to guide you, for to teach you is beyond my authority. I am like a child before this gathering, among whom are close on a hundred religious scholars, who goes to school in the morning and learns his lesson, then in the evening returns and repeats it to his father. His father sees whether or not what the child has learnt is correct, and the child awaits either approval or guidance from him. Yes, we are like children before you, and we are your students. You are our masters, and the masters of the other Muslim nations. I shall therefore repeat to you, our masters, part of the lesson I have learnt. It is as follows:

In the conditions of the present time in these lands, I have learnt a lesson in the school of mankind’s social life and I have realized that what has allowed foreigners, Europeans, to fly towards the future on progress while it arrested us and kept us, in respect of material development, in the Middle Ages, are six dire sicknesses. The sicknesses are these:

FIRSTLY: **The rising to life of despair and hopelessness in social life.**

SECONDLY: **The death of truthfulness in social and political life.**

THIRDLY: **Love of enmity**.

FOURTHLY: **Not knowing the luminous bonds that bind the believers to one another.**

FIFTHLY: Despotism, which spreads, becoming widespread as though it was various contagious diseases.

SIXTHLY: **Restricting endeavor to what is personally beneficial**.

I shall explain, by means of six *“Words,”* the lesson I have learnt from the pharmacy of the Qur’an, which is like a faculty of medicine. This lesson constitutes the medicine to cure our social life of those six dire sicknesses.

# First Word: Hope

The first word is ‘hope;’ that is, to nurture a strong hope of God’s mercy. As a consequence of the lesson I have learnt on my own account, I say: O congregation of Muslims! I give you this good news: the first signs of the true dawn of Arab happiness are just appearing. This happiness will occur through the kindling of the worldly happiness of all Muslims, in particular that of the Ottomans, and especially through the progress of Islam. The emergence of the sun of happiness has drawn close. In order to rub despair’s nose in the dust,[[3]](#footnote-3) I say what my firm conviction is so that the world will hear:

The future shall be Islam’s and Islam’s alone. And its ruler shall be the truths of the Qur’an and belief. Therefore, we must submit to Divine Determining and our fate of the present, for ours is a brilliant future, while the Europeans’ is a dubious past. I shall now mention one and a half preliminary arguments. I start with the premises of those arguments:

Islam and its truths possess the perfect capacity to progress, both materially and in moral and nonmaterial matters.

Progress in Moral and Non Material Matters, which is the **First Aspect**

You should know that history, which records actual events, is the most faithful witness to the truth. See! History is showing us. The testimony of the Japanese Commander in Chief who defeated Russia to the validity and justice of Islam is this:

*“History shows that the Muslims increased in civilization and progressed in relation to the power of the truths of Islam; that is, to the degree that they acted in accordance with that power. History also shows that they fell into savagery and decline, and disaster and defeat amidst utter confusion to the degree of their weakness in adhering to the truths of Islam.”* As for other religions, it is quite to the contrary. That is to say, history shows that they increased in civilization and progressed in relation to their weakness in adhering to their religions and bigotry, and were subject to decline and revolution to the degree of their strength in adhering to them. Up to the present, time has passed thus.

Furthermore, from the blessed time of the Prophet (PBUH) up to the present, not a single event in history has shown us a Muslim who has embraced another religion, whether old or new, in preference to Islam, as result of reasoned argument and conclusive evidence. If the uneducated embrace another religion without evidence in blind imitation, it has no bearing on this matter. And to be without religion is yet another question. However, history shows us that followers of other religions, and even the English and prerevolutionary Russians, who displayed the greatest bigotry in religion, are gradually approaching and entering Islam on the strength of reasoned argument and cogent proofs, sometimes in groups.[[4]](#footnote-4)

If we were to display through our actions the perfections of the morality of Islam and the truths of belief, without doubt the followers of other religions would enter Islam in whole communities; some entire regions and states, even, would take refuge in Islam.

Moreover, man has been awakened and aroused by the modern sciences in particular; he has understood the true nature of humanity.

Without any shadow of a doubt, man cannot live without religion, aimlessly. He cannot. Even the most irreligious person is compelled to take refuge in religion. For the only point of support for impotent man in the face of the innumerable disasters and the external and internal enemies that plague him, and the only point from which he may seek help and assistance in the face of the innumerable needs with which he is afflicted, and his desires that stretch to eternity, despite his utter want and poverty, is in recognizing the Maker of the world, in faith, and in believing and affirming the hereafter. There is no help for awakened mankind apart from this.

If the jewel of true religion is not present in the shell of the heart, material, moral, and spiritual calamities of untold magnitude will break loose over humanity and man will become the most unhappy, the most wretched, of animals.

In Short: This century, man has been awakened by the warnings of war, science, and awesome events, and he has perceived the true nature of humanity and his own comprehensive disposition. Man has begun to understand that with his wonderful comprehensive abilities and disposition, he was not created only for this brief and troublesome worldly life, but that he is a candidate for eternity, for there are within him desires that extend that far. Everybody has begun to realize that this narrow and transient world is not sufficient and cannot meet their boundless hopes and desires.

If it is said to the imagination, which is one of the faculties and servants of humanity: “You will rule the world and live for a million years, but in the end you will be dispatched to nonexistence with no possibility of a return to life,” for sure, the imagination of one who has not lost his true humanity and who has been awakened, rather than being joyful and pleased, will weep longingly and with sighs and regrets at there being no eternal happiness.

Thus, included in this point is the fact that in everyone’s heart an inclination has sprung up to search earnestly for a true religion. In the face of the sentence of death, before anything else man is searching for a truth, contained only in true religion, so that he may save himself. The present state of the world testifies to this fact.

After forty-five years and the appearance of irreligion, regions and states on the earth have begun to perceive, like a human being, this intense need of mankind. Furthermore, at their beginning and end, the verses of the Qur’an refer man to his reason, saying: *“Use your intelligence! Think! Consult your mind and your heart! Confer with them so that you might know this fact!”*

Look at the beginnings and ends of verses such as those; they say: *“Why do you not look? Why do you not take warnings? Look so that you may know the truth.”* Take note of the way *“Know!”* is used. Many verses contain sentences that have the meaning of: *“Why do men not know, why do they fall into compounded ignorance? Why do they not look? Have they become blind so that they cannot see the Truth? Why do men not call to mind and ponder over their own lives and the events in the world so that they might find the straight path? Why do they not think, deliberate and reason with the mind, and so fall into misguidance? O men! Take a lesson! Take a warning from past ages and try to be saved from the moral and spiritual calamities of the future!”* These verses refer man to his intellect; they enjoin him to consult with his reason.

O my brothers in this Umayyad Mosque as well as those in the vast mosque of the world of Islam! You too take warning. Take warning from the dreadful events of the last forty-five years. Come straight to your senses! O you who are wise and thoughtful and consider yourselves to be enlightened!

Conclusion: We Muslims, who are students of the Qur’an, follow proof; we approach the truths of belief through reason, thought, and our hearts. We do not abandon proof in favor of blind obedience and imitation of the clergy like some adherents of other religions. Therefore, in the future when reason, science and technology prevail, of a certainty that will be the time the Qur’an will gain ascendancy, which relies on rational proofs and invites the reason to confirm its pronouncements.

Moreover, the veils that have eclipsed the sun of Islam, hindered its emergence and prevented it illuminating mankind have begun to disperse. Those things that were hindering it have begun to fall back. The signs of the dawn appeared forty five years ago[[5]](#footnote-5). Then the true dawn broke in 1371/1951, or it will break. Even if it is the false dawn, in thirty or forty years’ time the true dawn will break.

Eight serious obstacles prevented the truths of Islam completely overwhelming the past.

THE FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD OBSTACLES: The Europeans’ ignorance, their barbarity at that time, and their bigotry in their religion. These three obstacles have been removed by the virtues of knowledge and civilization, and they have begun to disperse.

THE FOURTH AND FIFTH OBSTACLES: The domination and arbitrary power of the clergy and religious leaders, and the fact that the Europeans obeyed and followed them blindly. These two obstacles have also started to disappear with the emergence among mankind of the idea of freedom, and the desire to search for the truth.

THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH OBSTACLES: The despotism that was with us, and our degeneracy that arose from opposing the Shari‘a, were obstacles. The fact that the separate despotic power residing in a single individual is now declining indicates that the fearful despotism of larger groups in society and of committees will also decline in thirty to forty years’ time. And the great upsurge in Islamic zeal, together with the fact that the ugly results of immorality are becoming apparent, show that these two obstacles are about to decline, indeed, that they have begun to do so. God willing, they will completely disappear in the future.

THE EIGHTH OBSTACLE: Since certain matters of modern science were imagined to oppose and be contrary to the outer meanings of the truths of Islam, it prevented, to some extent, their prevailing in the past. Scientists and philosophers opposed Islam because they did not know the truth and, for example, imagined the two angels composed of spirit called Thawr and Hut, who are charged through a Divine command to oversee the globe of the earth, to be a great corporeal ox and fish.

There are hundreds of examples like this one. After learning the truth, even the most opinionated philosopher is compelled to submit to it. In the treatise called the Miraculousness of the Qur’an,[[6]](#footnote-6) the Risale-i Nur points out flashes of the Qur’an’s miraculousness that lie beneath each of all the verses that science attacks, and it sets forth clearly the elevated truths, which the hand of science cannot reach, in those sentences and phrases of the Holy Qur’an that the scientists supposed to be points of criticism; it compels even the most obstinate philosopher to submit. It is clear and self-evident, any-one who wishes may look. -So let them look and see how this obstacle is being destroyed, as these words fore-casted forty-five years ago.

Some perspicacious Muslim scholars have indeed written on this subject. Signs that this eighth serious obstacle will be overturned are to be seen.

For sure, even if not now then in thirty to forty years’ time, in order to fit out and equip to perfection the three forces of science, true knowledge, and the virtues of civilization, and to rout and put to flight those eight obstacles, the desire to search for the truth, equity, and love of humanity will be dispatched to the eight fronts of those eight enemy squadrons. They have already started to drive them back. God willing, in half a century they will scatter them completely.

It is well known that the most indisputable virtue is that which even its enemies testify to and affirm. The following therefore are two examples out of hundreds:

**The First:** A famous European scholar and philosopher of the 19th century, Carlyle, did not hold back from proclaiming in the loudest voice to philosophers and Christian scholars the following, which he also wrote in his works, that Islam was born like a brilliant flame and devoured the religions of its time as though they were dead wood. It was Islam’s right to do this he said, for it was a reality, while the other religions lacked reality. He said also that the words most worthy to be heeded first are those of Muhammad (Upon whom be blessings and peace), for the true word was his. He said too that if the truth of Islam is doubted then the most self-evident matters should be doubted, because the most self-evident and necessary truth is Islam[[7]](#footnote-7).

**Second Example**: A famous European of the last century who was also a scholar and philosopher, Prince Bismarck, said:

*“I have studied all the revealed books, but since they are corrupted, I have been unable to find the true wisdom I was searching for, for the happiness of mankind. Then I saw that the Qur’an of Muhammad was far superior to all the other Books. I found wisdom in all its words. There is no other work that will serve man’s happiness like this. Such a work cannot be the word of man. Those who say it is Muhammad’s work are denying the imperatives of knowledge. That is, the Qur’an is self-evidently the word of God.”*

So, supported by the fact that the clever fields of Europe and America have produced crops of brilliant and exacting scholars like Carlyle and Bismarck, I say with all assurance:

Europe and America are pregnant with Islam; one day they will give birth to an Islamic state. Just as the Ottomans were pregnant with Europe and gave birth to a European state.

O my brothers who are here in the Umayyad Mosque and those who are in the mosque of the world of Islam half a century later! Do the introductory remarks, that is, those made up to here, not point to the conclusion that it is Islam that will be the true, and spiritual, ruler over the future, and only Islam that will lead mankind to happiness in this world and the next; and that true Christianity, stripping off superstition and corrupted belief, will be transformed into Islam; following the Qur’an, it will unite with Islam?

**Second Aspect**

That is, the powerful reasons for Islam’s material progress show that Islam will also be materially dominant in the future. The First Aspect demonstrated its progress in moral and spiritual matters and this Second Aspect offers strong proofs for its material progress and supremacy in the future. For established in the heart of the Islamic world’s collective personality are five extremely powerful, unbreakable ‘Strengths,’ which have blended and coalesced.[[8]](#footnote-8)

**First Strength:** This is the reality of Islam, which is the master of all perfection, can make three hundred and seventy million souls as a single soul, has been furnished with a real civilization and positive, true sciences, and is such that it cannot be destroyed by any power.

**Second Strength:** An intense need, which is the real master of civilization and industry, and is the source and means of development, together with complete, backbreaking poverty, are such strengths that they may be neither silent nor crushed.

**Third Strength:** This Strength, which teaches men exalted aims in the form of competition for exalted things, and causes them to strive on that way, which shatters despotism, excites exalted emotions, and destroys jealousy, envy, malice and rivalry, and is furnished with true awakening, the eagerness of competition, the tendency towards renewal and predisposition for civilization, consists of the freedom which is accordance with the Shari‘a. That is to say, it has been fitted out with the desire for the highest accomplishments worthy of humanity.

**Fourth Strength:** This the fearlessness arising from belief, which is decked out with compassion. That is, neither to demean oneself or to be servile to oppressors and despots, nor to oppress and be arrogant towards the unfortunate; these form the foundations of the freedom which is accordance with the Shari‘a.

**Fifth Strength:** This is the dignity of Islam, which proclaims and upholds the Word of God. In this age, proclaiming the Word of God is contingent on material progress; it may be proclaimed only through achieving true civilization. It cannot be doubted that in the future the world of Islam’s collective personality will carry out to the letter that categorical command issued by the dignity of Islam through belief.

In the past, Islam’s progress occurred through smashing the enemy’s bigotry and obstinacy and through defense against their aggression; through weapons and the sword. Whereas in the future, in place of weapons, the immaterial, moral swords of true civilization, material progress, and truth and justice will defeat and scatter the enemies.

You should understand that what I mean are the good things that are civilization’s virtues and its benefits for mankind. Not its iniquities and evils that idiots have imagined to be its virtues, and imitating them, devastated our possessions. Giving religion as the bribe, they have not even gained the world. Through civilization’s iniquities prevailing over its benefits and its evils being preferred to its virtues, mankind has suffered two calamitous blows in the form of two world wars, and overturning that sinful civilization men have been so utterly disgusted that they have smeared the face of the earth with blood.

God willing, through the strength of Islam in the future, the virtues of civilization will prevail, the face of the earth cleansed of filth, and universal peace be secured.

Indeed, the facts that European civilization is not founded on virtue and guidance, but on lust and passion, rivalry and oppression, and that up to the present the evils of civilization have predominated over its virtues, and that it has been infiltrated by revolutionary societies like a worm-eaten tree, are each like powerful indications and means for the supremacy of Asian civilization. In a short period of time it will prevail.

How is it that while there are such powerful and unshakeable ways and means for the material and moral progress of the believers and people of Islam, and although the road to future happiness has been opened up like a railway, you despair and fall into hopelessness in the face of the future, and destroy the morale of the Islamic world? In despair and hopelessness you suppose that *“the world is the world of progress for Europeans and everyone else,”* but *“it is the world of decline only for the unfortunate people of Islam!”* By saying that you are making a grievous mistake.

Since the desire to progress and be perfected has been included in the universe and in man’s essential nature, for sure, if doomsday does not soon engulf mankind as a result of its errors and wrongdoing, in the future truth and justice will show the way to a worldly happiness in the world of Islam, God willing, in which there will be atonement for the former errors of mankind.

Consider this: time does not run in a straight line so that its beginning and end draw apart from one another; it moves in a circle, like the motion of the globe of the earth. Sometimes it displays the seasons of spring and summer as progress, and sometimes the seasons of storms and winter as decline. Just as every winter is followed by spring and every night by morning, mankind also shall have a morning and a spring, God willing. You may expect from Divine mercy to see true civilization within universal peace brought about through the sun of the truth of Islam.

At the start of the lesson I said I would demonstrate one and a half arguments to support my assertion. Now, one argument, in concise form, is finished and the remaining half argument is as follows:

As has been established by the prying investigations and innumerable experiments of the sciences, the fundamental and absolutely overriding aim and the true purpose of the All Glorious Maker in the order of the universe are good, beauty, excellence and perfection. For all the physical sciences demonstrate such an order and perfection in the fields they study in accordance with their comprehensive laws that the intellect can find nothing more perfect.

For example, sciences such as anatomy in medicine, the science of the solar system in astronomy, and botany and biology, all demonstrate the miracles of power and the wisdom of the All Glorious Maker in the order in their own particular fields, and the truth of the verse,

Who makes most excellent everything that He creates.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Also, inductive reasoning and general experience demonstrate that evil, ugliness, defect, badness and futility are minor in the creation of the universe. They are not the aim; they are dependent and secondary. That is to say, ugliness has not entered the universe for the sake of ugliness, but as a unit of measurement in order to transform a single truth of beauty into numerous truths. Evil, and Satan even, have been set to pester man in order to be the means of his limitless progress through competition. Minor evils and ugliness like these have been created in the universe in order to be the means of instances of universal beauty and good. Thus, according to inductive reasoning, the true aim and result of creation prove that good, beauty and being perfected are fundamental in the universe and that they are the true aim. So since men have filthied and disordered the face of the earth to this degree with their wicked godlessness and depart this world without receiving their deserts and without reflecting the true aim present in the universe, they certainly shall not escape to nonexistence. They shall rather be dispatched to the dungeons of Hell.

Also, it is established by inductive reasoning and the investigations of the sciences that man is the most exalted among animals and the most important. For he discovers with his reason the steps between the apparent causes and effects existent in the universe, and the relationships of causes, which follow on after each other in succession. And, in order to imitate Divine art and orderly and wise dominical creation with his own insignificant art, and in order to understand Divine actions and Divine art through his partial knowledge and his own arts, he has been given the faculty of will as a scale and measure. Thus, the fact that man knows the universal, all-embracing actions and attributes of the All Glorious Creator through the materials he works through the exercise of his will proves that he is the most honored and exalted creature in the universe.

Also, according to the testimony of the truths of Islam concerning man and the universe, the most noble and exalted, the most excellent and the highest, are the people of Islam, who are the people of truth and reality. And, according to inductive reasoning and the testimony of history, among the people of truth, the most exalted among honored mankind, the most excellent and superior was the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This is testified to by his thousand miracles, his elevated morals, and the truths of Islam and the Qur’an.

Since the three truths of this half argument give such news, is it at all possible that mankind should refute the testimony of so many sciences and deny this reasoning with their depravity, and, being perversely obstinate in the face of Divine will and preeternal wisdom, which embraces the whole universe, continue in their iniquitous savagery, willful godlessness and fearful destruction? Is it at all possible that they should continue in this way against Islam?

I swear with all my strength and, if I possessed them, with innumerable tongues by the All Wise and Glorious One, the All Beauteous Maker, Who creates the world with this perfect order, and the universe, from particles to the planets, from a fly’s wing to the lamps in the heavens, with an unbounded wisdom of regularity, that it is in no way possible for mankind, contrary to every other sort of being and opposed to the other species, which are its small brothers, to stand in opposition to the order in the universe through its universal acts of evil and to eat and digest the bitter fruits which, for thousands of years, have been the cause of evil predominating over good among men.

This possibility could only occur by supposing the impossible, that, although man is at the degree of having been charged with the ‘supreme trust’ over the universe, has the rank of Divine vicegerent of the earth, and is an elevated elder brother to the other beings in the universe, he was the lowest, most base, most wretched, most harmful and most insignificant, and as a consequence had stealthily entered the universe and caused chaos in it. This impossibility can in no way be accepted.

This half argument of mine for this fact leads to this conclusion that just as the existence of Heaven and Hell in the hereafter is a necessary fact, so too shall the religion of good and truth prevail absolutely in the future so that, as is the case with all other beings, good and virtue will prevail absolutely over mankind; and mankind may be equal to the rest of their brothers in the universe; and it may be said that the mystery of preeternal wisdom is established in mankind also.

In Short: As the definite facts mentioned above demonstrate, the choice result of the universe and the most important creature in the view of the Creator is man. And as man’s wrongful conduct up to this time necessitates the existence of Hell, so do his comprehensive innate abilities and potentialities and the truths of his belief related to the universe self-evidently necessitate Paradise. Thus, since he cannot endure the crimes, and two world wars, which have made the cosmos weep, and cannot digest the bitter evils he has swallowed; and because of his conduct, at which he is sick and through which he has filthied the whole face of the earth; and since he has caused humanity to fall to the most abject level and cannot endure the crime of having overturned a thousand years of progress; most certainly and without any doubt, if some ghastly catastrophe does not soon break loose over his head, the truths of Islam will be the means of delivering man from the low and debased degree to which he has fallen, of cleansing the face of the earth, and securing universal peace. We beseech this from the mercy of the All Merciful and Compassionate One, and we await it with hope.

# Second Word: Don’t Despair

The Second Word has been born in my thought as a result of my experiences in the course of life. It is as follows:

Despair is a most grievous sickness and it has entered the heart of the world of Islam. It is despair that has as though killed us so that a small state of one or two million in the West has as though made twenty million Muslims in the East its servants and their country, its colony. And it is despair that has killed our high morals, and causing us to abandon the public good, has restricted our sight to personal benefits.

It is despair too that has destroyed our morale. Although with little power we were victorious from east to west through the moral strength that arose from belief, because it was destroyed through despair, tyrannical foreigners have made three hundred million Muslims their captives for the last four hundred years.

And because of this despair, Muslims even suppose the indifference and despondency of others to be an excuse for their own laziness and say: *“What is it to me?”* Saying, *“Everybody is contemptible, like me,”* they abandon the courageousness of belief and fail to perform their Islamic duties.

Since the sickness of despair has inflicted so much tyranny on us and is killing us, we shall totally shatter it with the verse,

Do not despair of God’s mercy.[[10]](#footnote-10)

God willing, we shall destroy it with the truth of the Hadith, *“Even if a thing is not wholly obtained, it should not be wholly left.”*

Despair is a most grievous sickness of communities and nations, a cancer. It is an obstacle to achievement and is opposed to the truth of the Sacred Hadith, *“I am with my bondsman who thinks favorably of Me.”* It is the quality and pretext of cowards, the base and the impotent. It does not tell of Islamic courage. It cannot be the quality of a people like the Arabs in particular, who among mankind have been privileged with a fine character that is the cause of pride. The nations of the Islamic world have taken lessons from the Arabs’ fortitude. God willing, once more the Arabs will give up despair despair and will stand together with the Turks, who are the heroic army of Islam, and will unfurl the banner of the Qur’an in every part of the world.

# Third Word: Truthfulness

This Third Word I have learnt from the studies and researches I have carried out in the course of my life and from my experience of the ups and downs of social life; its summary and essence are as follows: truthfulness is the basis and foundation of Islam, and the bond between people of good character, and the basis of elevated emotions. Since this is so, as the foundation of the life of our society, we must bring to life truthfulness and honesty, and cure our moral and spiritual sicknesses with them.

Yes, truthfulness and honesty are the vital principles in the life of Islamic society. Hypocrisy is a sort of actualized lying. Flattery and artifice are cowardly lying. Duplicity and doubledealing are harmful lying. And as for lying, it is to slander the AllGlorious Maker’s power.

Unbelief in all its varieties is falsehood and lying. Belief is truthfulness and honesty. As a consequence of this, there is a limitless distance between truth and falsehood; they should be as distant from one another as the East is from the West. Like fire and light, they should not become mixed with one another. However, cruel politics and tyrannical propaganda have mixed and confused them, and have also thrown into confusion man’s achievements.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Truthfulness and lying are as distant from one another as are belief and unbelief. With Muhammad’s rising to the highest of the high by means of truthfulness in the Era of Bliss, and with the treasury of the truths of belief and the truths of the universe being unlocked with the key of truthfulness, truthfulness became the most valuable merchandise in the market of human society, and the goods most in demand.

Because of lying, the likes of Musaylima the Liar fell to the lowest of the low. Since that mighty revolution showed that at that time lying and falsehood were the key to blasphemies and superstition, they became one of the worst and filthiest goods on the market of the universe, and it was not as though everyone wanted to buy them, indeed, everyone detested them. Certainly the Companions, who were in the first line of that mighty revolution and in whose nature it was to buy things that were the cause of pride and to be customers for the most valuable goods and those most in demand, would never knowingly have advocated any falsehood. They would not have soiled themselves with lying. They would not have made themselves resemble Musaylima the Liar.

Indeed, since with all their strength and through innate disposition they were customers for truthfulness and honesty, which formed the steps whereby Muhammad (Upon whom be blessings and peace) rose to the highest of the high, and were the most soughtafter merchandise and the most valuable commodity and the key to realities, and since as far as was possible they tried not to depart from truthfulness, it became an established principle in the science of Hadith and among scholars of the Shari‘a that “the Companions always spoke the truth. Their narrations do not require to be investigated in the same way as other narrations. The Hadiths they related from the Prophet (PBUH) are all sound.” A decisive argument for the consensus of the scholars of Hadith and the Shari‘a is this fact. Thus, at the time of the mighty revolution in the Era of Bliss truthfulness and lying were as far from one another as belief and unbelief, yet with the passing of time they have gradually drawn closer to each other. Political propaganda has sometimes given greater currency to lies, and evil and lying have to some degree taken the stage. It is because of this fact that no one could attain to the level of the Companions. Since this has been discussed in the Addendum to the Twenty Seventh Word, which is about the Companions, we refer you to that and cut short the matter here.

O my brothers here in this Umayyad Mosque! And O my brothers who, forty to fifty years later, form the four hundred million believers in the vast mosque of the world of Islam! Salvation is only to be found through truthfulness and honesty. The *“support most unfailing”*[[12]](#footnote-12) is honesty. That is to say, the strongest chain with which to be bound to salvation is honesty.

However, sometimes in the past lying abrogated this if there were advantages to be gained. Some scholars issued ‘temporary’ fatwas in case of necessity or for benefit. But in this age, such fatwas may not be given. For it has been abused so much that there may be only one benefit among a hundred harms. The judgement cannot therefore be based on benefit.

For example, the cause for shortening the ritual prayers while on a journey is hardship. But it cannot be the reason. For it has no determined limit and may be abused. The reason may only be the journey. Similarly, benefit may not be the reason for telling a lie. Because it has no specified limit and is a swamp breeding abuse. The judgement for a fatwa may not be based on it. In which case, *“Either truthfulness or silence.”* That is, there are two ways, not three; that is, not either the truth, or lies, or silence.

Since public order and security have been overturned through mankind’s evident and ghastly lying and willful misrepresentations, and through its abuse of benefits, mankind is clearly commanded and compelled to close the third way. Otherwise, the world wars, hideous revolutions, and decline and destruction that humanity has suffered in the past half century will bring down some overwhelming disaster on men’s heads.

Indeed, everything you say must be true, but it is not right to say everything true. If on occasion it is damaging, then be silent. But there is no fatwa for lying. Everything you say must be the truth, but you do not have the right to say everything that is true. Because if it is not sincere, it will have a detrimental effect and truth will be spent on wrong.

# Fourth Word: Love

What I am certain of from my experience of social life and have learnt from my lifetime of study is the following:

The thing most worthy of love is love, and that most deserving of enmity is enmity. That is, love and loving, which render man’s social life secure and lead to happiness are most worthy of love and being loved. Enmity and hostility are ugly and damaging, have overturned man’s social life, and more than anything deserve loathing and enmity and to be shunned. Since this truth has been clearly explained in the Twenty Second Letter of the Risale-i Nur, here we shall point it out only briefly. It is as follows:

The time for enmity and hostility has finished. Two world wars have shown how evil, destructive, and what an awesome wrong is enmity. It has become clear that there is no benefit in it at all. In which case, on condition they are not aggressive, do not let the evils of our enemies attract your enmity. Hell and Divine punishment are enough for them.

Sometimes, man’s arrogance and self-worship cause him to be unjustly hostile towards believers without his being aware of it; he supposes himself to be right. But this hostility and enmity is to slight powerful causes of love towards the believers, like belief, Islam, and fellow humanity; it is to reduce their value. It is a lunacy like preferring the insignificant causes of enmity to the causes of love, which are as great as a mountain.

Since love and enmity are contrary to one another, like light and darkness, they cannot truly combine. The opposite of whichever is predominant in the heart cannot at the same time be truly present. For example, if love is truly present, then enmity will be transformed into pity and compassion. This is the position towards the believers. Or if enmity is truly present in the heart, then love takes on the form of feigned approval, not interfering, and being apparently friendly. This may be the position towards unaggressive people of misguidance.

Indeed, the causes of love, like belief, Islam, humanity and fellow feeling, are strong and luminous chains and immaterial fortresses. One sort of the causes of enmity towards the believers are personal matters, which are like small stones. In which case, to nourish true enmity towards a Muslim is a great error; it is like scorning the causes of love, which are as immense as a mountain.

In Short: Love, brotherhood, and affection are basic to Islam, and are its bond. The people of enmity resemble a spoilt child who wants to cry. He looks for an excuse, and something as insignificant as a fly’s wing becomes the pretext. They resemble too an unfair, pessimistic person who so long as it is possible to distrust, never thinks favorably. He ignores ten good deeds due to one bad deed. Fairness and favorable thinking, which mark the Islamic character, reject this.

# Fifth Word: Freedom

The lesson I have learnt from the mutual consultation enjoined by the Shari‘a is this: in this age, the single sin of one person does not remain as one; it sometimes swells, spreads and becomes a hundred sins. And sometimes a single good deed does not remain as one, but progresses to the order of thousands of good deeds. The reason for this is as follows:

Freedom in accordance with the Shari‘a and the consultation enjoined by the Shari‘a have demonstrated the sovereignty of our true nationhood. The foundation and spirit of our true nationhood is Islam. In so far as they have carried the standard of the Ottoman Caliphate and Turkish army in the name of that nationhood, the two true brothers of Arab and Turk are like the shell and citadel of the nationhood of Islam, and the sentries of that sacred citadel.

Thus, through the bond of this sacred nationhood, all the people of Islam become like a single tribe. Like the members of a tribe, the peoples and groups of Islam are bound and connected to one another through Islamic brotherhood. They assist one another morally, and if necessary, materially. It is as if all the groups of Islam are bound to each other with a luminous chain.

If a member of one tribe commits a crime, all its members are guilty in the eyes of another, enemy, tribe. It is as though each member of the tribe had committed the crime so that the enemy tribe becomes the enemy of all of them. That single crime becomes like thousands of crimes. While if a member of the tribe performs a good act that is the cause of pride affecting the heart of the tribe, all its members take pride in it. It is as if each person in the tribe feels proud at having done that good deed.

It is because of this fact that at this time, and particularly in forty to fifty years’ time, evil and bad deeds will not remain with the perpetrator; they will transgress the rights of millions of Muslims. Numerous examples of this shall be seen in forty to fifty years’ time.

O brothers who are listening to these words of mine here in the Umayyad Mosque! And O Muslim brothers in the mosque of the world of Islam forty to fifty years’ later! Do not make apologies, saying: “We do no harm, but neither do we have the power to do anything beneficial; therefore we are excused.” Such an apology is not acceptable. Your laziness and saying: *“What is it to me?”,* and your displaying no effort and not getting into the working spirit through Islamic unity and true Islamic brotherhood, have done much damage and are an injustice to you.

Just as bad deeds thus mount to thousands, so also at this time good deeds, that is, good deeds that affect the sacredness of Islam, do not remain restricted to the one who performs them. Indeed, such good deeds may in fact be beneficial to millions of believers; they may strengthen the bonds of moral, spiritual, and material life. Therefore, this is not the time to cast oneself on the bed of idleness, saying: *“What is it to me?”*

O my brothers here in this mosque and my brothers forty to fifty years later in the mighty mosque of the world of Islam! Do not suppose I have mounted this place of delivering lessons in order to give you advice. I have done so to claim my rights from you. That is to say, the interests and happiness in this world and the hereafter of small groups are bound to masterly teachers like you, the Arabs and Turks, who are a vast and esteemed body. We, the Muslim groups who are your unhappy small brothers suffer harm through your idleness and laxity.

Especially the Arabs, who are esteemed, numerous, and either have been awakened or will be! First and foremost, I address you with these words. For you are our teachers and leaders, and the teachers and leaders of all the peoples of Islam, and you are the fighters of Islam. It was later that the mighty Turkish nation assisted you in that sacred duty.

Therefore, due to laziness your sin is great. Your good acts and deeds are also great and exalted. In particular we await with great expectation from Divine mercy the different Arab groups entering upon exalted circumstances in forty to fifty years’ time, like those of the United States of America, and your being successful like in former times in establishing Islamic rule in half the globe, indeed, in most of it, which at the moment is in captivity. If some fearful calamity does not soon erupt, the coming generation shall see it, God willing.

Beware, my brothers! Do not imagine that I am urging you with these words to busy yourselves with politics. God forbid! The truth of Islam is above all politics. All politics may serve it, but no politics can make Islam a tool for itself.

With my faulty understanding, I imagine Islamic society at this time in the form of a factory containing many machines. Should any components of the machines fall behind or encroach on another, which is its fellow, the machines cease to function. The exact time for Islamic unity is therefore beginning. It necessitates not paying attention to one another’s personal faults.

I say this to you with regret and sadness that certain foreigners have taken our most valuable possessions and country from us and have given us a rotten price in return.

Similarly, they have taken from us our elevated morals and a part of our fine character that touches on social life, and they have made them the means of their progress. And it is their dissipated morals and dissipated character that they have given us as their price.

For example, because of the fine national feeling they have taken from us, one of them says: *“Should I die, let my nation live, for I have an everlasting life in my nation.”* They have taken these words from us and it is the firmest foundation in their progress. These words proceed from the religion of truth and the truths of belief. They are our property, the property of the believers.

However, because of the obscene and bad character that infiltrated us from foreigners, a selfish man from among us says: *“If I die of thirst, let it not rain again anywhere in the world. If I do not experience happiness, let the world go to rack and ruin as it wishes.”* These ridiculous words arise from lack of religion and from not recognizing the hereafter. They have entered among us from outside and are poisoning us.

Also, because of the idea of nationhood which those foreigners obtained from us, an individual becomes as valuable as a nation. For a person’s value is relative to his endeavor. If a person’s endeavor is his nation, that person forms a miniature nation on his own.

Because of the heedlessness of some of us and the foreigners’ damaging characteristics that we have acquired, and, despite our strong and sacred Islamic nationhood, through everyone saying: *“Me! Me!”* and considering personal benefits and not the nation’s benefits, a thousand men have become like one man.

If a man’s endeavor is limited to himself, he is not a human being, for human beings are by nature civilized. Man is compelled to consider his fellow humans. His personal life continues through social life. For example, how many hands is he in need of to eat one load of bread, and in return for it how many hands does he in effect kiss? And how many factories is he connected to through the clothes that he wears? You make the comparison! Since he cannot survive with only skin like an animal, and is by nature connected to his fellow humans, and is compelled to pay them an immaterial price, by his nature, he maintains civilization. One who confines his view to his personal benefits abandons his humanity, and becomes an iniquitous animal lacking all innocence. If nothing happens as a consequence and he has an authentic excuse, that is an exception!

# Sixth Word: Consultation

The key to Muslims’ happiness in the life of Islamic society is the mutual consultation enjoined by the Shari‘a. The verse,

Whose rule is consultation among themselves[[13]](#footnote-13) orders consultation as a fundamental principle. Just as the consultation of the ages and centuries that mankind has practiced by means of history, a conjunction of ideas, formed the basis of man’s progress and sciences, so too one reason for the backwardness of Asia, the largest continent, was the failure to practice that true consultation.

The key and discloser of the continent of Asia and its future is mutual consultation. That is to say, just as individuals should consult one another, so must nations and continents practice consultation. For it is the freedom that is in accordance with the Shari‘a, which is born of the consultation enjoined by the Shari‘a, and the noble-mindedness and compassion of belief that will loosen and remove the fetters and chains of the various forms of tyranny fastened to the feet of three hundred, rather, four hundred, million strong Islam. It is that lawful freedom which, adorned with the customs and observances of the Shari‘a, will cast out the evils of dissolute Western civilization. The freedom born of the Shari‘a, which arises from belief, enjoins two principles:

Belief necessitates not humiliating others through oppression and despotism and not degrading them, and secondly, not abasing oneself before tyrants. Someone who is a true servant of God cannot be a slave to others. Do not make anyone other than God lord over yourselves. That is to say, someone who does not recognize God ascribes relative degrees of mastery to everything and everyone, and piles worries on his own head. For sure, the freedom born of the Shari‘a is a bounty of Almighty God through the manifestation of His Names of All Merciful and All Compassionate; it is a characteristic of belief.

Long live truthfulness! Death to despair! Let love endure! Let mutual consultation find strength! Let those who follow their own whims and desires be the object of blame, reproach and detestation! And on those who follow right-guidance be peace and wellbeing! AMEN.

If it is asked: Why do you attach this much importance to mutual consultation? And how may the life and progress of mankind, in particular Asia, and particularly Islam, be achieved through mutual consultation?

We would answer: As is explained in the Twenty First Flash of the Risale-i Nur, the Treatise on Sincerity, since just consultation results in sincerity and solidarity, three ‘alifs’ become one hundred and eleven. Thus, three men between whom there is true solidarity may benefit the nation as much as a hundred men. Many historical events inform us that as a result of true sincerity, solidarity, and consultation, ten men may perform the work of a thousand.

Man’s needs are endless and his enemies innumerable, his strength and capital insignificant, and the number of destructive, harmful humans who have become like monsters through lack of religion is increasing. In the face of those endless enemies and innumerable needs, man can continue his personal life only through the support and assistance proceeding from belief, and can maintain his social life only through the mutual consultation enjoined by the Shari‘a, that again proceeds from the truths of belief. It is only thus that he can halt his enemies and open up a way to secure his needs.

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1. Qur’an, 39:53. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ’Ajluni, Kashf al-Khafa, i, 211. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Old Said, through a presentiment of the event, gave news forty-five years ago of what occurred in 1371/1951, namely that the Islamic world, and foremost the Arabic states, would be delivered from subjection to foreign powers and their despotism, and would form Islamic states. He did not think of the two World Wars and thirty to forty years of absolute despotism. He gave the good news of what actually occurred in 1371/1951 as though it would occur in 1327/1909. He did not take into account the reasons for the delay. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Proofs of this claim, and powerful witnesses to it, are the following facts; that, forty five years after this claim was made, in spite of two appalling world wars and the emergence of an extreme and absolute despotism, small northern states like Sweden, Norway and Finland have accepted and started to teach the Qur’an in their schools as a barrier to communism and irreligion. A number of prominent English orators are also seen to be in favor of encouraging the English to accept the Qur’an. And America, now the most powerful state on earth, is seen to support the truths of religion with all its strength, and has decided that Asia and Africa shall find prosperity, peace and reconciliation through Islam, and it patronizes and encourages the newly emergent Muslim states and tries to enter into alliance with them. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. That is, in 1906. [Tr.] [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The Twenty-Fifth Word. [Tr.] [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Thomas Carlyle, 1795-1880. See his work, On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History, London, 1841, which is the transcript of six public lectures Carlyle gave in London in 1840, the second of which was entitled: The Hero as Prophet. Mahomet: Islam. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. We understand from the Qur’an’s teaching and instruction and what these indicate, that through mentioning the prophets’ miracles, the Qur’an is informing mankind that events similar to those miracles will come into existence in the future through progress, and is urging them to achieve them, saying:
*"Come on work! Show examples of these miracles! Like the Prophet Solomon (UWP), cover a journey of two months in a day! Like the Prophet Jesus (UWP), work to discover the cure of the most frightful diseases! Like the Prophet Moses (UWP), extract the water of life from stone and deliver mankind from thirst! Like the Prophet Abraham (UWP), find materials and dress in them so that fire will not burn you! Like some of the prophets, listen to distant voices and see distant images in east and west! Like the Prophet David (UWP), soften iron like dough and make it like wax to meet the needs of mankind! How greatly you benefit from the clock and the ship, the miracles of the Prophet Joseph (UWP) and the Prophet Noah (UWP) respectively. Benefit in the same way from the miracles the other prophets taught you, and imitate them."*By analogy with the above, the Qur’an instructs mankind in every respect, urges them to material, moral and spiritual progress, and proves that it is the universal teacher and master. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Qur’an, 32:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Qur’an, 39:53. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. O my brothers! It may be thought from this lesson of the Old Said that he was excessively concerned with politics and the social matters of Islam. But be careful, do not suppose he had taken the way of making religion a tool or means of politics. God forbid! With all his strength, he was making politics the tool of religion. He used to say: "I prefer one truth of religion to a thousand matters of politics. Indeed, he perceived at that time forty to fifty years ago that certain two-faced atheists were attempting to make politics the tool of irreligion, and in response to those aims and ideas of theirs, he tried to make politics a servant and tool of Islam and its truths.

However, twenty years later he saw that, in response to those clandestine double-dealing atheists’ efforts to make politics the tool of irreligion, which they were doing under the pretext of westernization, a number of religious politicians were trying to make religion the tool of Islamic politics. But the sun of Islam cannot follow and be the tool of lights on the ground. And to make Islam a tool is to reduce its value and is a great crime. The Old Said even saw a pious scholar who, as a result of that sort of partisan politics, was enthusiastically praising a dissembler who agreed with his own political leanings, while criticizing and declaring to be deviant an up-right teacher who opposed them. The Old Said said to him: "Should a devil support your political ideas, you would interpret it as mercy, and if an angel were to oppose them, you would curse him." As a result of this, the Old Said declared: "I seek refuge with God from Satan and politics," and for thirty-five years has given up politics.13

*Signed: Said Nursi*

Since the New Said gave up politics completely and did not follow them at all, the Turkish translation of the Damascus Sermon, a lesson of the Old Said which touches on politics, has been printed and made available. Furthermore, although the twenty-seven years of the New Said’s life together with the hundred and thirty sections of his writings and letters have been minutely examined by three courts (now one thousand courts) and by government officials; and although he was compelled to oppose the evil-doing apostates and double-dealers who were working against him; and although the order had even been given secretly for his execution; the fact that they were unable to find even the slightest indication suggesting that he had exploited religion for political ends proves decisively that he had not done so. We students of the Risale-i Nur are in wonder at this extraordinary situation and consider it to be a sign of the true sincerity that exists within the sphere of the Risale-i Nur.

*Signed: Students of the Risale-i Nur.* [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Qur’an, 2:256. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Qur’an, 42:38. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)