

# The Holy Qur'ān In The Ism-i A'zam



©Allāmah Naṣīr al-Dīn Naṣīr Hunzai

# **The Holy Qur'ān in the Ism-i A'zam**

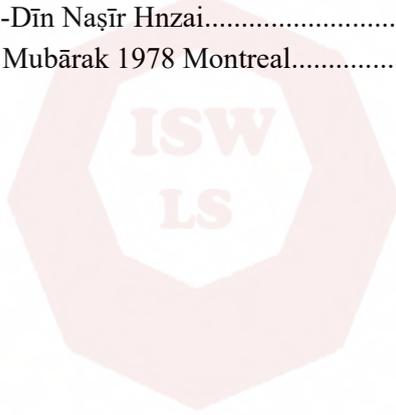
By  
**°Allāmah Naşir al-Dīn Naşir Hunzai**

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## **Farmān-i Mubārak to the Jamā'at of Hunza and Gilgit, by Radio**

Bombay, 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1940

I remember all *jamā'ats* of the Northern Frontiers of India, such as, Chitral, Hunza, Gilgit, Badakhshan and all friends and devotees with benediction. Be sure that the light of my love and kindness will reach the whole *jamā'at* of Hunza like the sun. Men and women, small and big, young and old, all of you are my spiritual children. I never forget you and will never forget you both in this world and the next.

Try to educate your children and strive to learn the European languages and the English language. Obey the ruler of the time and be kind to those who are younger and subordinate to you.

*(Farman of Ḥazrat Mawlānā Imām Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh)*

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## Publishers' Note

A look at the list of books by °Allāmah Naṣīr al-Dīn “Naṣīr” Hunzai appended at the end of this booklet will show that °Allāmah Ṣāhib has written as many as 87 books so far some in Persian and Burushaski, but most of them in Urdu, the National Language of Pakistan. Yet quite a big segment of our *jamā'at*, being emigrant from India, Bangladesh, Africa and other parts of the world, are not acquainted with Urdu. Also, before the Partition, Urdu was not popular, particularly in the Province of Sind, and therefore, quite a few of our Ismaili brethren in this part of the Country have only a working knowledge, if at all, of Urdu. For the benefit, therefore, of this section of our populace and the English speaking *jamā'ats* elsewhere, Khānah-yi Ḥikmat has made a humble initial attempt of having published the English translation of one of the articles of °Allāmah Ṣāhib viz. “Qur'ān Ism-i A'ẓam mēn”.

The translators are Al-Wā'iz Prof. Dr. Faqir Muḥammad Hunzai (Ph.D., McGill) who has had a long association with °Allāmah Ṣāhib and a brilliant academic career here and abroad and Miss Zain Rahim Qasim, a gifted Canadian Ismā'īlī who is an M.A in English Literature. Dr. Faqir Muḥammad is a well known scholar, very popular in Karachi and in the Northern Areas, and before joining the University of McGill in Canada for his doctorate, he had to his credit four M.A.'s – in Arabic, Persian, Philosophy and Islamic Studies.

An Xeroxed version of this article is included in “Al-Majālis Al Maghribiyyah” published by H.H. The Aga Khan Shia Imāmi Ismā'īliya Association for Canada, Montreal District Committee, during the visit of °Allāmah Ṣāhib there (December 1977 – March 1978).

The publishers fervently hope that the booklet would be found useful by the *jamā'ats* and their response would be encouraging enough for Khānah-yi Ḥikmat to undertake publication of such more translations of °Allāmah Ṣāhib's works

Karachi, 13<sup>th</sup> December, 1978.



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## The Holy Qur'ān in the Ism-i A'zam

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

It is an obvious fact that the aim and purpose of the holy Qur'ān is to impart knowledge, wisdom and guidance. In other words the Qur'ān has been sent to this world with the purpose that the people will obey God, the Messenger, and the *ulu al-amr* through it, so that they will obtain God's pleasure, wherein lies physical and spiritual peace and welfare and success in both worlds.

If you think with open-mindedness whether the Qur'ān, as the speech of God, should be limited or unlimited, then a satisfactory answer to this question will be found in verses 31:27 and 18:109, where God says: "And if all the trees in the earth were pens, and the sea, with seven more seas to help it, (were ink), the Words of Allāh could not be exhausted." "Say: Though the sea became ink for the Words of my Lord, verily the sea would be used up before the Words of my Lord were exhausted, even though We brought the like thereof to help." If you think logically you can ask if it is possible for whatever is with God, such as the Qur'ān which has been revealed in this world, to be exhausted. Is it not still with God exactly in the same status as it was in pre-eternity (*azal*)? Regarding this the Qur'ān itself says: "What is with you exhausts itself and what is with God remains (for ever)". (16:96). This means that although the Qur'ān was first manifested as a result of the command of "*kun*" in the form of the *qalam-i ilāhi* (the Divine Pen) in its luminous state, it still remained in the word "*kun*", i.e. the universal command (*amr-i kull*) without any change in the Qur'ān's state of command (*amr-i kayfiyyat*), for the command of "*kun*" is the source of all possible existents (*mumkināt*) eternally and sempiternally, which never becomes devoid of them.

Then the Qur'ān was preserved in the Guarded Tablet (*lawh-i mahfūz*) through the Divine Pen. But no sensible person can say that now the Qur'ān did not remain in the Divine Pen, for it has been revealed in the Guarded Tablet. The wise people understand that the Qur'ān is in the essence of the Divine Pen, in the sense that it has rational (intellectual) existence, that is to say, the Divine Pen

is the Universal Intellect, and whatever comes out of the intellect, is just opposite to a material thing; that is to say, it does not leave its place like a material thing, but the same thing remains there in its original form. The Pen is used as a simile for the Universal Intellect in the sense that as in the intellect nothing becomes exhausted in spite of being used, in the same way, the treasure of the qualities of writing in the Pen is never exhausted despite using it. For instance whatever is written once by a pen, can, if we like, be written a thousand times. It is clear from this example that the Qur'ān is not only in this world, but is also in the word “*kun*”, the Divine Pen and the Guarded Tablet.

After the explanation of the state and reality of the command pertaining to the Qur'ān and its rational or intellectual existence, let us come to its spiritual writing, which is in the Guarded Tablet. In this respect let us ponder on these two verses. God says: “Nay, but it is a glorious Qur'ān. On a Guarded Tablet.” (85:21-22). It is obvious that the Qur'ān is written on the Guarded Tablet in the writing of the spirit and spiritualism, and not in the form of any physical and material writing. In any case, the fact has become clear that the Qur'ān is spiritually preserved in the Guarded Tablet for ever, for it is the Tablet of the Universal Soul wherein is preserved not only the Qur'ān, but is preserved everything for ever.

If you want to ask how the Qur'ān verses are written and preserved in the Universal Soul, then you should ponder on this Qur'ānic verse: “We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and in their own souls until it will be manifest unto them that it is the Truth.” (41:53). This means that the signs of God are hidden in this spacious world and also in the human souls, which the common people cannot see. In spite of this there has to come a time, wherein God will show them His signs. This shows that the signs of God are written in the exterior and interior of the world and in the essence of man himself, but God's writing is entirely different and much loftier than that of the writing of man. Further, it should be known that all the signs of God, whether they are in the horizons or in the sense of living miracle, are the Qur'ān, for the Qur'ān is the sign of God, as well as the miracle of His power.

Furthermore, we are mentioning here a simple example which will further explain this notion. For instance, when a writer writes a book, according to the traditional way of writing it should be at least in four places at the same time:

1. In the mind and heart of the author,
2. In the pen,
3. In the inkpot,
4. On the pages of the book,

Although the form and shape of the book is different in these four stages. That is to say, in the mind and heart of the author it is in the form of different types of thoughts and ideas; in the pen it is in the form of varying movements (motions); in the inkpot it is in the form of the unity of the dots of knowledge and wisdom, and on the pages of the book it is extended in the form of fixed letters. Thus if a glorious angel (or an angel of glory), in the brightness of the Light of God, would take a look at the mind and heart of the author before or after the completion of the book, he would find it in the form of thought, which has yet to come into existence in the external world or which has already come. Similarly, he can describe the entire book through spiritual observation of the motion of the pen, and in the same way he can read the details of the book in the ink and comes to know how the one dot – which has been transported every time from the inkpot to the tip of the pen – has given shape to all the letters of the book through its different manifestations.

In modern times, in addition to the abovementioned four kinds of writings, there are other devices through which it can further be proved that a book does not exist only in physical writing but there are other forms too, in some of which it speaks and in some where it is silent. For example, in devices such as the gramophone, the recorded disc can be made to speak if so desired, otherwise it is silent, and thus the book in a way is also preserved in it. Further, if we think about the telephone, wireless, radio, then it is found that they all serve the purpose of a book. A tape-recorder too can be used as a book. The cinema and television are the best examples of the living book of spiritualism, and microfilm and fichefilm are the

best examples of the silent book. But all these things inspite of being wondrous and marvellous, are physical, material and worldly, and are the product of the attempts of immature and imperfect man, which, considering the perfect power of God, are just naught. Now in spite of this explanation are we going to consider the Pen of power (*qalam-i qudrat*) and the Guarded Tablet (*lawḥ-i mahfūz*) devoid of the higher qualities of the soul and intellect like the human manufacturings? Or, are we going to consider them (i.e. the Pen and the Tablet) as two great angels, which are regarded as the lights of Universal Intellect and Universal Soul and Muḥammad and ʿAlī? In fact the pen of power or the Divine Pen is the light of Muḥammad or the Muḥammadan Light, and the Guarded Tablet is the light of ʿAlī.

There is no doubt that the abovementioned material examples can help in acquiring the knowledge of certitude regarding the Pen, the Tablet, and the spirit and spiritualism of the Qurʾān, but we have to keep the difference between the reality of the intellect and the soul, and the reality of matter, in mind. They are as apart as the heaven and the earth. Nonetheless, this is the only way to go from exoteric (*zāhir*) to the esoteric (*bāṭin*) and to understand a higher through a lower. Thus in order to understand the spiritual and luminous state (*rūḥāniyyat awr nūrāniyyat*) we should proceed from the knowledge of certitude (*ʿilm al-yaqīn*) to the vision of certitude (*ʿayn al-yaqīn*), where all the realities can be perceived directly; this type of observation and recognition of the intellectual and spiritual realities is called *maʿrifat* (recognition), which also includes the *maʿrifat* of all the stages of the Qurʾān. Some people think that it is only God's recognition which is called *maʿrifat*. If we accepted this, then it would imply that the observation and recognition of pre-eternity (*azal*), post-eternity (*abad*), space, spacelessness, time, timelessness, the Pen, the Tablet, Soul, Paradise, Hell, and the annihilation of the cosmos and existents is more difficult than that of God. This is a misconception and the true concept of *maʿrifat* is, as we have mentioned, observation and recognition of the intellectual and spiritual realities through the eye of certitude (*ʿayn al-yaqīn*).

Regarding the Qur'ān it is further said in the Qur'ān: “We have made it a Qur'ān in Arabic, that ye may be able to understand, and verily, it is in the Mother of the Book, with Us high and full of wisdom.” In other words, this means that where the Qur'ān is in the presence of God, there is in a more subliminal form and full of wisdom. That is to say, there it is in the spiritual writing and in the language of God, which is the language of wisdom. It is living and speaking. But on the soil, where it is revealed, there it is in the Arabic language. For from the beginning it has been a Law of God that He sent every messenger in the language of his people (14:4). Thus during the time of the Prophet, the Arab Muslims had the central position of the Muslim community. Since all the Muslims are one and the same community, therefore Arabic is regarded as the language of the Muslim community.

The Prophet has said about *umm al-kitāb* (the Mother of the Book) that it is in the exoteric sense *sūrah al-fātiḥah* (the Opening Chapter), and that it is in the esoteric sense Imām <sup>°</sup>Alī. These are two positions of the Mother of the Book in their respective sense. But there the question arises that the words which the *sūrah al-fātiḥah* contains are the only words which this chapter contains, but nonetheless, the rest of the Qur'ān is still extended over hundreds of pages. How then is it possible to conceive that the entire Qur'ān is contained in the *sūrah al-fātiḥah*? The answer to this question is that just as a seed contains within itself potentially a tree, i.e. just as a seed has the capacity of producing a tree, so in the same sense the *sūrah al-fātiḥah* contains the entire Qur'ān.

Further, as God says: “... a grain of corn which growth seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains.” This means that only in one crop one grain is multiplied into seven hundred, and as a consequence, it has such a capacity that it could produce sufficient seed for the cultivation of the entire world, but this process would take considerable time. Similarly, in the *umm al-kitāb*, i.e. the *sūrah al-fātiḥah*, all the meanings of the Qur'ān are contained, but without any time. Moreover, it should be remembered that the words and meanings of the *sūrah al-fātiḥah* are so comprehensive and universal that they embrace all the realities and wisdoms of the Qur'ān. And it is in the tradition and practice of God that He

causes an entire world to be comprised in the smallest thing, and then He expands the smallest thing to the extent of the spacious world; just as He has been creating the entire cosmos from a single word of kun (Be), then condensing the entire cosmos and the existents into a subtle substance (*gawhar-i laṭīf*), which contains it in the same word, kun (Be). (6:73).

In the light of the above mentioned realities and gnosés, it is clear that the Divine speech – the Qur’ān – is not limited, and as such it has many forms: its state of command (*amrī kayfiyyat*) is in the word ‘Be’ (kalimah-yi kun); its luminous form and intellectual existence is in the Divine Pen; its spiritual state is in the Guarded Tablet (*lawḥ-i mahfūz*), which is the Universal Soul; its semasiological kernel or essence (*ma’ nawī maghz*) is in *umm al-kitāb* (the Mother of the Book); and its revealed shape, as it should be, is in the physical world. And except for the people of *ḥaqīqat*, nobody knows this secret that the Prophet Muḥammad was taught the *ism-i a’zam* by the permanent Imām (*al-Imām al-muqīm*), and through this name the Prophet used to perform the special “*zīkr*” as a result of which the Qur’ān was revealed upon him, which in the beginning was through the mediation of the Pen, the Tablet, Isrāfil, Mikā’il and Jibrā’il.

We have already mentioned that the *umm al-kitāb* is the *sūrah al-fātiḥah* exoterically, and Imām Ali esoterically. For the *umm al-kitāb* is both, the manifest Imām (*Imām-i mubīn*) and the Guarded Tablet (*lawḥ-i mahfūz*). Further, the light of *nubuwwat* (Prophethood) is the Universal Intellect and the light of Imāmat is the Universal Soul, and again the light of Muḥammad is the great *‘arsh* and the light of ‘Alī is the eternal *kursī*. Thus it is clear that God wrote the glorious Qur’ān on the Tablet of ‘Alī’s light with the Pen of Muḥammad’s light, then it revealed itself on the personality of Muḥammad in the form of *tanzīl* (exoteric form of the Qur’ān) and of *ta’wīl* (esoteric meaning of the Qur’ān); then the Prophet entrusted to his true successor ‘Alī the spirit and spiritualism of the Qur’ān – the wisdom of practical *ta’wīl* – through the teaching of the *ism-i a’zam*. Then this great task continued in the chain of Imāmat, progeny after progeny, that is to say that each Imām hand over to his successor the spirit (*rūḥ*;

light); spiritualism (*rūḥāniyyat*); luminousness (*nūrāniyyat*); and practical *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān. This tradition has been practised not only by the Prophet Muḥammad and his successors – the holy Imāms – but before them, by Prophet Ibrahim. As God says: “And he (Ibrāhīm) made it (*rūḥāniyyat* and *Imāmat*) a word (*kalimah*, i.e. *ism-i a'zam*) enduring among his progeny, so that they (due to the *ism-i a'zam*) may return (to God).” This is the Tradition of God which is decreed (fixed) for all the Prophets. As He says: “When Allāh made (His) covenant with the Prophets, (He said): I give you a book and wisdom. And afterward there will come unto you a messenger, confirming that which ye possess. Ye shall believe in him and ye shall help him. He said: Do ye agree, and will ye take up My burden (which I lay upon you) in this (matter)? They answered: ‘We agree’. He said: Then bear ye witness. I will be a witness with you.” (3:81). This verse shows on the one hand, that in the period of Prophethood the chain of the prophets continued without any interruption, and on the other hand, each prophet not only trusted his successor, but he also helped him in teaching him the *ism-i a'zam*. And for this purpose God made His Covenant with the prophets.

The prophets received the light and luminousness (*nūr awr nūrāniyyat*) and the book and wisdom through this *ism-i a'zam*, for God hears through His Great and Sublime Names. Therefore, all the blessings of the intellect and soul are hidden in the Supreme Name (*ism-i a'zam*) of God, as He says: “Blessed be the Name of thy Lord, Glorious and Generous.” Here the ‘Lord’ (*rabb*) means the Supreme Name (*ism-i a'zam*), and it is blessed in the sense that all the material and spiritual blessings which God grants to the believers are received from the treasures of the *ism-i a'zam*. These blessings also include the book and wisdom, which means the spirit and spiritualism, i.e. the practical *ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān. As God emphatically says: “And in truth We have made the Qur'ān easy to remember and admonish, then is there any that remembers?” (54:17, 22, 32, 40). To make the Qur'ān easy to remember and admonish, means that it has been epitomized into *ism-i a'zam*, so that the true believers may remember it easily, and as a result of his spiritualism, the living and speaking realities of the Qur'ān will appear in him. This is called wisdom and practical

*ta'wil* of the Qur'ān. Thus the Knowledge of Names (*'ilm al-asmā'*) which God had granted to Adam, was in fact in the form of the results and consequences of *ism-i a'zam*, and again the information which Adam gave to angels regarding their names was not an exoteric type of teaching, but it was the teaching of the Sublime and Great Names of God, which held the position of the heavenly book of Adam.

During the period of Prophethood, the Prophet had the status of the luminous Supreme Name of God (*nūrānī ism-i a'zam*), and during the period of Imāmat the Imām of the time has this status. The prophets and the Imāms, each one of them in their respective time, grant a verbal *ism-i a'zam* (*lafẓī ism-i a'zam*) to some true believers, and when such believers make progress and achieve success in it, then they are gradually taught the knowledge and wisdom of the Qur'ān through various means of spiritualism. Thus all the precious pearls of spiritual realities, which our *dā'īs* have spread out are through the blessings of this *ism-i a'zam*.

*Ism-i a'zam* is the light of God, the prophet, and the Imām of the age; it is the spirit and light of the Qur'ān; it is the light of guidance and the light of faith (*īmān*); it is the light of the believers; it is the luminous lamp; it illuminates the worlds of the faithfuls' hearts and it is the light of the heavens and earth.

When a believer succeeds in achieving a higher status through the special bandage (meditation) and spiritual exercise of the Supreme Name (*ism-i a'zam*) of God, the doors of Divine blessings are open for him and the spirit and spiritual entities (*rūḥ awr rūḥāniyyīn*) converse with him; such an unprecedented and unique world, which is blooming with spiritualism and luminousness, of which every particle, owing to its effulgence and radiance, dazzles the eye of the heart (spiritual eye), remaining in front of the believer day and night. Such a world is just the opposite to the exoteric and material world, for its four elements are intellect, soul, *tanzil*, and *ta'wil*; it is such a world that every thing in it is like a speaking book; and how can it not be so since it is the world of spiritualism and luminousness of the Supreme Name of God and the paradise of the knowledge and wisdom of the Qur'ān?

The spiritual elevation which follows in the foot-steps of the Prophets and the Imāms, can be achieved through the *ism-i a'zam*, is in accordance with the details of this subject which we have explained, but yet I cannot say that I have been able to fully define and describe two great (important) realities, like the holy Qur'an and *ism-i a'zam* appropriately.



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## **Reproduction of an Interview of ʿAllāmah Naṣīr al-Dīn “Naṣīr” Hunzai during his lecture tour of the Jamāʿats in Eastern Canada in December 1977 / March 1978 – Interviewer: Mr. Alaudin Damji of a Canadian Ismāʿīlī communal periodical**

The Canadian Ismāʿīlī had the opportunity to interview ʿAllāmah Naṣīr al-Dīn “Naṣīr” Hunzai who recently visited the Eastern Canada Jamāʿats on a lecture tour.

ʿAllāmah Ṣāhib, as his title implies, is a great scholar. He is also an author and a poet. It is quite likely that in the years to come, some of his works will be regarded with the same veneration that is awarded to some of the great *Ismāʿīlī Dāʿīs* of the past. While in Montreal, some of the lecturers at the McGill University’s Institute of Islamic Studies, paid tribute to his breadth and depth of understanding of Islam and its principles.

He speaks nine languages – Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Shina, Burushaski (Hunzai), Chitrali, Punjabi and English. ʿAllāmah Ṣāhib has also written the Hunza alphabet based on Urdu and Persian script. The Hunza alphabet has eight new characters in addition to the original Urdu alphabet.

ʿAllāmah Ṣāhib at all times sports his formal attire, which is a kind of uniform which distinguishes him as an *ʿĀlim-i Dīn*, meaning religious scholar. “I debated quite a lot whether I should wear my formal dress on my North American tour,” he chuckled, “but my wife and son insisted that I should, and therefore I went along with their idea.” And indeed his dress accentuates the ʿAllāmah Ṣāhib’s personality as much as his knowledge.

What impresses you most about the man is his unassuming nature. He led me to his room where in the corner a small table cluttered with papers and books, and a chair formed his office. He tidied his desk and seated himself behind it – all set to answer questions. In the warmth of his presence, one could not but feel comfortable. The man is so devoid of any negative human emotions that before

you know it, he has already won your confidence. So you want to know more about him. To him, no question is difficult or impossible. In no time the room filled up with young people, some of them university students who have been following him with their questions and doubts wherever he has gone.

°Allāmah Ṣāhib gets special happiness in answering questions; as he proudly noted, “In Montreal I met the university students whom I was able to convince along scientific lines about some of our concepts and beliefs. The students were very pleased and satisfied with the answers.”

Canadian Ismā‘īlī:

It has been mentioned that you come from a family to whom the services to House of Imām has always been a tradition. May be you would like to tell our readers something about your background.

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

Yes, that is true. My grandfather was appointed *khalīfah*, a representative of *Pir*, to look after the affairs of the *Jamā‘at*. This office has been hereditary and has been with the family for the last three generations. I was born in Hyderabad, Hunza, in May of 1917. My interest in religion was from a very early age. I completed Standards 3 and 4 in one year. Whatever knowledge I acquired was through self-study rather than through formal training. At 22, I joined the army for a period of about 7 years which ended on 7<sup>th</sup> February 1946 after the Second World War. In 1946 I went to Bombay on the occasion of Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

Canadian Ismā‘īlī:

Is it true that you went to China on some mission work? Were you sent there by Imām Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh?

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

Yes, I did go to China as an assistant to one of our community leaders who was assigned the duty by Mawlānā Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh to establish *Jamā‘at-khānahs* and religious schools for the

Chinese *Jamā'at*. However, eventually, all the duties fell on my shoulders.

Canadian Ismā'īlī:

In what part of China is the *Jamā'at* located and what is the size and origin of the *Jamā'at*?

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

The *Jamā'at* is mainly concentrated in the two cities of Yaqand and Sariqool in the Sinkiang Province of China. They number about 50,000; some of these Chinese Ismā'īlīs are emigrants from Badakhshan while the majority of them are Turks from Chinese Turkistan.

Canadian Ismā'īlī:

How long were you in China? Were you able to achieve your goal?

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

I was in China from 1949 to 1954. Pir Sabzali had many years before me in 1922 been sent on a similar mission but had little success. When we went there the Ismā'īlīs used to practise 'taqīyah'. Within a year of my arrival in China, we were able to establish some *Jamā'at-khānahs* and with that, they became known to other Muslims and the public.

Canadian Ismā'īlī:

However, is it true that this brilliant success was not without its attendant ill luck?

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

Yes, that is true. When my activities came to the attention of other non-Ismā'īlīs they did not like the idea at all. I was put under surveillance, however, finally, I was cleared of all false accusations and allowed to leave China after completing my mission.

Canadian Ismā'īlī:

Did this unfortunate experience make you bitter?

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

No, not at all. On the contrary, during this period I attained the highest Spiritual Experience. So you see, sometimes worldly misfortunes can prove highly beneficial, particularly for the person in search of God.

Canadian Ismā'īlī:

What else did you do for the Chinese *Jamā'ats*?

°Allāmah Ṣāḥib:

I composed some 'Manqabats' or religious poems consisting of praise and glory of Imāms for the Chinese *Jamā'ats* which are to this day recited in the Chinese *Jamā'at-khānahs*.

Canadian Ismā'īlī:

Is it true that some of the poems you have composed have been accepted by Ḥāẓir Imām as Gināns?

°Allāmah Ṣāḥib:

(At this point °Allāmah Ṣāḥib produced the original copy of the letter from Ḥāẓir Imām dated October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1961 in which *Khudāwand* accepted his works as a Ginān Book). These Gināns are in Burushaski and are recited in the *Jamā'at-khānahs* in Hunza, Gilgit and the surrounding areas.

Canadian Ismā'īlī:

What do these Gināns deal with?

°Allāmah Ṣāḥib:

They are essentially a narration of my spiritual experiences. They cover the period before and after my China trip. They were completed and published in 1961 as '*Naghmah-yi Isrā'īl*'.

Canadian Ismā'īlī:

You have been described as one of the most prolific writers that the Ismā'īlī Community has ever produced. May be you would like to comment on that.

°Allāmah Ṣāḥib:

Yes, that is true. To-date I have written about 65 books. Few of these are translations of the works of Pīr Nāṣir Khisraw, one of the well-known being ‘*Wajh-i Dīn*’ meaning ‘The face of religion’. Others which I can remember off-hand are ‘*Zikr-i Ilāhī*’, ‘*Silsilah-yi Nūr-i Imāmat*’, ‘*Mizānu’l-Ḥaqā’iq*’.

Canadian Ismā‘īlī:

‘*Mizānu’l-Ḥaqā’iq*’ when translated into English means Scales of Realities. Is that right?

‘Allāmah Ṣāḥib:

Yes, that is true.

Canadian Ismā‘īlī:

In the West at the moment there is a lot of speculation about intelligent life outside this planet. Is it true or is it a figment of someone’s runaway imagination?

‘Allāmah Ṣāḥib:

There is definitely an element of truth in it.

Canadian Ismā‘īlī:

So you do support the theory that there is intelligent life (in the universe) beyond this planet.

‘Allāmah Ṣāḥib:

Yes, definitely so.

Canadian Ismā‘īlī:

What is the nature of this intelligent life?

‘Allāmah Ṣāḥib:

They differ from us in many respects in that they do not have any blood and they do not have any need from breathing as you and I have. Their eating and drinking habits are also quite different from ours.

Canadian Ismā‘īlī:

This revelation comes as quite startling to me as it would be to many of our readers who have never given spiritual matters the importance that they deserve.

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

Well, you should then start putting your spiritual life in order. For, according to my knowledge, there is going to come a spiritual revolution in this world. However, you must realize that the revolution I am talking of is a process and may come over a period of time which may vary from a year of 100 years. I believe that it has already started. If you have read the book ‘Psychic Research Behind the Iron Curtain’, you would be able to understand what I am talking about. There is nothing strange about it, for it is all in accordance with Allāh’s will. For in the Surah 53:41 God says, “Soon we will show them our signs in the (furthest) Regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth.” Those who are spiritually more alive will reap more fruits than those who have neglected their spiritual lives.

Canadian Ismā‘īlī:

What are, in your opinion, the benefits of spiritual progress?

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

Its benefits are two-fold. On the personal level it means knowledge and with knowledge comes salvation. On the community level it enables one to render service to one’s fellow-beings. For instance, it has enabled me to influence many people to improve their lot by pointing out to them their possibilities.

Canadian Ismā‘īlī:

Of all your works, which would you class as one of your best?

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

‘*Rumūz-i Rūḥānī*’. It deals mainly with spiritual matters.

Canadian Ismā‘īlī:

Your book ‘*Īsār-nāmāh*’ is the product of your personal tragic experience.

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

Yes, that's true. It has been dedicated to my son Isar who died tragically in a plane crash in December of 1972. It is actually a collection of my letters in reply to the letters of condolence my friends wrote to me on the occasion. They deal mainly with problems of life, death and related matters.

Canadian Ismā'īlī:

That brings me to the question of the recall of human suffering in life.

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

They play a very important part because they make a mu'min perfect and give him the courage necessary to attain the highest position of Spiritual Enlightenment. You must realize that today if I am what I am, it has been possible only due to the sum-total of my life experiences, which at times have dragged me to the depths of human miseries. My life has been full of suffering, misfortunes and difficulties and I have had to endure extreme human emotions as well as spiritual emotions for long periods but I have had no cause for despair. Physical losses and worldly things do not move me – I have never cried for them. However, for a mu'min difficulties should always be regarded as a mercy, because often in them lies his Spiritual Enlightenment.

Canadian Ismā'īlī:

What makes some of your writings very unique?

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

They are unique because they have been Divinely inspired.

Canadian Ismā'īlī:

This is getting to be very interesting. Can you share with us as to how this Divine Inspiration works?

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

Life itself is inspiration. I love writing, I get lost in writing, I am overcome with joy when I write, Oh! To write! When there is silence and relaxation, the mood is perfect for writing. I sit with

my eyes just closed like this, my arms like this (°Allāmah Ṣāhib reclines in his chair in the corner at his writing table, eyes lightly closed, his hands folded in his lap, his face in complete repose with only a hint of a smile at the corners of his mouth) just like this ... *fikrī °ibādat* ... like so, and I then listen ... (°Allāmah Ṣāhib still with his eyes closed) to my heart and soul ... they speak to me! I see a vague sketch, it becomes larger and clearer, more concrete. (°Allāmah Ṣāhib slowly opens his eyes and smiles). I feel joy and great happiness, I feel great love for the *Jamā°at*. I am happiest when I am writing for the *Jamā°at* and sometimes the urge is so great to write for the *Jamā°at* that I do not sit for °*ibādat*. Usually, around 2:00 am I creep out of my bed and tiptoe to my desk so that I do not disturb the others in the house. I thoroughly enjoy doing this.

Canadian Ismā°ilī:

Many of your writings have been reviewed and the reviewers have described them a °*Arifānah shā°irī*. What does that mean?

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

It means that which contains in it *ḥaqīqat* and *ma°rifat*.

Canadian Ismā°ilī:

All your writings are in Urdu, a beautiful language, but which unfortunately many *Jamā°atī* members living in the West cannot speak or write. Do you know of any efforts being made to translate them into English?

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

I wish that some of the *Jamā°atī* scholars would translate my books into English and Gujarati. My student, Faquir Muḥammad Hunzai with help of Miss Zain Qasim has already started translating a few of my books ‘Eight Questions Answered’, ‘Qur’ān and Spiritualism’ and some articles on Inner Meaning of Qur’ān. Another friend, Khan Muḥammad Ṣāhib of Karachi has already translated ‘*Imām Shināsi* – Part I’; I hope eventually all my books will be translated into English.

Canadian Ismā°ilī:

You come from Hunza which is popularly known in the West for its people who enjoy robust health well into their old ages. May be you can share with our readers some of your own views on the above matter?

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

Well, as you are aware, Hunza is located in a mountainous region where the air we breathe is more rarified and clear. Also the life is much simpler and as such we do not have problems of industrial pollution so common in the West and elsewhere. The majority of the people in Hunza are farmers. Their diet consists of lots of fruits, vegetables, etc. However, for more details I would advise you to read Renee Taylor's 'Hunza Health Secrets', as the author must have done a lot of research and therefore the book should give you more useful information.

Canadian Ismā'īlī:

What is your opinion of love, both physical and spiritual?

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

I believe that both forms of love are important as physical is a bridge leading to the spiritual or *ḥaqīqat*. A spiritually enlightened person is imbued with love for all mankind – especially *mu'mins*. He finds that this burning love for his Imām and His spiritual children has enslaved him. It is a slavery of the best kind.

Canadian Ismā'īlī:

What kind of things do you love?

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

I love the *Jamā'at* and all human beings. I love to spread 'ilm' and I love religious discussions with scholars and interested people, or whom someone says we should have a *majlis* – the sight of people in prayer – I love that very much indeed and it gives me so much happiness.

Canadian Ismā'īlī:

You were once involved with the Ismailia Association for Pakistan as a Research Associate. Do you see similar possibility for yourself

at the newly inaugurated Institute of Ismā<sup>c</sup>īlī studies in London, UK?

°Allāmah Ṣāḥib:

Yes, it is true that I was involved with the Ismailia Association for Pakistan for a period of 15 years and recently I resigned from my post of Research Associate.

Regarding the second part of your question, you must understand that the nature of my work is such that it would be better to continue what I am doing independently. Hopefully, in the years to come, young scholars at the Institute and elsewhere will use my works as source material on Ismailism.

Canadian Ismā<sup>c</sup>īlī:

Surely, finance must be a problem for you. Is there anything we can do to help so that the store of knowledge on Ismailism reaches to as many Ismā<sup>c</sup>īlīs as possible the world over?

°Allāmah Ṣāḥib:

Yes, it is, and those concerned about the dissemination of this knowledge can always contact me. May be by consultation and discussion we can work out ways whereby I can give you rights for the publications. Translations and finances are my two problems but it is very, very important to me that what I have written is delivered accurately and that real meanings are not lost in translation.

Presently, there are five books in the press in Pakistan. My son and students are looking after their publication.

Canadian Ismā<sup>c</sup>īlī:

In the short time that you have been in Eastern Canada, you have come across large numbers of our *Jamā<sup>c</sup>atī* members who have flocked to hear you at various lectures, seminars and private gatherings. What are your impressions of them?

°Allāmah Ṣāḥib:

I must say that I have been very impressed and happy to meet the *Jamā'ats* and their leaders. I feel that in the years to come the *Jamā'ats* in Canada have the potential of doing a lot for the Ismā'īlīs the world over. I am very happy and confident that my friendship with your *Jamā'ats* will enable me to spread my work to more people than I have been able to do so far.

Canadian Ismā'īlī:

What do you think of our youths here?

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

I have been very happy to meet with them and talk to them. I have found them so vibrant and eager for religious knowledge. I am very happy to see this. There should be a Question Centre for youths where they are free to ask questions about their religion and I think such a Centre would really work in Canada.

Canadian Ismā'īlī:

Today when relationships between people tend to be very impersonal, what do you have to say about this?

°Allāmah Ṣāhib:

Our code of conduct affects all our actions. If our code of conduct is loose, so will be our lives. Religion should govern our lives. It teaches us how to live. This materialistic phase will continue for a while until people will accept the code of conduct unanimously. Personally, I believe moral values ought to be followed. The Prophet preached the religion based on morals. We are moving towards a time when a spiritual revolution will take place.

Canadian Ismā'īlī:

We sincerely hope that this publication will bring to the attention of the *Jamā'ats* in Canada and elsewhere of an inspiring Ismā'īlī personality like you. We hope the *Jamā'ats* will give you both moral and financial support needed to bring the benefit of your knowledge and expertise to the *Jamā'at* all over the world.

Interested *Jamā'at* Members can contact °Allāmah Ṣāhib at the following address:

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312, Garden West,  
Karachi-5  
(Pakistan)



**Institute for  
Spiritual Wisdom  
and  
Luminous Science**  
**Knowledge for a united humanity**

Navroz Mubārak – 1978  
Montreal

Our most beloved Bāpā,  
Yā ʿAlī Madad

You have brought to us all joy and happiness,  
You have awakened our sleeping souls,  
You have done that which words can never say

You are Mawlā's blessing on us all  
Mawlā's gift and grace to Humanity  
Mawlā's messenger of macrifat and much more  
Mawlā's chosen one, his torch-bearer

*Shukr Al-ḥamdu li'llāh*

For that kind word and advice,  
That explanation and that answer,  
That care and that concern,  
That feeling and that emotion,  
That understanding and that prayer,  
That smile and that twinkle,  
That pat and that caress,  
That hug and that embrace,  
That love and that affection,  
That tear and that kiss,  
That *Zikr* and that *Giryah-ū zāri*

Each one with so much Divine Love  
Each one a pearl-like gift  
Each one a gift from Mawlā Bāpā.

With lots of love and prayers,  
Your humble student – Salim

(During his recent lecture tour – December 1977 / March 1978 – of the *Jamā'ats* of Canada, at the invitation of His Highness The Aga Khan Shia Imami Ismailia Association for Eastern Canada, °Allāmah Naşīr al-Dīn Naşīr Hunzai was presented the above tribute on the occasion of Navroz Mubarak by Dr. Salim Mawani, M.B., Ch.B., E.C.F.M.G, L.M.C.C., M.D.)



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