

# *Paigham-E-Haqq*

## *MESSAGE OF TRUTH*

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-I-Islam (Lahore) Fiji

(Ahmadiyya \* Society for the propagation of Islam)

(\* The term Ahmadiyya is derived from the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) whose other name was Ahmad)

Our humble plea to the reader is not to let your prejudice cloud your views towards our Movement but to consider these articles in a cool and dispassionate manner.

“Call to the path of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with people in the best manner.” (Holy Quran 16:125)

In the spirit of the above-cited verse, this periodical attempts to dispel misunderstandings about the religion of Islam and endeavors to facilitate inter-faith and inter-denomination dialogue based on reason and rationality.

## **CONTENTS**

*Vol. 132*

<b>EXPLANATION OF SO-CALLED ‘MAIDENS’ (HÚR) IN ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF PARADISE .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>FOUR EXCELLENT QUALITIES BESTOWED UPON SAINTS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>LESSONS IN THE QURAN - 6 .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>READING OF THE HOLY QURAN: THE RIGHT AND PROPER WAY VERSUS RITUAL USE .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>PRAYER — THE SUSTENANCE OF THE SOUL .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>TOLERANCE AND MUTUAL RESPECT IN ISLAM .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>ISLAM IN THE WORLD TODAY .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>TRUE CONCEPTION OF THE AHMADIYYAH MOVEMENT .....</b>	<b>20</b>

**A LAHORE AHMADIYYA PUBLICATION**

*Published on the World-Wide Web at:*

*<http://ahmadiyyafiji.wordpress.com> and [www.muslim.org](http://www.muslim.org) and [aail@aol.com](mailto:aail@aol.com)*

**Publisher: Abdul Nasim**

**Editor: Mehboob Raza**

**Circulation: Imran Sahukhan**

**Contact Information: 3313549,**

**PO Box 407, Suva**

**email: masjidnoor@connect.com.fj**

**Design & Printed by:**

**Max Marketing & Publishing Ltd**

**35 Ackland St, Vatuwaqa**

**Ph: 3375041**

**www.maxmarketingfiji.com**

The main objective of the A.A.I.L is to present the true, original message of Islam to the whole world - Islam as it is found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, obscured today by great misconceptions and wrong popular notions. Islam seeks to attract the *hearts and minds* of people towards the truth, by means of reasoning and the natural beauty of its principles. *Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad* (d.1908), our Founder, arose to remind the world that Islam is:

**International:** it recognizes prophets being raised among all nations and requires Muslims to believe in them all. Truth and goodness can be found in all religions. God treats all human beings equally, regardless of race, nationality or religion.

**Peaceful:** Allows use of force only in unavoidable self-defence. Teaches Muslims to live peacefully under any rule which accords them freedom of religion.

**Tolerant:** Gives full freedom to everyone to hold and practice any creed or religion. Requires us to tolerate differences of belief and opinion.

**Rational:** In all matters, it argues use of human reason and knowledge. Blind following is condemned and independence of thought is granted.

**Inspiring:** Worship is not a ritual, but provides living contact with a Living God, Who answers prayers and speaks to His righteous servant even today as in the past.

**Non-sectarian:** Every person professing Islam by the words *La ilaha ill-Allah, Muhammad-ur rasul-ullah* (There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) is a Muslim. A Muslim cannot be expelled from Islam by anyone.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad taught that *no* prophet, old or new, is to arise after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. However, *Mujaddids* will be raised by God to revive and rekindle the light of Islam.

**About Ourselves**

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore has branches in many countries including:

USA	Guyana
UK	Australia
Holland	Canada
Indonesia	Germany
Suriname	India
Trinidad	South Africa
	Philippines

**Achievements:**

The Anjuman has produced extensive literature on Islam, originally in English and Urdu, including translations of the Holy Quran with commentaries. These books are being translated into other languages, including French German, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, Chinese and Arabic. The Anjuman has run several Muslim missions around the world including the first ever in Western Europe.

**History:**

- 1889: Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement.
- 1901: Movement given name Ahmadiyya after Holy Prophet Muhammad's other famous name Ahmad
- 1905: Hazrat Mirza appoints central body (Anjuman) to manage the Movement.
- 1908: Death of Hazrat Mirza. Succeeded by Maulana Nur-ud-Din as Head.
- 1914: Death of Maulana Nur-ud-Din. Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam founded Lahore as Continuation of the original Anjuman. Maulana Muhammad Ali elected as Head.
- 1951: Death of Maulana Muhammad Ali after fifty years of glorious service to the cause of Islam. Maulana Sadr-ud-Din (9.1981 becomes Head.
- 1981-1996: Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan, an eminent Medical Doctor and religious scholar, led the Movement, at a time of intense persecution
- 1996 -2002: Prof. Dr Asghar Hameed, a distinguished Retired University Professor of Mathematics, and learned Islamic scholar, served as Head.
- 2002: Prof. Dr Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha elected Head.

## EXPLANATION OF SO-CALLED 'MAIDENS' (HÚR) IN ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF PARADISE

*From the notes in the English translation of the Holy Quran by Maulana Muhammad Ali*

The mention of húr in the Holy Quran as among the blessings of paradise, promised to the true believers in the life after death, is much misunderstood. This word and certain other associated terms are mistakenly considered to mean beautiful, young maidens, to be given as reward in the after-life to Muslim men, and on this basis the teachings of Islam are maligned and criticised as pandering to the crude, lustful desires of men.

We quote below some commentary notes by Maulana Muhammad Ali in his English translation of the Holy Quran, explaining these terms and their true significance. The following points emerge about what these blessings of paradise are:

- They are the fruits of the good deeds of a person, whether male or female;
- Their nature is entirely different from anything that is, or can be, known in this world;
- These rewards are meant for both the male and the female believers equally.

### **Verse 52:20**

"Reclining on thrones set in lines, and We shall join them to pure (húr), beautiful ones ('ín)."

### **Note 52:20a on this verse:**

(For simplicity the first few lines of this Note, containing a philological discussion, are omitted.)

As regards the word húr, it is a plural of ahwar (applied to a man) and of haurá' (applied to a woman), signifying one having eyes characterized by the quality termed hawar, which means intense whiteness of the white of the eye and intense blackness of the black thereof. The word ahwar (singular of húr) also signifies pure or clear intellect (Lane's Lexicon). The other word, 'ín, is plural of a'yan (meaning a man wide in the eyes) and of 'ainá' (meaning a woman beautiful and wide in the eye). The latter word also signifies a good or beautiful word, or saying (Lane's Lexicon). It may be noted that whiteness is also a symbol of perfect and unsullied purity, and hence the two words húr and 'ín really stand for purity and beauty; and therefore, instead of white-eyed and large-eyed ones, I adopt the words pure and beautiful ones, as being more expressive of the true significance. To realize the true significance of these words, two points must be borne in mind. The first is that paradise is a place for faithful women as well as for faithful men, and hence the Holy Quran often speaks of the faithful as being in paradise with their wives; see for instance 36:56, where the faithful are spoken of as sitting on thrones or raised couches with their wives, or 13:23 and 40:8, where they are spoken of as being in paradise along with their wives and offspring. The second is that the blessings of paradise are alike for women and

men, there being not the least difference in this respect between the two sexes. The question then is what is meant by húr 'ín here. It has already been explained that the Holy Quran does not speak of any conjugal relations being maintained in a physical sense in the life to come. Moreover, it has been shown on various occasions that, where the blessings of paradise are spoken of, these are nothing but physical manifestations of the spiritual blessings which the doers of good enjoy in this life too. There are gardens, trees, rivers, milk, honey, fruits and numerous other blessings spoken of as being met with in paradise, but that all these are not things of this life has been shown more than once in these footnotes, and a saying of the Holy Prophet already quoted makes it clear that the blessings of paradise are not the things of this life. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: Allah says I have prepared for My righteous servants what no eye has seen and no ear has heard and what the heart of man has not conceived (Bukhari 59:8). The Holy Quran also speaks of them in similar words: No soul knows what refreshment of the eyes is hidden for them (32:17). These clear statements need no comment, and they establish beyond the shadow of a doubt that whatever blessings are spoken of as existing in paradise, the one thing sure about them is that they are not things of this world. Hence even the white-eyed, large-eyed ones, or the pure, beautiful ones, the húr 'ín, of this verse, are not actually the beautiful women of this life. These are heavenly blessings, which the righteous women shall have along with the righteous men, for v. 17 plainly says that those who keep their duty will find these blessings, and therefore the pure, beautiful ones are as much a blessing meant for the righteous women as for the righteous men.

The question may still be asked, why are these blessings described in words which apply to women? The fact is that the reward spoken of here is one having special reference to the purity of character and the beautiful deeds of the righteous, and it is womanhood, not manhood, that stands for a symbol of purity and beauty. Moreover, it should be noted that in Arabic sálíhát and tayyibát signify good deeds and pure things as well as good women and pure women, and this is another reason why the reward of good and pure deeds is spoken of in terms which apply to women. But note also that both húr and 'ín are plurals of words applying to men as well as to women, as also to qualities and deeds.

### **Verses 37:48-49**

"And with them are those modest in gaze, having beautiful eyes, as if they were eggs, carefully protected."

### **Note 37:49a on these verses:**

The description of women given here calls attention to

the prominent feature of the character of a good woman. In the first place, they are described as restraining their eyes, and modest in their gaze, and attention is thus called to the fact that the most valuable virtue of woman is that rare chastity which is described here as restraint or freedom of the eye from lust. Then the beauty of their eyes is praised, the suggestion clearly being that the purity of the eye leads to its beauty, or that the real beauty of the eye consists in its purity. In the second place, they are described as being eggs carefully protected, which alludes to their pure and unsoiled character. It should, however, be noted that what is apparently a description of women is really a description of the fruits of deeds done in this life, the words adopted being applicable to both (see the word *hūr* in 52:20a), and these are in fact spiritual blessings manifested physically. The blessings which it promises, whatever they may be, are as much meant for men as for women; the only thing certain about them is that their nature is different from the nature of the physical blessings of this life.

### Verse 38:52

“And with them are those modest in gaze, equals in age.”

### Note 38:52a on this verse:

For the modest in gaze, see 37:49a. Here, in addition, they are called *atráb* or equals in age, as showing that their growth begins with the growth of spiritual life in

man, thus showing that they are the fruits of good deeds, whether done by males or females, who would all have these fruits equally.

### Verses 56:35-38

“Surely We have created them a (new) creation, so We have made them virgins, loving, equals in age, for those on the right hand.”

### Note 56:38a on these verses:

It is noteworthy that the blessings granted to the righteous are first spoken of as shades, water, fruits and resting-places; and then, as it were to dispel all doubts as to what these blessings of the next life are, it is said in v. 35, We have created them a new creation. These words settle conclusively that, whatever these blessings are, whether shades or trees or water or fruits, they are all the fruits of deeds, which have been made to grow into a new growth. The words that follow this statement are no doubt primarily applicable to women, but, as shown in 52:20a, it is only because womanhood stands as a symbol of purity and beauty. Thus *abkár*, plural of *bikr*, means a virgin, and also an action that has not been preceded by its like (Lane's Lexicon). Similarly, *atráb*, or equals in age, as already shown in 38:52a, signifies that the growth of those blessings begins with the growth of spiritual life in man. 'Urub ("loving") is plural of both 'urúb and 'aríb, the former signifying a woman that manifests love to her husband.

## FOUR EXCELLENT QUALITIES BESTOWED UPON SAINTS

*From the book 'Tiryāq al-Qulub' By Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad*

[Editor's Note: The verse 4:69 of the Holy Quran tells us that those who obey Allah and His Messenger are "with" or "in the company of" the prophets, the truthful (*siddiq*), the faithful (*shahid*) and the righteous (*salih*). Despite the fact that it most certainly does not say that a Muslim can become a prophet by obeying Allah and the Messenger, the Qadianis are always citing this verse in support of their wrong belief that prophets can arise from among Muslims. Below we translate a lengthy explanation of this verse as given by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. It is absolutely clear from his explanation that what the verse means is that saints (*auliya*) among Muslims attain four kinds of qualities, and the quality of the prophets which they attain is the receiving of knowledge of the unseen from God, in the manner, of course, in which saints receive revelation. Hazrat Mirza has repeatedly used the word 'saint' in this writing, and he has not even remotely suggested that this verse promises that a Muslim can become a prophet.]

It should be borne in mind that a comprehensive knowledge of matters unseen is not granted to those who do not have sound connections with God; and though it is possible for such persons to have the occasional true dream or true vision, but the necessary condition for sainthood (*wilayat*) and acceptance by God is that unseen matters and hidden affairs should be revealed to the person in much greater abundance than to

anyone else in the whole world, so that none can rival this abundance. It is worth remembering that whenever Almighty God, out of His great grace, bestows upon some person the robe and status of sainthood, He grants him clear distinction over his peers and his contemporaries in all of four things. And if such distinction is found in anyone, then it becomes necessary to believe, surely and certainly, that he is one of those perfect servants and exalted saints of God whom He has himself chosen and trained under His special guidance.

The four things that mark out the perfect saints and men of God are four qualities granted to them to serve as signs and miracles. In each of these qualities they have a clear and plain distinction over others; in fact, these accomplishments reach the grade of miracles. Such a man is like the philosopher's stone, and only he reaches this rank who has, since eternity, been chosen to benefit the world. The four qualities, which are as four signs or miracles, and which distinguish one who is a great saint (*wali*) and master and chief of the saints, are as follows.

### First quality: receiving revelation.

Firstly, matters of the unseen should, after supplication or by other means, be disclosed to him in such abundance, and many prophecies be fulfilled so clearly, that no other person could rival him in respect of abundance of quantity and clarity of condition. And

as regards this abundance and clarity, it should be not only improbable, but impossible, that someone else could have a share of these qualities. That is to say, it should be entirely impossible that someone else could parallel or rival these qualities in terms of secrets of the unseen revealed, acceptance of his prayers and prior intimation of the same to him, and signs of support that appear in heaven and earth. And he should, by way of miracle and in an extraordinary manner, be granted such divine knowledge of the unseen, luminous visions and heavenly support, as if a gigantic river were flowing and a glorious light descending from heaven and spreading on the earth; and these things should reach the stage where they appear to be miraculous and unequalled in their time. This excellence is called the excellence of prophethood.

#### **Second quality: truth.**

The second excellence that is necessary as a sign for the leader of the saints and chief of the purified ones is the attainment of the higher understanding and knowledge of the Quran. It is necessary to remember that there is a lower, an average and a higher teaching of the Quran. The higher teaching abounds in so much light of knowledge, brightness of truth, true beauty, and virtue, that the lower or average ability cannot possibly reach it. Only the possessors of the purest nature, whose entirely luminous disposition draws light to itself, attain to these truths.

So the first stage of sidq (truthfulness) that they attain is aversion for worldly affairs and an instinctive dislike of what is vain. After this condition is firmly established, the second stage of sidq is reached which can be called zeal, enthusiasm and turning towards God. And after this state is thoroughly established, a third stage of sidq is attained which can be called the greatest transformation, an entire cutting off, personal love, and the rank of total self-effacement in Allah.

This having been deeply-rooted, the spirit of truth penetrates the human being, and all pure truths and matters of knowledge of a high order are revealed to him. There rises up in his heart, and pours forth from his lips, the most profound and deep knowledge of the Quran and points of the shariah. And such secrets and subtleties of the religion are disclosed to him as are inaccessible to the intellects of the followers of customary and conventional knowledge. This is because he is inspired by God, and the holy spirit speaks within him. All inclinations to falsehood are cut out from within him because he learns from the spirit, speaks according to it, and by the spirit does he influence others.

In this state he is called siddiq (lit. truthful) because the darkness of falsehood entirely leaves him, and is substituted by purity and the light of truth. The manifestation through him, at this stage, of truths and matters of knowledge of a high order is a sign of him. Having been fermented by the light of truth, his holy teaching astonishes the world. People are wonder-struck by his pious knowledge which stems from his self-effacement in Allah and knowledge

of the truth. This quality is called the quality of siddiqiyya (lit. truthfulness).

It should be remembered that siddiq is one who both has a complete knowledge of the Divine truths and acts on them perfectly instinctively. For instance, he knows the true significance of matters such as Divine unity, obedience to God, love of God, the obtaining of complete riddance from worshipping others than God; the real meaning of devotion to God, sincerity, repentance; and the essence of moral virtues such as patience, trust in God, resignation to Him, effacement in Him, truthfulness, fidelity, forgiveness, modesty, honesty, trustworthiness, etc. And apart from having this knowledge, he is well-established on all these virtues.

#### **Third quality: being a witness of faith.**

The third excellence granted to the great saints is the rank of shahadah. By this rank is meant that station where, by the strength of his faith, man acquires such a belief in God and in the Day of Judgment that it is as if he sees God with his own eyes. Then, with the blessing of this conviction, the effort and exertion of doing righteous deeds melts away, every Divinely-ordained fate appears sweet as honey to his heart, and each trial is seen by him as a reward.

Hence shahid is one who, by the strength of his faith, beholds God, and enjoys like sweet honey the bitter fate ordained by Him. This is why he is called shahid. This rank is a sign of the perfect believer.

#### **Fourth quality: righteousness.**

There is also a fourth rank which is attained fully and completely by the perfect saints and the purified ones: the rank of salihin (lit. the righteous). A person is called salih when he becomes inwardly cleared and purified of all wickedness, and with the removal of all this putrid and filthy matter, the ecstasy of Divine worship and contemplation reaches the highest degree. For, just as the taste of the tongue is spoilt by physical illness, so is the sense of spiritual flavour vitiated by spiritual ailments; and a person thus afflicted feels no pleasure in Divine worship and contemplation, nor does he have any enthusiasm, zeal or urge for it. On the other hand, the perfect man is not only cleansed of all evil matter but this quality develops so much within him as to appear as a sign and miracle.

These are, in short, the four grades, to try to attain to which is the duty of every believer. The person who entirely lacks these, lacks faith. This is why in the Sura Fatiha (opening chapter of the Holy Quran) the Glorious God has ordained for the Muslims this very prayer that they implore Him for all these virtues. This prayer is: "Guide us on the right path, the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours". This verse has been explained elsewhere in the Holy Quran [4:69] where it is made clear that by those upon whom God has bestowed favours are meant the prophets, the siddiq, the shahid, and the salih. The perfect man has all of these four qualities combined in him.

(Tiryaaq al-Qulub, pp. 246 – 250)

Elsewhere Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad writes:  
"The Holy Quran in the Sura Fatiha gives us the hope of becoming the likes of prophets. God exhorts us to pray to Him five times a day and beseech Him as follows: 'Guide us on the right path, the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours', meaning O God, grant us the guidance so that we may become the like of Adam,

the like of Seth, the like of Noah, the like of Abraham, the like of Moses, the like of Jesus, and the like of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and Ahmad." (Izala Auham, p. 257)

It is the like of a prophet, and not a prophet, that a Muslim is instructed to pray to become in the Sura Fatiha. The Qadiani assertion that a Muslim is taught here to pray to become a prophet is entirely baseless.

## LESSONS IN THE QURAN - 6

*Translation of Mr. N.A. Faruqi's book Mu'arif-ul-Qur'an  
Translated by Dr. Mohammad Ahmad, Ohio, Al-Fatihah*

### **Man Created for a Higher Objective.**

Today we will discuss the meaning of the verse:  
"Guide us on the right path (Ihdi-nas-siraatal-mustaqeem)."

The prayer in this verse is a vital part of Al-Fatihah because its explanation in the next verse provides the answer to a very important question: What is the purpose of man's creation? No other revealed scripture in its present form, or a sage, a scientist or philosopher has been able to give an answer to this. Scientists have discovered today, what the Holy Quran made known 1400 hundred years ago in the verse:

"And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all from Himself" (45:13).

The purpose of creation of the whole universe is, therefore, to be beneficial and subservient to mankind. Further on, the Holy Quran tells us that this was brought about by Allah appointing His vicegerent on earth, and by giving him knowledge of all things, so he could dominate all creation (2:30,31). If the purpose of all creation is to serve mankind, then what is the purpose of man's creation? As mentioned earlier, the answer to this is found nowhere else today except in the Holy Quran. If man does not know the reason for his creation, then his whole life, in fact the creation of the universe which was meant for him, would fail to achieve its purpose.

Let us consider what man himself has thought of as the goal of his creation. With all the knowledge and scientific discoveries of the modern age he does not know any more than what was known by his ancestors thousands of years ago despite of their ignorance. That is, he should eat, drink, get married, have children and make some worldly progress. Was this the purpose of creation behind the whole universe, a single atom of which contains a world of wonderment? Was it meant to serve mankind only for his limited life span? The whole universe, according to scientific research, took billions of years to prepare for the arrival of mankind. Was he

created only to perform a few bodily functions and fade into the dust? This could be the purpose of creating animal life, but for it to be the destiny of mankind, for whom the whole universe was created, would appear to be an exercise in futility.

### **The Path of the Righteous.**

Human intellect and nature cannot be satisfied by such a desultory objective. Mankind had so far accepted this because no one had provided the correct answer. The light of truth was first shed on this by the Book of Divine wisdom revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The answer to this secret lies in the spiritually vital prayer of Al-Fatihah, "Guide us on the right path." What is that path, and where does it lead to? The explanation for this is provided in the verse, "The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favors." Who are these people and what favors were bestowed upon them?

The Holy Quran informs us about them in the verse:  
"And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, they are those upon whom Allah has bestowed favors from among the prophets (nab-iy-yin), and the truthful (sid-diq-qeen), and the faithful (shu-ha-da), and the righteous (saa-li-heen), and a goodly company are they!" (4:69).

The verse just before this states: "And We would certainly have guided them in the right path" (4:68).

The question which now comes to mind is what kind of favors were they given? Most people with a worldly outlook consider wealth and power as the greatest blessing. With the exception of a few, no prophet or righteous person received this, and even those who did, considered it as something very insignificant. If material wealth and worldly power are the favors asked for in the Al-Fatihah, one must admit that the faithless and worldly people get the most of it. The greatest blessing bestowed upon the prophets, the truthful, and the righteous servants of Allah is in fact the recognition of the Divine Being. The Holy Quran explains this in the verse:

"Then as for those who believe and hold fast by Him,

He will admit them to His mercy (spiritual blessings) and grace (worldly blessings) and guide them to Himself on a right path" (4:175).

The prayer for the 'right path,' which is the life-giving element of Al-Fatihah, leads to the source of all righteousness, the Divine Being Himself. Other verses in the Holy Quran further clarify this, for example:

"Surely my Lord is on the right path," (11:56)

and the verse:

"He said: This is the right way with Me" (15:41).

The Holy Prophet Muhammad was sent as a messenger to invite people towards Allah. This is clearly stated in several places in the Holy Quran as in the verse:

"Say: This is my way, I call to Allah, with certain knowledge (basirat) — I and those who follow me" (12:108).

Basirat, or certain knowledge of Allah, means having such a close relationship with Allah as to be able to visualize Him with the mind's eye; such being the case of the Holy Prophet and those who follow him. Therefore, all the truthful (sid-diq-qeen) and faithful ones (shu-hada — the real meaning of the word being those who, after acquiring knowledge of internal or spiritual matters, convey it to others), and the righteous (saa-li-heen - those who completely follow the Holy Prophet) are the ones who attain nearness to God, the proof of this being that Allah communicates with them.

Several other verses of the Holy Quran give further confirmation to the statement that the real purpose of man's creation is recognition of the Divine Being. For example, the Holy Quran states:

"Surely this is a Reminder; so let him, who will, take a way to his Lord" (73:19).

In another verse it is stated:

"And those who strive hard for Us, We shall certainly guide (hadai-na) them in Our ways" (29:69).

In Arabic language the word hidayat means not only pointing towards the right path, but also guiding one along on it till he reaches his destination.

#### **Testimony of a Righteous Servant of Allah.**

What a great blessing it is to attain closeness to Allah Who is the Possessor and Source of all excellence and goodness. Let us hear about it from the mouth of one who in this age of atheism and materialism, by following the Holy Quran and the example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, was able to find God and establish

communion with Him — this person being none other than Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Mujaddid (Reformer) of the 14th Century Hijra, who writes in one of his books:

"How unfortunate is that person who still does not know that he has a God Who is One and Who has power over all things. Our heaven is our Lord. Our greatest pleasures lie within Him, because we saw Him and found every excellence within Him. This treasure is worth taking even if one has to lay down his life for it. This precious jewel is worth buying, even if one has to relinquish his self for it. O deprived ones! quicken your pace towards this fountain, for it will quench your thirst. It is the fountain of life which shall save you. What should I do to focus your attention towards this good news? With what kind of drum beat should I proclaim in the streets that 'This is our God,' so that people would listen? What medicine should I prescribe for their ears so that they hear this message? If you become of God, then be certain that He is yours. While you are in slumber He lies awake for you. You will be unaware of your enemy, and God will be watching him, and destroy his plans. You do not yet know the Omnipotence of your God. If you knew about it you would never grieve for this world. One who owns a treasure, does he ever scream, or cry, or become despondent with the loss of a penny? If you knew about this treasure, that God will help you in time of need, why should you be besides yourself in pursuit of worldly gain? God is a Beloved and Precious Treasure. Be cognizant of His blessings, He is your Helper in every step you take."

In another place Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad writes:

"The real motivator of my overwhelming concern is that I have discovered a gold mine, and I have been informed of a quarry of precious stones. I have been fortunate to find a shining and extremely valuable diamond from this mine, the value of which is such that if I distribute it amongst all my fellow beings, they would all become wealthier than that person who in the world today has the largest quantity of gold and silver. What is that diamond? 'The Truthful God.'"

Searching for and finding Allah, therefore, is the greatest purpose for which man was created, the prayer for which is the essence of Al-Fatihah. There is a Hadith of the Holy Prophet in which he says that God informed me of this, "I was a hidden treasure, so I determined that others should have knowledge of Me, therefore I created man." This is a manifestation of the excellence and goodness which is the meaning of the word Allah. Allah, Who is the Treasure House of all attributes and excellences, created mankind to give away these treasures. There could be no greater honor or benevolence for mankind.



## READING OF THE HOLY QURAN: THE RIGHT AND PROPER WAY VERSUS RITUAL USE

***Proper way as taught by the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet, revitalised by the Mujaddid of the time.  
Speech in Lahore, 28 December 1997.***

The English version of a speech delivered on the above subject in Urdu in Lahore.

It is stated in the Holy Quran regarding this Book of Allah:

“This is a book that We have revealed to thee, abounding in good [or mubarak, blessed], that they may ponder over its verses, and that the men of understanding may be mindful.” — 38:29.

This shows that the good or the blessing that the Holy Quran contains can only be attained by a human being if he or she ponders over its verses and becomes mindful of its teachings. Nowhere is it stated in the Quran that a person can benefit from the Quran merely and only by reading out its words without any knowledge of what the words are saying. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad said:

“People read the Holy Quran, but do so like a parrot, without thinking or understanding.... Neither the reader nor the listeners understand what is said. The manner of reciting the Holy Quran has become merely that two or three parts are read, without knowing what was read. At the most, they read it tunefully and pronounce the letters qaf and ‘ain properly. It is no doubt good to read the Quran in a fine and melodious way, but the real purpose of reciting the Holy Quran is to find out the truths and knowledge contained in it and to bring about a change within oneself.” — Malfuzat, vol. 1, pp. 428, 429.

When Hazrat Mirza was once asked the question, “How should the Holy Quran be read?”, he replied:

“The Holy Quran must be read with thought, reflection and concentration. It says in Hadith: ‘Many reciters of the Quran are cursed by the Quran’. He who reads the Quran and does not act upon it is cursed by the Quran. While reciting the Quran, when you reach a mention of mercy ask mercy from God, at a mention of chastisement ask protection from God’s chastisement. The Quran should be read with thought and reflection and you must act upon it.” — Malfuzat, vol. 9, pp. 199, 200.

Of course, when a child is learning to recite the words of the Holy Quran, that is a different matter, and it cannot be expected that the child should be taught the full

meaning of all that he reads. Even at that stage though, the child can be given some indication of the general meaning, particularly when reading the verses dealing with the simpler subjects that a child can understand (for example, the oneness of God and simple moral teachings). In any case, that is only a passing phase of life, not a permanent state.

What is wrong is that grown up people, who have learnt the recitation of the Quran, continue throughout their lives reciting the Quran without ever trying to know its meaning, without attempting to implement its teachings in their lives, in the belief that the mere recitation is a deed which brings Divine reward. If it were true that mere recitation earned such reward, how could the Holy Prophet possibly say that some reciters of the Quran are cursed by it?

### **Misuse of Quran for ritual purposes.**

As Muslims generally ceased to try learning the meanings of the Quran many centuries ago, and therefore were unable to receive its real blessing, they invented their own ways of deriving its blessings. These rituals and customs find no support in the Holy Quran, the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, or the lives of his Companions. Let us take what is known as khatam-i Quran, or finishing the Holy Quran. It is not found anywhere in the teachings of Islam that on certain occasions, of celebration or mourning, people should gather and be assigned various portions of the Quran to read so that the whole of the Quran gets read. Firstly, no one gains any knowledge of the Quran by reading it in this way. And secondly, this is opposed to the method of reading the Quran as instructed in the Quran itself and as advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

### **Quran on how to read the Quran.**

The Holy Quran says:

“Recite the Quran in a slow, leisurely manner (tarteel).” — 73:4.

This is also mentioned in a hadith in Bukhari, and Maulana Muhammad Ali comments upon it as follows in his Urdu commentary of Bukhari:

“Reciting with tarteel means to enunciate the letters distinctly and to read the words slowly in order that attention is turned to its meaning. The instruction to read



the Quran slowly, so that it moves the heart, is found not only in Hadith but is also clearly given in the Quran."

He then goes on to say that to read the Quran hurriedly and to finish it at high speed is clearly opposed to this instruction of the Quran. Then in Bukhari we are referred to another verse of the Quran on this subject which is the following:

"And it is a Quran We have made distinct, so that you may read it to people by slow degrees and We have revealed it in portions" — 17:106.

Here it is said that the revelation of the Quran to the Holy Prophet came in portions so that it could be read to people slowly, and not all at once.

#### **Finishing the Quran.**

Now when a man believes that he will receive Divine reward and blessings by finishing the Quran, or some assigned part of it, then he will wish to complete its reading as quickly as possible. He will never abide by the instruction, as explained above, to read it slowly and thoughtfully because he believes that the quicker he finishes it, the earlier he will get his reward. His sole aim and object is to reach the end, for that is where he believes that his reward lies. Therefore, to stop and ponder over its words is a hindrance to his objective. It is thus clearly seen that those whose aim is merely and only to finish the Quran, they read it in a manner which is directly opposed to how it should be read according to the Quran itself and the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

It is recorded in Hadith reports that a man asked the Holy Prophet, in how many days should he finish the Quran? The Holy Prophet replied, In one month. The man said, I am able to do it sooner. The Holy Prophet said, Then do it in twenty days. The man repeated that he was able to do it in shorter time. The Holy Prophet said, Then do it in fifteen days. And so it went on till the Holy Prophet came down to five days, and would not reduce it any further. In another report the Holy Prophet said: "He who completes the Quran in less than three days, he has not understood it." So the Holy Prophet himself fixed a limit of three days or of five days (according to different reports) before which the Quran should not be finished, and he clearly gave the reason that if you finish it in less time than this then you have not understood it.

The Holy Quran itself has put it quite beautifully: "Recite out of the Quran that which is easy for you." - 73:20.

In other words, reciting of the Quran should not be

undertaken as a burdensome task, subjecting one to hard labour, but one should read as much as one finds easy to do.

#### **Reading the Quran for the dead.**

One of the rituals that people have invented for obtaining blessing from the Holy Quran is to recite it for a deceased person, with the belief that the dead person will be rewarded as a result of the Quran being read for his "sake", and that the benefit of the recitation "reaches" the dead person. Now if we consider it rationally, it is the living who need to receive the Quran because only the living can learn from it and act upon it. The poor fellow who has died cannot now change his life to bring it in more accord with the teachings of the Quran.

It is, moreover, curious that very few Muslims are concerned about taking the message of the Quran to the living, but millions of Muslims are everyday reciting the Quran to make its benefit reach the dead.

The second point is that if it were true that we can bring benefit to the dead by reciting the Quran for their sake then the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his Companions would undoubtedly have engaged in this practice. However, we find no sign or trace of it in the history of the Holy Prophet's time or that of his Companions. Their relations and near and dear ones died but it is nowhere to be found that, upon someone's death, the Holy Prophet or his Companions finished the Quran for the deceased. The Holy Prophet himself died, leaving behind wives, a daughter, near relations and a large number of Companions, who were admittedly the greatest Muslims of all time. Yet none of them are recorded as having recited or completed the Quran for his sake. Similarly, the events of the deaths of Abu Bakr, Umar and other famous persons are reported in Hadith, but there is no mention that anyone finished the Quran for their souls. When Hazrat Mirza was asked: "Can [the benefit of] acts of charity and the reading of the Holy Quran reach the deceased?" he replied as follows:

"The benefit of acts of charity done in the name of the deceased does reach the dead person. But to give them benefit by reciting the Quran for them is not established from the Holy Prophet Muhammad or the Companions. Instead, you should pray for the dead. To give in charity in the name of the deceased, and to pray for them, is established from the example of 124,000 prophets. But that charity is better which the deceased gave with his own hands because that way he proves his faith." - Malfuzat, vol. 8, p. 405. Here Hazrat Mirza has explained succinctly what may or may not be done for the dead.

It is only prayer for their forgiveness and the giving of charity that is taught by Islam.

### **Giving of charity on behalf of the dead.**

As regards the giving of charity, what Hazrat Mirza has said in the above extract is that the real and substantial spiritual benefit that a deceased receives is from the charity or good works done by him or her in life. The benefit received by the deceased when those after him give in charity on his behalf is, in fact, only a consequence and reflection of the deeds which the deceased performed during his life.

The principle of giving in charity for the dead is based on a hadith according to which a man put to the Holy Prophet Muhammad that his mother had died suddenly and that if she could speak now she would give in charity. So his question was that if he gave in charity on her behalf, would it benefit her? The Holy Prophet replied, Yes. We learn from this that if a person does good in life, and dies without completing some good deed which he or she intended to perform, then if that good work is completed on his or her behalf by someone else, the deceased too receives some credit (apart, of course, from the person who actually does it).

Commenting on this and similar other hadith reports, Maulana Muhammad Ali writes:

“These hadith reports show that the deceased can benefit to some extent from the deeds of others, but it must be remembered that, as these reports clearly tell us, this is in case of such a close connection between the two that the doer of the deeds becomes a substitute for the deceased. In such matters we are not entitled to broaden the scope of the teaching of the Shariah so as to invent an entirely new principle.” — Bayan-ul-Quran, note under verse 53:39.

Similarly in his Urdu translation and commentary of Bukhari, entitled *Fazl-ul-Bari*, Maulana Muhammad Ali writes regarding the above-mentioned hadith report that we cannot create from its words a general principle of the dead receiving benefit from charity on their behalf, and we must not exceed the limit of the statement in the hadith. In this instance, the deceased had intended while alive to give in charity, but death did not spare her. So under these circumstances, if the son fulfils her intention then she also receives some benefit for the doing of the act.

### **Other rituals at time of death.**

Among the other practices commonly carried out

following a death are the ceremonies held on the third day (qul reading) and the fortieth day (chelum), where parts of the Quran are read for the benefit of the deceased (besides other baseless rituals). Hazrat Mirza was asked the question: “Does the deceased receive the reward of the reading of the qul?” He replied:

“There is no basis in the Shariah for the qul reading. What benefits the deceased are charity, prayer and the asking of forgiveness. However, the mullahs certainly receive reward from this ceremony. So if they are considered as the dead — and, in fact, the mullahs are spiritually dead — then we do agree [that the dead receive the reward]! We wonder how these people entertain such expectations. Religion has come to us from the Holy Prophet, and it contains no trace of any such thing. The Companions too died. Were qul readings held for any of them? This is an innovation (bid’ah) which, like other innovations, came into being centuries later.” — *Malfuzat*, vol. 6, p. 390.

Maulana Muhammad Ali writes:

“There is no authority of the Holy Prophet for the Qul ceremony on the third day, or for the ceremonies connected with the tenth and fortieth days after death. Nor can they be considered as acts of charity, for they are not for the benefit of the poor.” — *A Manual of Hadith*, ch. xv, note 22.

### **Customs versus example of Prophet Muhammad.**

The argument which Hazrat Mirza has advanced against these rituals is that no sign or trace of them is to be found in the lives of the Holy Prophet and his Companions. It was an important part of Hazrat Mirza’s mission of the reforms of Muslims to urge them to give up such customs and practices and instead follow the example of the Holy Prophet in their lives. As a result, the great elders and stalwarts of our Movement followed the sunna of the Holy Prophet in their lives and were sternly opposed to these customs which were prevailing among the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. This was certainly the case with those of our great men whom I had the privilege of knowing personally, namely, Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi, the late Hazrat Ameer Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan, Mr. Nasir Ahmad Faruqi, and Maulana Hafiz Sher Mohammad.

Regarding following customs vis-à-vis the real example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Hazrat Mirza once referred to the verse of the Holy Quran:

“Say: If you love Allah, then follow me [i.e. Prophet Muhammad]. Allah will love you and forgive you your sins” (3:31) and said:

"This is the one and only way of pleasing Allah: that you follow the Holy Prophet truly. We see that people are trapped in all sorts of customs. When someone dies, all kinds of innovations and customs are practiced, whereas they should just pray for the deceased. By following customs, it is not only that they are going against the Holy Prophet Muhammad but it is also an insult to him because the word of the Holy Prophet is not considered to be sufficient. If they had considered it to be sufficient, they would not have needed to invent customs of their own." — Malfuzat, vol. 5, p. 440.

#### Prayers from Quran and Hadith.

Another teaching of Islam which Muslims generally had reduced to a mere ritual is the use of the prayers that are taught in the Holy Quran and in the Holy Prophet's

hadith reports (masnun du'a). It is believed that by merely repeating the set words, while neither knowing the meaning nor saying them with feeling from the heart, the prayer will be answered. Regarding these prayers, Hazrat Mirza said:

"For prayers, find words that melt the heart. It is not right to go after the masnun du'a prayers so as to repeat them likemantras, while not recognizing the substance. It is essential to follow the sunna, but to create feeling in the heart is also in accordance with the sunna. ...The one who worships words is forsaken by God. You should go after the essence. You must say the masnun du'a prayers for blessing, but try to reach their essence and reality." — Malfuzat, vol. 2, page 338.

## PRAYER — THE SUSTENANCE OF THE SOUL

*Speech at the Ahmadiyya Convention, Toronto, 2nd August 1997  
by Dr. Mohammad Ahmad, Columbus, Ohio*

*"Surely We have given thee abundance of good. So pray to thy Lord and sacrifice. Surely thy enemy is cut off (from good)."*

o The Holy Quran, ch. 103.

If we apply the first verse of this chapter (Al-Kauthar) to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, as it has been commonly interpreted, it becomes difficult to reconcile it with the subsequent verse, "So pray to thy Lord and sacrifice," for we know for a fact that prayer and sacrifice were manifest in the most excellent and exemplary fashion in his life. Wherever in the Holy Quran the Holy Prophet is specifically addressed, the terms, "O Prophet," or "O Messenger," are used. In the words of this chapter, therefore, man in general is addressed. The question which, then, comes to mind is, what is the abundance of good that all of mankind has been given? The human body is one of these blessings; however, it can and does become unhealthy, and eventually perishes away; also in many ways it is inferior to certain animals. It is therefore an unlikely recipient for the abundance of good. The spirit within man is, however, something with which he is uniquely blessed. In the Holy Quran Allah tells us, "And We breathed into him our spirit." This spirit which comes from Allah is capable of reflecting His colors, as stated in the verse, "We take Allah's color and who is better than Allah at coloring and we are His worshippers." The Hadith of the Holy Prophet also conveys this in the words, "create the moral characteristics of Allah within yourself." The spirit of man which becomes his soul (nafs) is what grows with him and becomes a part of his personality. It evolves to receive the heavenly fruits

in this worldly life in the form of serenity of mind, and travels into the life Hereafter, where it is blessed with a new body to experience the everlasting blessings of heavenly paradise. The human soul is, therefore, the part of him capable of receiving the abundance of good, and prayer is what leads to this development. Man then becomes ready to sacrifice in the way of Allah, and cuts off his greatest enemy, the devil or the shaitan.

#### Prayer — nourishment for the spirit.

Just as food is essential for the life, health and development of the human body, the human soul also requires sustenance for its well-being, progress and existence. This spiritual nourishment is provided by the institution of prayer. This is the reason why so much stress has been laid on prayer in the Holy Quran and Hadith, and it is a major edict of Islam. The human spirit which receives such nourishment, stays healthy, develops, and remains alive. This is the greatest blessing for mankind. The Holy Quran explains this vital truth in these verses: "And strain not thine eyes toward that with which We have provided different classes of them, (of) the splendour of this world's life, that We may thereby try them. And the sustenance of thy Lord is better and more abiding. And enjoin prayer on thy people, and steadily adhere to it. We ask not of thee a sustenance. We provide for thee. And the (good) end is for guarding against evil." (20:131,132)

This tells us that Allah has created different classes of men. Each class of men has been given variable

amounts of material possessions. Abundance of wealth, however, leads to a greater degree of trial, when man makes it the purpose of his life, despite the fact that the world is a temporary abode. The sorrow of leaving one's prized possessions, and the realization in the Hereafter of the immense loss sustained by not having exerted oneself for the greatest blessing, i.e. the love of Allah, is in itself akin to the torment of hell. In addition, one will have to account for all that he was given in this world. If he considered his worldly possessions a trust of God, and spent out of them according to Divine injunctions, he would be secure. His punishment, otherwise, would be that of a dishonest person who betrays a trust given to him.

The attraction of material wealth is very evident in this age of tribulation of the Dajjal, and for the members of the Ahmadiyya Movement, to whom the identity of the Dajjal was correctly revealed by the Founder of this Movement, it is very essential not to be led astray by the abundance of wealth. The only way that this can be accomplished is explained in the Divine words that follow: "And the sustenance of thy Lord is better and more abiding. And enjoin prayer on thy people, and steadily adhere to it. We ask not of thee a sustenance. We provide for thee. And the (good) end is for guarding against evil."

The believer is told not to greedily long for the fineries of this world. Worldly sustenance is temporary, and one is held accountable for its appropriate disposal. For him the everlasting reward is the spiritual sustenance which is bestowed without the need for accountability, and is of a far superior quality — this spiritual sustenance only being acquired through prayer.

The Holy Quran is such a wonderful book of knowledge and profound wisdom that while mentioning prayer, it first enjoins the believer to ask his family to keep it up, and also provide a strong personal example of steadfastness in doing so himself. This is because even in case of physical sustenance, man gives preference to his wife and children. A large portion of his earnings is spent for food and clothing and other necessities for his family. The man of the house, who is usually the breadwinner, spends very little on himself. Thus man is told that just as he worries for the physical maintenance of his family, he should be even more concerned for their spiritual well-being. In order to accomplish this he is advised not only to enjoin them to keep up prayer, but also to keep up prayer in person so as to set an example. Without a personal example it would be difficult to get their compliance.

We are then told that Allah provides us with physical sustenance, and does not ask us for it. In a similar manner, when He enjoins prayer, it is not for His own benefit. It is purely for the good of mankind, and provides him with spiritual sustenance which is essential, much superior, and everlasting. The final comment is that taqwa (keeping one's duty, guarding against evil) leads to a better end. This means that we should keep up our duty in regards to the physical sustenance given to us, for we will be held accountable for it and utilize the spiritual sustenance provided in the form of prayer to strengthen and keep our spirit healthy, so that we can control our animal desires. If the animal within is left unbridled, it will weaken the defenses against evil (taqwa), resulting in loss and torment of hell.

Keeping up of prayer means that it is not merely recited but said with full understanding, and the realization that one is standing in front of Allah. It should be considered a great privilege to be given the opportunity to stand before the Best of judges, five times a day. The words of the prayer create the most excellent concept of the Divine Being, and His attributes (provided, prayer is kept up, and not just said in a hurry). Prayer also strengthens the belief in our hearts that Allah, the Possessor of all perfect attributes, is with us all the time; He sees us, and we can pray to Him wherever we are. He is able to hear our prayers, and is Aware of our inner secrets. This is why during prayer we stand with our hands folded, bow down and prostrate; and some of the prayer is recited loudly while the rest is said in silence. When faith firmly becomes established in all of these concepts, the truth of the Quranic statement, "Surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil" (29:45), is fully manifested. This means that no dirt or evil collects in one's heart, or remains behind as a part of his actions. He reaches the state of taqwa or guarding against evil, which is a great achievement.

### **Spiritual ascension through prayer.**

The Holy Prophet said: "Prayer is the ascension (Mi'raj) of the believer." Now the event of Mi'raj (Ascension) is well-known to the Muslims. The Holy Prophet in a state of vision (kashf) ascended to the spiritual heavens. He progressed in spiritual status beyond the level of all other prophets. At a certain point in this spiritual journey, the Angel Gabriel who escorted him also parted his company, stating that from there on he would not be able to withstand the manifestation of the Divine presence. He advised the Holy Prophet to go on further by himself. As the Holy Prophet proceeded, he came in the presence of Allah. He sat down respectfully with his legs folded in front of Allah and said: "All services rendered by words,

and bodily actions, and sacrifice of wealth are due to Allah.”

To this Allah replied: “Peace be on thee, O Prophet, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings.”

To this the Holy Prophet answered: “Peace be upon us, and on the righteous servants of Allah.”

What other conversation took place during this spiritual encounter is not recorded. The extraordinary precious treasure or reward, however, that he brought back with him was the permission for his followers to pray five times a day. The lessons that we learn from these events of the Ascension (M i'raj) are as follows:

1. If we follow completely the footsteps of the Holy Prophet, we can ascend to those highest levels in the life after death, where we have to go eventually.
2. By completely following the path of the Holy Prophet, one can progress further than the reach of the angels. The Quran also tells us that if a man truly becomes the vicegerent of Allah, angels are committed to bow before him.
3. The spiritual status achieved by the Holy Prophet is the ultimate stage of Fana-fi-Allah (losing oneself completely in Allah). At this stage every word, action, and possession is spent in the way of Allah, and under His direction. This is apparent from the words of the Holy Prophet: “All prayers and worship rendered through words, bodily actions and sacrifice of wealth are due to Allah.”
4. As a result of this complete obedience and service with humility, Allah rewarded the Holy Prophet with peace, mercy and everlasting blessings in this world, and the Hereafter. He immediately conveyed these to his followers, and all the righteous servants of Allah, because he knew that whenever Allah says something it is fulfilled. This is clearly indicated by his words, “Peace be upon us and the righteous servants of Allah.” In these words we see a remarkable display of the feelings of selflessness, love and caring for humanity that the heart of the Holy Prophet was endowed with. These words also show that the spirit which is from God remains restless until it achieves peace by communion with Allah through prayer.
5. Going directly into the Divine presence is a historically unique occurrence. What did the Holy Prophet request from Allah? He asked Allah to bless His followers with the same honor and blessing that he was blessed with in obtaining nearness to God. The permission to pray five times a day was granted for this very purpose. How unfortunate is the one who keeps himself deprived of this blessing, and does not keep up prayer; or merely recites it as a custom without acquiring its full benefit.

6. The Holy Prophet has called prayer the Ascension (M i'raj) of the believer. This tells us that prayer is the means to get close to Allah, and recognize Him. The conversation which took place between Allah and him, is recited in the obligatory prayer service after the prostration. From this it is quite apparent that prostration is the posture of closest proximity to the Divine Being. Prolong your prostration and understand what is being recited, i.e., “My Lord is free of all faults, and He is the most High.” In reciting these words, we are imploring Allah, Who has created the means for our spiritual evolution; just as He is free of all faults, may He nurture our spiritual progress, so that we can obtain freedom from all our shortcomings; just as He is the most High, due to His goodness and perfect attributes, may He create good qualities in us. If this prayer is rendered sincerely, in it lie all the blessings of this life, and the Hereafter. Besides the prayers of the Hadith and the Holy Quran, if one has to make any other request before Allah, he can pray in his own language. Say prayers with the shedding of tears, for prostration is the time when one is closest to God. When a child wraps his arms around his mother and cries, maternal feelings of love and mercy are aroused. Crying of the suppliant in prostration evokes an outpouring of Divine mercy; for who is more Merciful and Bounteous than Allah?

7.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Reformer (Mujaddid) of the fourteenth century Hijra and the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, expresses this in one of his books, *Barakat-ud-du'a*, or ‘The Blessings of Prayer’:

“This strange occurrence took place in the desolate country of Arabia that hundreds and thousands of dead were raised to life in a short period of time and those who were decadent for generations took the coloring of Allah. Those devoid of vision began to see, and the speechless became fluent in Divine knowledge. The world saw a change which nobody had heard of, or witnessed before. Do you know what it was? It was the crying in the dark nights of one lost in the love of Allah that brought about this momentous change, and such miraculous happenings were manifested which seemed impossible at the hands of the helpless unlettered one, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.”

He then states:

“I am also observing this from my own personal experience that the effect of prayer is stronger than that of fire and water. In fact, in the realm of natural means, there is nothing more powerful than prayer.”

May Allah give us the strength and understanding to keep up prayer — the means of spiritual sustenance. Ameen.

## **TOLERANCE AND MUTUAL RESPECT IN ISLAM**

*By Sheikh Omar El Bastawisy (Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, Cairo, Egypt)*

*[This article is a transcript of a speech delivered at the Symposium titled "The Quran: A Response to Recent Controversies Concerning Islam's Holy Book", held in conjunction with the Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Society's 2011 International Convention in Columbus, Ohio on July 9, 2011. Sheikh Omar El Bastawisy is a scholar from the prestigious and most respected Al-Azhar Al-Sharif in Cairo, Egypt. Sheikh Bastawisy held the esteemed position of Director and Head of the Office of the Grand Imam. Sheikh Bastawisy is a close friend of the U.S. branch of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement and, in particular, has been an incredibly valuable resource for Samina Malik (the Vice-President of the U.S. based Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Society), in her collaborative works with Al Azhar. In this article, Sheikh Bastawisy very eloquently canvasses the landscape of tolerance and mutual respect in Islam. His presentation at the Symposium was appreciated by all, especially the members of the various interfaith groups in attendance.]*

Assalamu aleikum (May Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon you). The topic I will speak on today is titled "Tolerance and Mutual Respect in Islam".

### **Freedom of Belief and Conscience**

One of the manifestations of tolerance in Islam is the freedom of belief that Islam guarantees for human beings. This is clearly stated in the Holy Quran when Allah, the Most Exalted, says: "There is no compulsion in religion..." [The Cow 2: 256]. Compulsion to renounce one's religion and convert to another religion is forbidden, for belief is based on the freedom of choice. This is clearly emphasized in the Holy Quran; Allah, the Most High, says: "...so let him who please believe, and let him who please disbelieve..." [The Cave 18: 29].

Tolerance is exemplified by The Holy Prophet [May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him] in his declaration of religious freedom in the first constitution of the Islamic State in Madinah when he acknowledged that the Jews and the Muslims together formed one nation. Based on the religious freedom and tolerance guaranteed by Islam, the Second Early Caliph, 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, [May Allah be pleased with him] granted the Christians of Jerusalem an assurance of safety for their lives, churches and crosses, assuring them that none of them would be harmed nor compelled on account of his religion.

### **Freedom of Thought and Expression**

Tolerance of Islam is also evident in the fact that Islam grants freedom to conduct religious discussions on an

objective basis, far from abuse or ridicule. In this regard, Allah, the Most Exalted, says in the Holy Quran: "Call to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the best manner..." [The Bee 16: 125]. Based on these tolerant principles, the dialogue should be conducted between Muslims and Non-Muslims. The Holy Quran invites the People of the Book to this. Allah, the Most High, says: "Say: O People of the Book, come to an equitable word between us and you, that we shall serve none but Allah and that we shall not associate aught with Him, and that some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah. But if they turn away, then say: Bear witness, we are Muslims." [The Family of 'Amran 3: 64]. This means that should the dialogue between both parties fail to accomplish its aim, every person has his own religion in which he believes. This is expressed in the last verse of the Chapter entitled "The Disbelievers" which is concluded by the Divine revelation to the Holy Prophet Muhammad [May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him], addressed to the disbelievers: "You have your religion, and I have my religion." [The Disbelievers 109: 6].

### **Liberal View of Other Religions**

Muslims honor and revere all prophets and messengers of Allah. They make no distinction between any of them, for it is a fundamental article of faith in Islam that a Muslim cannot be a true believer until and unless he believes in all messengers of Allah [Mighty and Majestic be He], not only in Muhammad [May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him], Allah, the Most High, says: "And those who believe in Allah and His messengers and make no distinction between any of them, to them He will grant their rewards. And Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful." [The Women 4: 152]. The Messenger of Allah [May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him] lauded his fellow Messengers of other religions. About Jesus [May Allah's peace be upon him], he said: "Both in this world and in the Hereafter, I am the nearest of all the people to Jesus, the Son of Mary. The Prophets are all paternal brothers; their mothers are different, but their religion is one". Prophet Muhammad [prayers and peace be upon him] so venerated Moses [Peace be upon him] that when the Prophet came to Madinah and found the Jews fasting the day of 'Ashura', he asked them: "Why are you fasting this day?". They said: "This is a righteous day; it is the day when Allah saved the Children of Israel from their enemies, so Moses fasted on this day." He said: "We have more right to Moses than you," so he fasted on that day and commanded [the Muslims] to fast on that day. Messenger Muhammad [May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him] spoke of his fellow Prophet



Joseph [Peace be upon him] in laudatory terms: "The honorable, the son of the honorable ... (was) Joseph, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham [Peace be upon them all]".

### No Compulsion in Matters of Faith ...

Thus, we find that Islam's tolerance is well reflected in the fact that Islam has never coerced its opponents to enter into it. Rather, it grants Non-Muslims the full freedom to retain their own religion and does not force them to convert to Islam. This is clearly stated in the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet. Allah, the Most Exalted, says: "And if thy Lord had pleased, all those who are in the earth would have believed, all of them. Wilt thou then force men till they are believers?" [Jonah 10: 99]. The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad, [May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him] gave Non-Muslims the option either to accept Islam or to retain their faith. He even concluded with Non-Muslims covenants of protection for their religion, honor and property. According to US Professor Edon Calgerity, the Quran contains a holy verse abounding in truth and wisdom. This verse is well known to all Muslims and must also be known to Non-Muslims. It runs as follows: "There is no compulsion in religion". This verse was revealed regarding some men of Al-Ansar (the Helpers) whose children embraced Judaism or Christianity. With the advent of Islam, they tried to force their children to convert to the new religion. So, this verse was revealed to forbid them from forcibly converting their children to Islam.

Allah, the Most Exalted, says: "And say: The Truth is from your Lord; so let him who please believe, and let him who please disbelieve..." [The Cave 18: 29]. Therefore, Muslims offered Non-Muslims conversion to Islam without compulsion or coercion. When King Al-Mansour Qalawun had mistakenly forced ahl al-dhimma [People of the Covenant] to accept Islam in 680 A.H, and such people had forcibly converted to Islam, this sparked the fury of Muslim religious scholars and judges in his time. Six months later, the board of religious scholars was held and resolved that such people forcibly converted to Islam and that forced conversion to Islam is disallowed, therefore they are allowed to revert to their old religion. So, the majority of such people reverted to their religion. Is it not a tolerance displayed by Islam and a respect for other religions? The Italian Dr. Laura Veccia Vaglieri says: "Once the Muslims concluded agreements with peoples, they granted them the freedom of religion and did not force them to enter into Islam. Furthermore, Muslim armies were not followed by a great multitude of undesirable, importunate missionaries nor did they place Muslim missionaries in privileged positions in order to propagate or defend their religion. In a certain period of time, Muslims stipulated that whoever wishes to accept Islam must take a certain measure that undoubtedly would

not facilitate the propagation of Islam. They required that whoever wishes to embrace the new religion must appear before the judge and declare that they accepted Islam without any pressure and that their conversion is not motivated by any worldly gain". It is also tolerant that Islam has not only granted Non-Muslims the freedom to retain their religion, but also its tolerant Shari'a has allowed Non-Muslims to practice their religious rituals and granted protection for their places of worship. Allah, the Most High, says: "... And if Allah did not repel some people by others, cloisters, and churches, and synagogues, and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered, would have been pulled down..." [The Pilgrimage 22:40]. When commanders of Muslim armies conquered any country, the caliphs advised them to display such tolerance. Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq [May Allah be pleased with him] commanded Usama Ibn Zayd as follows: "I command you to do 10 things: kill no woman, no child, nor an elderly person; do not cut down fruit trees, or vandalize homes, or wound a sheep or camel except if you must eat it; do not drown a palm tree, or burn it, do not be treacherous; do not be cowardly; and you will pass by people who have devoted themselves to monastery life; leave them alone to their devotions".

### Historical Examples

Including the people of Ilyaa "Jerusalem" in his covenant, 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab [May Allah be pleased with him] said: "This is an assurance of peace and protection given by the servant of Allah 'Umar, Commander of the Believers to the people of Ilyaa. He gave them an assurance of protection for their lives, property, church and crosses as well as the sick and healthy and all its religious community. Their churches shall not be occupied, demolished nor taken away wholly or in part. None of their crosses nor property shall be seized. They shall not be coerced in their religion nor shall any of them be injured."

Covenants and pacts with Non-Muslims were translated into practical behavior, namely respecting their beliefs, shari'as [religious laws] and customs and not compelling nor coercing them to convert to Islam. Such freedom had a wonderful impression on Non-Muslims, for they were not accustomed to such noble virtues.

Muslims protected and did not cause any harm to the places of worship of others. In a letter sent to Simeon, Metropolitan of Rev-Ardashir, Primate of Persia, the Nestorian Patriarch, Isho-yabh III says: "The Arabs, to whom God at this time had given the empire of the world, behold, they are among you as you know well; and yet they attack not the Christian faith, but on the contrary, they favor our religion, do honor to our priests and the saints of the Lord and confer benefits on churches and monasteries".



The Unbiased Western historians acknowledged this great tolerance of Islam. Gustav Le Bon said: "The tolerance of Muhammad towards the Jews and Christians was truly grand; the founders of other religions that appeared before him, Judaism and Christianity in particular, did not prescribe such goodwill. His caliphs followed the same policy, and his tolerance has been acknowledged by some European skeptics and believers alike when they study the history of the Arabs in depth". The Italian Laura Veccia Vaglieri said: "... such people known as ahl al-dhimma [People of the Covenant] were granted as much protection as the Muslim community". Given the fact that the deeds of the Messenger [May Allah's blessings and peace be upon him] and the Early Caliphs later became a law followed by Muslims, it is not exaggeration to insist that Islam does not only preach religious tolerance, but also makes tolerance an essential part of its Shari'a. Non-Muslims have been shown by Muslims such tolerance as not displayed by opposing denominations of their faiths. The Christians in Syria wrote to Abu 'Ubaidah 'Amer Ibn Al-Jarrah [May Allah be pleased with him], the commander of the Muslim army during the conquest of Syria in the camp called "Fahl", saying: "Oh Muslims, you are more beloved to us than the Romans, even though the Romans share our religion. You are more true to your covenants, more accommodating to us, and you don't oppress us, and you are just rulers, but Romans, they would oppress us and take away our homes."

Thus, we find out that when Islam made its appearance more than fourteen centuries ago as the seal of all divine messages and the last link in the chain of divine revelation, of all the religions that man has ever known, whether they are divine or earthly, it has been distinguished by tolerance and mutual respect. It has conveyed to people the last revealed Word of God on earth. Islam has not denied any of the previous prophets and messengers of Allah nor their revealed divine scriptures. It has not forced any of the followers of previous divine religions to convert to Islam. Rather, it has made belief in all prophets of Allah and their revealed scriptures a fundamental article of faith in Islam without which faith is invalid. This tolerant attitude of Islam towards previous religions should be met with similar tolerance and reduce the number of opponents of Islam. Allah, the Most Exalted, says in the Holy Quran: "The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. They all believe in God and His angels and His Books and His messengers. We make no difference between any of His messengers. And they say: We hear and obey; our Lord, Thy forgiveness (do we crave), and to Thee is the eventual course." [The Cow 2: 285].

### Contemporary Attitudes

Today, Islam is the recipient of many fierce campaigns against it. No religion in the world today is exposed

to as much flagrant oppression and calumny in the international media as Islam. This shows that there is a lack of understanding surrounding the religion of Islam and a misunderstanding of its tolerant teachings, whether deliberate or intentional. Moreover, there is an evident confusion between Islam as a religion and some foolish actions which are committed by some Muslims in the name of Islam and which the religion is innocent of. To confront this, we should double our scholarly efforts in order to present and widely spread the true picture of Islam. Thanks to Allah, the discerning Non-Muslims are well aware of, and bear witness to, these effects. Never in the history of Islam have Muslim religious scholars failed to fulfill their duty to present the tolerance, ease and moderation of Islam. Fairness requires that Islam should be judged on the basis of an objective and unbiased study of the fundamentals of Islam, not on the basis of rumors, false accusations and groundless, preconceived judgments.

### Importance of Bonds of Fraternity

In its primary sources, Islam invites Muslims to unity and solidarity and warns them against disunity and dissension. Allah, the Most High, says: "And hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited ..." [The Family of 'Amran 3: 103]. It also calls for sympathy with others and alleviating their pains and compares all Muslim people to one human body. The Messenger of Allah [May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him] said: "You will see the believers in their mutual kindness, love and sympathy just like one body. When a limb complains, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever".

Islam places bonds of faith and fraternity on an equal footing. Allah, the Most High, says: "The believers are brethren..." [The Rooms 49: 10]. This establishes the foundations of Islam that achieve peace and security all over the world. Mutual respect among followers of different religions means that followers of different religions should not have contempt for each other and symbols of religions should be respected, so that this concept prevails among all people.

Whoever wants to understand Islam should communicate with prestigious religious organizations such as the more than 1000-year-old Al-Azhar Al-Sharif. Dialogue and communication should be conducted on matters of mutual interest, not on the core of belief, for, as we have already said, every person has the freedom to choose his religion. As it is always said, compulsion in matters of religion does not produce true believers, but rather hypocrites.

Tolerance and mutual respect are displayed in the salutation of Assalamu 'Alaikum [peace be upon you]. Islam admits that all humans are brothers or sisters in

humanity and that they originated from a single father, Adam, [peace be upon him] and a single mother, Eve. Difference in faiths does not prevent cooperation among all humans. Allah [Exalted be He] says: "O mankind, surely We have created you from a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other. Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful of you..." [The Rooms 49: 13].

#### **Islam and the Foundation for Peaceful Relations**

The word "Islam" means submission to the Will of Allah and sincere devotion to Him [Glorified and Exalted be He]. Islam is the religion of all prophets. All prophets were sent down with the same message, namely to sincerely worship Allah and possess noble virtues.

Islam is peace. The term "Islam" is derived from the word "salaam" [peace]. These two terms -Islam and salaam- concur in that they carry the sense of bringing about safety, serenity and cooperation among all people in righteousness and piety, these people being all descendents of one and same origin, as Allah, the Most High, says: "O people, keep your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind), and spread from these two many men and women..." [The Women 4: 1]. The word "salaam" occurs more than thirty times in the Holy Quran. The recurrent use of this word, in various situations and in different styles, attracts attention to this lofty basic principle. Peace opens hearts, minds and sentiments up to planting the virtue of brotherhood among all humans and exchanging among men the bounties that Allah made permissible for them, and spreads a sense of safety and serenity among individuals and communities. One of the virtues of the term "salaam" is that it is one of the magnificent names of Allah, as Allah, the Most High, says: "He is Allah, besides Whom there is no God; the King, the Holy, the Author of Peace, the Granter of Security, Guardian over all, the Mighty, the Supreme, the Possessor of Greatness. Glory be to Allah from that which they set up (with Him)!" [The Banishment 59: 23]. Al-salaam is also the greeting that is exchanged among the people of faith. When meeting a fellow Muslim, the Muslim says: Assalamu 'Alaikum [peace be upon you], i.e. may you and us be safe. In the Noble Hadith, the Messenger of Allah [May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him] said: "Allah made "salaam" the greeting of our ummah [community], and a profession of peace towards our dhimmis [People of Covenant]". When the Muslim finishes his prayer, he salutes to his right, saying: "May peace and Allah's mercy be upon you" and to his left, saying: "May peace and Allah's mercy be upon you". The greeting that the believers receive from their Creator in Paradise is al-salaam. Allah, the Most

High, says: "Their salutation on the day they meet Him will be, Peace!.." [The Allies 33:44]. The greeting that Angels bestow upon believers in Paradise is al-salaam. Allah, the Most Sublime, says: "... and the angels will enter in upon them from every gate. Peace be to you, because you were constant — how excellent is then the final Abode!" [Thunder 13: 23-24]. The greeting that the believers in Paradise exchange is al-salaam, as Allah says: "They will hear therein no vain discourse, but only, Peace! And they have their sustenance therein, morning and evening." [Mary 19: 62].

Dar Al-Salaam [Abode of Peace] is one of the names of Paradise, as Allah, the Most High, says: "And Allah invites to the abode of peace, and guides whom He pleases to the right path." [Jonah 10: 25]. This means that the Almighty invites His servants to enter Paradise through faith and good deeds and guides whom He pleases to the right path. A frequently invoked prayer of the Messenger [May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him] is: "O Allah, You are the Peace and from You comes peace, so greet us with the salutation of peace".

Thus, it becomes clear to any rational person that the Islamic Shari'a considers peace among people as the basis of all human relations. When minds are safe from perversion, souls free from greeds, hearts purified from sins and emotions filled with true faith, then goodness will prevail among people and they will cooperate with each other in righteousness and piety, not in sin and aggression. In order for the rhythm of life to be regulated, prosperity to be promoted and goodness to prevail among people, people should cooperate with each other to fulfill their interests and needs and provide aid and help to the needy. The Arabic poet says:

*Whoever does good will be recompensed for it  
Allah will not waste the reward of those who do  
good deeds.*

Our meeting today in this Special Conference presented by the Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Society and participation with such elite scholars, thinkers and researchers make us look forward with great hope to the future, the events of the conference to be organized and the resolutions and recommendations to be made. We are all required to cooperate and work together in order to achieve security, peace and tolerance.

We ask Allah, the Most Sublime and All-Powerful to grant us success to do what benefits the whole mankind and what Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, loves and is pleased with. Verily Allah is All-Hearing and Responsive. He is the best Protector and best Helper.

## ISLAM IN THE WORLD TODAY

*An introduction to the fundamentals of the faith and an assessment of extremist propaganda*  
By Fazeel S. Khan, Esq.

[This article is a transcript of a presentation delivered at the Columbus Rotary Club. The Rotary Club is well known for its business and executive membership and its valuable contributions to community service. The Columbus chapter is currently the second largest in the country. The membership requested a Muslim speaker to provide insight into the contemporary Muslim world. Accordingly, the presentation dealt with a short background on the basics of the faith and then focused on two major misconceptions, that of Islam's teachings on war/jihad and its compatibility with democracy as a governing system.]

### 1. The Essence of the Faith

The word "Islam" is derived from the Arabic word "silm", meaning "peace". So, the religion is neither named after its founder nor the place from which it originated, as is the case with other faiths, but rather is titled after the objective to which it aspires. The attainment of peace – within the individual, amongst people, and between man and God – is the lofty goal Islam prescribes as the very purpose of life. "Peace", therefore, is the very essence of the faith.

And it was this simple message that encapsulated the essence of this faith, that inspired its adherents to strive to contribute toward the advancement of civilization. History shows that from every area of science, to every aspect of civil society (including, politics, commerce, economics, and education), to all spheres of the arts, Muslims, either through invention or by building upon earlier knowledge, provided the world with gifts that set a trajectory for the development of the civilized world. Muslims of the early Islamic empires are commonly recognized as being preservers of the past and providers for the future.

I would like to read to you a passage from a speech that I believe very eloquently relates the legacy of Islamic contributions to modern civilization. The author of the speech is Carly Fiorina. Ms. Fiorina is the former CEO of the technology giant Hewlett-Packard, she was also a top advisor to Republican presidential candidate John McCain and a candidate for the U.S Senate representing California. While speaking of "management" and "leadership" at a conference during her tenure at Hewlett Packard, Ms. Fiorina stated the following:

There was once a civilization that was the greatest in the world. It was able to create a continental super-state that stretched from ocean to ocean, and from northern climes to tropics and deserts. Within its dominion lived hundreds of millions of people, of different creeds and ethnic origins.

One of its languages became the universal language of much of the world, the bridge between the peoples of a hundred lands. Its armies were made up of people of many nationalities, and its military protection allowed a degree

of peace and prosperity that had never been known. The reach of this civilization's commerce extended from Latin America to , and everywhere in between.

And this civilization was driven more than anything, by invention. Its architects designed buildings that defied gravity. Its mathematicians created the algebra and algorithms that would enable the building of computers, and the creation of encryption. Its doctors examined the human body, and found new cures for disease. Its astronomers looked into the heavens, named the stars, and paved the way for space travel and exploration.

Its writers created thousands of stories. Stories of courage, romance and magic. Its poets wrote of love, when others before them were too steeped in fear to think of such things.

When other nations were afraid of ideas, this civilization thrived on them, and kept them alive. When censors threatened to wipe out knowledge from past civilizations, this civilization kept the knowledge alive, and passed it on to others.

While modern Western civilization shares many of these traits, the civilization I'm talking about was the Islamic world from the year 800 to 1600, which included the Ottoman Empire and the courts of, and, and enlightened rulers like Suleiman the Magnificent. Although we are often unaware of our indebtedness to this other civilization, its gifts are very much a part of our heritage.

### 2. Distorted Perception Today

Today, however – far from being viewed as a spiritual faith, founded on the notion of peace, and a primary source of development for civilization – Islam is viewed as a violent and intolerant faith that is inherently incompatible with the civil and democratic ideals accepted by the modern world.

Recent polls (Washington Post) show nearly half (49%) of Americans have a negative view of Islam. More than a quarter (26%) admit to having at least some prejudice against Muslims. We see 2/3 of Americans (66%) opposing the efforts of Muslims to build a community center (which happens to also include a prayer area) two blocks away from Ground Zero because its considered too close.

Obviously, these negative perceptions are based on some reality. Extremists of the Muslim faith have engaged in terrorist attacks in various places and claim that their actions are a "jihad" and are in compliance with what their faith mandates. In the same vein, we hear from extremists that Islamic governance cannot be reconciled with western-style democracies and, as a result, Muslims are required to fight to withstand the imposition of man-made laws that diminish the sovereignty of God on earth.

These two views are entirely without merit and those who subscribe to them, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, are simply wrong. These two views find no support in the primary sources of Islam; they are simply tools used to further political ambitions. I'd like to address both of these views.

### 3. War and Jihad

First, Islam does not advocate war; far from it, as already explained, it requires Muslims to do good to others so that peace may be established on earth. In particular, the Arabic word "jihad", which many people believe to be synonymous with the term "holy war", simply means "striving hard". It implies an exertion on one's part to the best of his or her ability for the purpose of improving a condition. And its primary significance is the striving against one's inner passions, to bring about reform within one's self and to improve the conditions of others in society. So, a laborer determined to work hard to support his or her family, so that they will not become dependents of the state, is a type of "jihad".

A father or mother working hard to raise their children properly so that they will exhibit good moral values when they grow up, is a type of "jihad". A student working hard to earn a degree for the purpose of contributing to society in a positive way is a type of "jihad". In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad once said:

"The most excellent jihad is to say a word of truth before an unjust ruler". There is no doubt, though, that the Quran (the holy scripture of Islam) does contain verses dealing with war. Although "peace" is the goal in Islam, "war" is permissible under certain circumstances as an "exception" and only a means to the end; war is permissible only for purposes of trying to maintain peace. In fact, the wellknown "Just War" Theory, accepted by all western nations in some form or the other, is strikingly similar to the concept of justified war in Islam. Just as the "Just War" Theory attempts to reconcile the feelings of moral abhorrence towards war with an acknowledgment that war may sometimes be necessary, so too does Islam balance this conflict of interests. And, the Holy Quran provides clear guidance as to the proper conditions under which war may be permissible or justified; it states:

Permission (to fight) is given to those on whom war is made, because they are oppressed. (22:39) So, the Quran permits Muslims to engage in war only in self-defense; that is, when being "oppressed" by others. And what does "oppression" mean? Well, the Quran does not leave this important question unanswered; in the very next verse it explains: Those who are driven from their homes without a just cause except that they say: Our Lord is God. And if God did not repel some people by others, cloisters, and churches, and synagogues, and mosques in which God's name is much remembered, would have been pulled down. (22:40)

So, the type of "oppression" that justifies military conflict in Islam is when the rights to life and liberty are appropriated and freedom of religion (for all) is annexed. The Quran permits fighting in order to establish peace and order and halt the unlawful deprivation of rights (in particular, religious freedom).

Clearly, this is a polar opposite to the propaganda of "extremists" who claim the Quran instructs Muslims to fight others in order to compel them to follow Islam or in order to establish a so-called "Islamic State". There is simply nothing "extreme" about the Islamic position on war; neither does it sanction it without strict conditions, nor does it require a wholesale prohibition under every possible circumstance. Rather, a balanced and practical approach is provided.

### 4. Democracy

Moving on to the other common misunderstood view - it is believed by many that Islam's teachings on governance or statehood is incompatible with the values underlying a democratic political system and rather requires the people to be governed by autocratic regimes.

Recent events in the Middle East show convincingly that this is not the understanding of the masses. But what does the Quran have to say - are the Quranic principles of governance compatible with "democracy"? Well, first the term "democracy" itself needs to be understood. The word democracy has no single definition.

It means different things to different people. For some, it equates to a system of governance wherein a written constitution is supreme. The British and Israelis though would necessarily disagree, for they have no written constitution. For others, it means a governing structure wherein persons are elected strictly by popular vote. This, however, does not hold true in representative democracies like the U.S. Still others view democracy as a political scheme whereby all people are guaranteed equality. Try reconciling this with the caste system prevalent in the so-called largest democracy in the world, India, or the years of slavery experienced in America's early history. In the most simple and basic terms, though, democracy may be defined as a system of governance wherein:

1. majority opinion is accepted, and 2) individual/minority rights are protected. Both these criteria find explicit support in the Quran.

### Majority Rule

For instance, the essence of "majority rule" is openly declared in the Quran; while speaking of the true believers, it states: And those who respond to their Lord and keep up prayer, and whose affairs are decided by counsel among themselves ... (42:38)

In this verse we find the foundation for a government by counsel, or a parliamentary government. Clearly, in Islam, the people are not to be ruled by the whim of one person, but rather are to be consulted, or have their representatives consulted, as to how the affairs of public life are to be conducted. And this principle was put into practice by no other than Prophet Muhammad himself.

Authenticated reports show that he not only engaging in consultative processes with regard to administrative matters and state affairs, but also accepted the majority view despite his personal opinion at times being to the contrary. In fact, Prophet Muhammad was expressly commanded in the Quran to "consult them (i.e. the people) in important matters" (3:158).

The Quran also encourages the "majority rule" style government by laying the foundation for a "participatory system": Surely God commands you (the people) to make over positions of trust (in government and state affairs) to those worthy of them. (4:58) So, accordingly to this verse, it is the people, the general public, who possess the authority to make someone their representative. Again, authenticated reports show this principle was practically demonstrated in the early history of Islam by the Muslims "electing" the first four Caliphs (i.e. heads of state after Muhammad) either by agreement of all parties, by nomination after consultation with leading representatives of the community, or by appointment by an elective council. And the chosen representative was accountable to the people, being in a position of "trust". As Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, in his first public address after being elected, stated: You have elected me Caliph (head of state), but I claim no superiority over you ... Help me if I act rightly and correct me if I take a wrong course ... Obey me so long as I obey the laws and regulations. In case I disobey the laws and regulations, I have no right to obedience from you. So, the concepts of a "social contract" between the people and the government and the "rule of law" where leaders are accountable to the people for their actions, values that are hallmarks in democratic systems, are principles that were practiced in the early history of Islam and were derived from the provisions on governance in the Holy Quran.

### Individual/Minority Rights

Similarly, the fundamental elements of the minority/individual rights notion are unequivocally upheld in the Quran. The Quran affirms that all people, regardless of race, color or creed are equal: "All mankind is a single nation" (2:213). It also features what some believe to be the magna carta of religious tolerance by declaring: "There is no compulsion in matters of religion" (2:256).

With regard to gender equality, women were granted the right to inheritance, the right to property ownership and every other individual right granted to man. Even the protection against disparate treatment in pay, is advanced: "For men is the benefit of that they earn. And

for women the benefit of what they earn" (4:32). Keep in mind, this was all in the 6th century. And undisputed history bears testimony to the distinguished civil liberties enjoyed by non-Muslims under early Muslim rule, the protected status of Jews in Spain being an illustrious example.

### Conclusion

Now, why is it important to address these issues and point out the fallacies of the extremists' interpretations? Well, it is now becoming widely accepted that "ideology" is the center of gravity of Islamic extremist groups. It is recognized that defeating terrorism entails attacking the ideology upon which terrorists' base their causes, rather than simply focusing on a "capture and kill" type philosophy. Moreover, Islam should not be viewed as the problem; rather, a correct understanding of Islam can be the solution to combatting extremism in the Muslim world. Muslim extremists need to be stripped of the garb of Islam they have been wearing to address their political grievances.

And certainly Muslims have the primary responsibility in refuting the ideologies of extremists. And this is what the Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Society, the organization of which I am the Secretary, has been doing, not since 9/11, but for the past 100 years. We publish literature on Islam that is of such scholarship that all of the largest retailers in the country carry them and many universities use them as text books. But our main focus is on having these works translated into various languages of the world and distributed for free in foreign countries so that the ordinary Muslims may have the opportunity to learn about their religion for themselves in their own language and not rely on, what unfortunately is often the case, some politically motivated imam telling them what their religion is. This work takes us to Russia and Central Asia, all the way to the Philippines, to Nigeria and now even to the middle-east, where we have our literature certified by Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, so that it may be accessible throughout the Arab lands as well. Certainly a lot more needs to be done. But this is our contribution to help facilitate the establishment of peace in the world, by reclaiming our faith from extremists.

## TRUE CONCEPTION OF THE AHMADIYYAH MOVEMENT

*An introduction to some distinguishing features of this Islamic organization*

*By Maulana Muhammad Ali*

### Introduction

*[This article contains material from the booklet True Conception of the Ahmadiyya Movement published by Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam, (Lahore) USA. The booklet originally formed a chapter in the book Tahrik Ahmadiyya (The Ahmadiyya Movement) by Maulana Muhammad Ali, first published in 1931. This article highlights some of the distinctive features of the Ahmadiyya group and clarifies some of the popular misconceptions about it. The entire booklet is available at [www.muslim.org/bookspdf/trueconc/conts.htm](http://www.muslim.org/bookspdf/trueconc/conts.htm).]*

Many are the misconception prevailing among people about the Ahmadiyyah Movement. The greatest of all is

that it is a religion quite separate from Islam, like Bábism or Bahá'ism. The basis of this false idea is that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qádián, Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement, has laid a claim to prophethood. This allegation has already been refuted in the foregoing pages. But there are some who go to the extent of declaring that Ahmadís have a different kalimah (formula of Faith), a different form of prayer, a different Book besides the Qur'án and a different Qiblah.<sup>1</sup> All these charges have no foundation at all.

Had Ahmadiyyat been a separate religion, like Babi or Bahai faith, its activities obviously should not have been confined to the spread of Islam. Whatever work has

been done in this age about the propagation of Islam, in Europe, America and other countries of the world, the greater part of it is due to the efforts of the followers of the Ahmadiyyah Movement. In this connection, the literature produced by Muslims is either the result of the activities of this Movement or has been done under its influence. Had Ahmadiyyat been something different from or hostile to Islam, it should not have laid so much emphasis on establishing Muslim missions and spreading the Islamic literature all over the world. Bábism was in existence fifty years before the inception of the Ahmadiyyah Movement. Had it started any Islamic mission or published any Islamic literature? If Ahmads had a religion different from Islam, they must have directed their full efforts to the advancement of that 'new' faith, but as they are entirely engaged in the service of Islam, they cannot, and in fact do not, owe allegiance to any other religion except Islam.

It is, indeed true that a group from among the followers of Ahmad, i.e. the followers of the Qādiān section, have ascribed a claim of prophethood to him, but they are still in an intermediary state. Although, on account of their belief in such a prophethood, they have declared all the Muslims of the world to be unbelievers (kāfirs),<sup>2</sup> they have not yet adopted a new formula of faith (kalimah) for themselves. And, although according to their creed unless a person accepts Mirza Ghulām Ahmad as a prophet and formally takes on oath of allegiance to the effect, he does not enter the fold of Islam, so far they have refused to formulate a new kalimah for themselves and adhere only to the Islamic formula of faith:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

*There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is Allah's Messenger.*

But this is, as I have said, only an intermediary position, or a state of indecision. They would either, at last, give up the belief in the Founder's prophethood or formulate a separate kalimah and a separate religion for themselves.<sup>3</sup> The logical conclusion of their creed — that anybody who does not accept Mirza Ghulām Ahmad as a prophet is a kāfir and outside the pale of Islam<sup>4</sup> — is that the kalimah is not valid any more. When the acceptance of the existing kalimah does not keep a person within the fold of Islam — and even the four hundred million Muslims of the world who declare their faith in it are declared to be kāfirs and outside the pale of Islam — this kalimah must necessarily be considered as abrogated, and the messengership and prophethood of a person whose acceptance has become essential for entering the fold of Islam must form a part and parcel of the new kalimah. If the belief in the prophethood of Ahmad is not renounced, a time will come when these people shall have to formulate a separate kalimah and a separate religion, and their relation with Islam would become like that of Bábís or Bahá'ís, who regard Islam a genuine religion of the past, but, with regard to the present time, they consider their own faith alone as true, Islam and its kalimah having been abrogated by them. The Qādiān people have put themselves on the horns of a dilemma. They are trying to sail in two boats at a time. On the

one hand they declare four hundred million Muslims — believers in the kalimah — to be kāfirs and on the other they include themselves among Muslims, refusing to adopt a new kalimah and a new faith. But this condition cannot exist for long. Either the repulsiveness of such a doctrine would at last create an aversion in the minds of the majority of these people and they would refrain from attributing a claim of prophethood to the Founder or would accept the ultimate result of their belief, which is that the old kalimah shall have to be discarded to give place to a new one. Ahmadiyyah Movement, at any rate, was neither a new religion in its original form, nor has it, so far, grown to be a new religion among the followers of Mirza Ghulām Ahmad.

#### **It is not even a sect in the general sense of the term**

Every religion in the world is divided into sects which, generally, differ in their fundamentals with one another. For instance, some Christians regard Jesus Christ as God or son of God, and others take him to be a human being, and with advancement of knowledge this group is increasing in number. This means that believers in Triune God, as well as those who believe in one God, are all Christians. Similarly, among Hindus there are many who believe in one God, and there are others who worship idols and have faith in three hundred and thirty million gods. Some consider the Vedas as the spoken word of God and others take them to be the composition of human beings. Such differences, in fact, should be termed as fundamental sectarian differences. There are no differences and no sects in Islam in this respect. All the sects in Islam agree on the fundamentals of religion.

All believe in one God, in the finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad. All take the Qur'ān as the last revealed Book of God which has not suffered any change in text. All face towards the same Qiblah when praying. But with this uniformity of opinion that all believe in one God, one Messenger, one Qiblah and one Book there have been differences on minor points and details of religion. Some Muslim Imāms, after due consideration, have arrived at different conclusions with regard to certain matters of religious life. Various groups of Muslims followed these Imām according to their own choice, and this has resulted in the formation of different schools of thought in Islam. This is the real fact behind the growth of the so-called sects in Islam. Differences among these sects are not differences in the fundamentals of religion, but in matters of jurisprudence, or details of religious practices. And this type of difference of opinion is, in fact, a blessing as The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: Difference in my ummah is a blessing, because along with unity this opens a way for freedom of opinion. Liberty in views, and free exercise of judgement (ijtihād) is, in fact, a great blessing that helps in the advancement of knowledge and learning, and develops in every person the habit of deep thinking. The sectarian differences of Muslims are, therefore, of no real importance. But the foundation of Ahmadiyyah Movement has not been laid on any such sectarian differences. The chief characteristic of this Movement today has been the same as it was before, viz. the defence and propagation of Islam. Whatever differences this movement has with other Muslims, these are definitely not connected with matters of jurisprudence



or details of religious life but only with matters concerning the defence and propagation of Islam. The history of the Movement bears testimony to the fact that when Mirza Ghulām Afmad founded this organisation and made a declaration for an oath of allegiance, he did not differ with other Muslims on any religious doctrine.

The object of the formation of this organisation was only the protection and propagation of Islam. Although he had been devoting his whole time, even before that, to this noble object, at this stage, under Divine command, he set up a permanent basis for the spread of Islam according to the Qur'ānic verse: i.e. and from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right.<sup>5</sup> Immediately thereafter he started writing *Fatf Islām*, wherein he divided the work of the spread of Islam into five main branches. At this juncture, it was manifested to him that the belief in the physical ascension and continued existence of Jesus Christ was an obstacle in the way of the progress of Islam. It was on this Divine manifestation that his claim was based and it was because of this that Muslims started opposing him.

### Attitude towards jurisprudential problems

In all the matters of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) the attitude of Afmadīs is completely liberal. The detail of laws, viz. regulations of marriage, divorce, inheritance, prayer, fasting, ablution etc. which have caused great controversy among Muslim 'ulamā' do not worry them in the least. They enjoy full liberty in these matters. It would be quite correct to say that the Afmadiyyah Movements is rather a synthesis of the different schools of thought in Islam based on *fiqh* and invites them towards unity, by tolerating and ignoring their differences. Whatever minor differences Afmadiyyat has with other Muslim sects only relate, as already remarked, to the propagation and defence of Islam. Thus, if Afmadiyyat is a sect in Islam, it is unlike the sects of other religions, for there are no sects in Islam in that sense. It is again unlike other sects in Islam which are based on differences in *fiqh*, for in that sense it is a synthesis of all these sects. It is a sect in Islam in the sense that, for the furtherance of the cause of Islam, it has laid emphasis on certain points and has devised effective means to face the hostile forces working against Islam. The task for the internal reformation of Muslims itself falls within the scope of its programme.

### A Movement for Islam

Because of its distinctive features from other Islamic groups in certain respects, the Afmadiyyah group may be called a sect or school of thought in Islam, but it is in fact a great movement within the fold of Islam, the main object of which is to awaken Muslims and consolidate their efforts for the spread of Islam. Its object is not to concentrate on, and retain, differences of minor importance, as is done by other schools of thought in Islam. Its ideal is, however, far superior and beyond all sectarianism. If the only object of this movement is to prove the death of Jesus Christ and establish the truth of the claims of the Founder as the Promised Messiah, Mahdīs and Mujaddid, it may perhaps be classed as a sect like other sects in Islam. But that is not for which the Afmadiyyah Movement stands. These are only a means

to achieve an end. And what is that end? Spreading and strengthening the cause of Islam in the world and rousing up the Muslims for this sacred task.

### Death of Jesus Christ

Belief in the death of Jesus Christ is regarded to be the most important feature of the Afmadiyyah Movement. There have been Muslim divines, like Imām Bukhārīs and Imām Mālik, who believed in the death of Jesus Christ. Imām Bukhārīs, in his collection of *Īadīth*, has reported from Ibn 'Abbās that the significance of *mutawaffī-ka* is *mumītu-ka* (i.e. I will cause you to die)<sup>6</sup>. That is, he has not accepted the meaning of *tuwaffa* as the taking of body and soul together, as were accepted afterwards by some people. Imām Mālik, similarly, believed in the death of Jesus Christ: *wa qāla Mālik-un māta* i.e., and Mālik said he died<sup>7</sup>.

Belief in the death of Jesus Christ by two persons of such great caliber shows that there must be others, also from the earlier Muslim divines, who entertained a similar belief. The companions of the Holy Prophet seem to be all agreed upon this point. At the death of the Holy Prophet, those companions who could not believe the sad news to be true were silenced by Abū Bakr by the recitation of the verse: And Mufammad is no more than an apostle; the apostles before him have already passed away<sup>8</sup>. All the companions of the Holy Prophet were thus duly convinced that like all other prophets, their Prophet too had left this mundane life. This was the consensus of opinion of the companions of the Prophet over the death of Jesus Christ. Had anybody believed that Jesus was alive he must have pointed it out. In this age too the late Sir Sayyid Afmad of Aligarh, Muftī Mufammad 'Abduh and Sayyid Rashīd Ra'ā of Egypt, believed in the death of Jesus Christ<sup>9</sup>. Many other 'ulamā' of India also share this belief but are afraid of declaring it in public, as such a belief is sufficient to stigmatise them as pro-Afmadīs. People have grown suspicious to the extent that anybody who just mentions it, is considered to have secret alliance with the Afmadiyyah Movement. As the claim of the Founder is based on the death of Jesus Christ, the Muslim 'ulamā' and some of the present-day translators of the Holy Qur'ān are much hesitant in accepting this belief as true.

Apparently, the question of the life and death of Jesus Christ is neither one of the fundamentals of Islam nor a part of its *furū'* (lit. branches). Why is it, then, that it has become one of the distinguishing features of this movement? As it has been discussed before, the main object of the Afmadiyyah Movement is the propagation of Islam, particularly in the West, where it has to face the onslaughts of the Dajjāl (Antichrist); the belief in the corporal existence of Jesus Christ is the greatest obstacle in the propagation of Islam among Christian peoples. If Jesus Christ is alive in heavens with his body of clay for the last two thousand years, does not partake of food and is above the needs and necessities of this material life without suffering any change in his body, he is certainly not of human species. If he is actually endowed with these peculiarities, his body is immortal. This is the argument which is put forth by Christians very forcibly. Muslims who believe in the continued existence



of Jesus Christ fall an easy prey to them. The natural corollary of their strange belief is that Jesus Christ is far above a human being, rather a co-sharer in Divinity. It is not worthwhile, under these conditions, to go and preach Islam to Christians. For this reason the Founder of the Afmadiyyah Movement laid emphasis on eradicating such a false view about Jesus Christ.

### Significance of the Claims

The true conception of the Afmadiyyah Movement is only this, that it is a great movement for the propagation, spread and defence of Islam in the world, and all the distinguishing features it possesses are a means to achieve this great end. So much so that accepting the claims of the Founder is also not an object in itself but only a means to achieve the object of the spread of Islam. The greatest thing is that with the acceptance of these claims, one feels in oneself a very strong faith which invigorates one to make every sacrifice for the sake of Islam. The logic of this belief may or may not satisfy anybody, but the fact is that those who kept company with the Founder of the Movement, or came into spiritual contact with him after his death, felt a real zeal for the propagation of Islam and became fully convinced that Islam was going to overpower the world. It seems something is lacking in us that we do not rise up to the occasion and acquaint the world with the real teachings of Islam, otherwise Islam possesses such a spiritual beauty within it that, whether it is materialism which seems at present to sweep away everything along with it or the net of Christianity which seems to be spreading all over the world today or the dominance of any other force, all of them are going to be subdued by Islam, all heads have to bow down before its invincible principles of peace and spiritual well-being. This faith and this love for the religion of Islam inspire every Afmadī to do his best for the cause of Islam. Without faith and love, the will to sacrifice cannot exist. The spiritual contact with the Founder stimulates in Afmadīs this faith and love. Thus a change occurs in them as it does in a tree which has been engrafted upon.

That is why there is a tremendous difference between the attitude of an Afmadī and that of a non-Afmadī. The latter is waiting for somebody else to come and help him in the cause of Islam, and the former is convinced that this is his work that it is he who is responsible for it and has the power to do it. Difference in the outlook of these two persons is quite obvious. Waiting for Jesus Christ to come down from heaven is an escapist's refuge. Belief in the claims of the Founder stirs up Muslims and they know once for all that nobody else is coming from above to raise them from the slough of despondency to which they have deeply sunk. They have themselves to struggle hard for their own deliverance.

Those who enter into fealty with the Founder know it full well that the prophecies of the Holy Prophet have come true. It was foretold that the days of the glory of Islam will be followed by poverty and misery among Muslims but again, Islam will rise in its full splendour, and overpower the world with its spiritual force and the era of the onward march of Islam would start anew. This is the age when prophecies relating to the dominance of Islam with the

advent of Messiah are going to be fulfilled. It is our duty now to carry the message of Islam to all the corners of the world. The power to conquer the hearts is inherent in Islam. But the Muslims must work and sweat for its success.

The acceptance of the claims of the Founder has thus changed the lethargic attitude of his followers. It has given them a new power of faith which is palpable behind all the activities of the Afmadiyyah Movement. This is the only object in accepting Mirza Ghulām Afmad as the Promised Messiah, Mahdī and Mujaddid. This does not mean that Islam was incomplete before, and by accepting the Founder our religion has been perfected. Islam was indeed perfected at the time of the revelation of the verse: This day have I perfected for you your religion,<sup>10</sup> but the faith in man keeps on waxing or waning, as we have it in Bukhārī: "The faith increases and decreases".<sup>11</sup> Acceptance of the Founder's claim is a great source of enhancing our faith in Islam. The uphill task of the propagation of Islam cannot be done without this strong faith, particularly when this path is not strewn with outward honours and glories and it has not the thrills and attractions of an adventurous life like that of a politician.

### Ahmadiyyat is a true interpretation of Islam

Ahmadiyyat is thus a representation of Islam in the simple and pure form which attracted the world before and is even doing so now. In other words, Afmadiyyat is a true interpretation of the teachings of Islam and the Qur'ān. And the thing which distinguishes it from the other sects of Islam is only this that it removes the errors which had found place in Islamic teachings and manifests the inherent beauties of Islam which were thrown into oblivion by Muslims, so that Islam may attract the world once again.

Islam is a living religion which presents God Who is a living reality, Who spoke to His righteous servants before, and Who speaks with His righteous servants even now, and will continue to do so forever. Like His attributes of hearing and seeing, His attributes of communication with human beings has never been suspended. Although prophethood has come to an end, God's communication with His servants has not been stopped. But Muslims generally thought that God spoke before, but after the Holy Prophet, the doors of revelation were closed forever. Special stress has been laid by the Afmadiyyah Movement on this point of God speaking with man. That religion is dead, by following which man cannot attain the stage of communication with God. And as has been promised in the Qur'ān and the Īdāḡīth, God will always continue to speak with the righteous servants of this ummah.

Islam is a natural religion and appeals to the nature of man, the human nature being spontaneously attracted towards it. Unfortunately some of the Muslim leaders fell under the impression that Islam could be propagated with physical force also. Such thoughts were given free expression about the advent of Maḡdī, and the objections raised by non-Muslims with regard to the spread of Islam with sword were thus strengthened by Muslims themselves.

This caused great hatred among non-Muslims against Islam, which subsequently obstructed the way of the propagation of Islam. It was Afmadiyyat which clarified the whole issue by emphasising the point that there was no compulsion in religion<sup>12</sup>. Islam has been drawing people under its fold because of its beautiful teachings. It is the natural religion of mankind, a simple religion, devoid of all ethical and ritualistic intricacies. Even an illiterate person can understand its teachings. But Fiqh (jurisprudence) made the whole affair very complex. Simple beliefs and teachings of Islam gave place to hair-splitting logical discussion that did no good, except paralyse the practical life of Muslims. The Afmadiyyah Movement regained the lost original simplicity of Islam by placing above everything else the Qur'ân which was the real source of the teachings of Islam. The ʿĀdith comes next wherein the Holy prophet has explained and interpreted the teachings of the Qur'ân. Fiqh which is not the original source of the details of our life should not be given preference over the Qur'ân or ʿĀdith.

Islam is a rational religion. The Qur'ân very often enjoins its readers to apply their intellect, reason and understanding in matters of faith. But the 'ulamâ', in their narrow-mindedness, reached the stage that anybody who tried to understand religious matters on an intellectual level was dubbed as heretic. Afmadiyyat again threw light on this aspect, proved the authenticity of the principles of faith on rational basis and showed that reason and faith did not stand apart. They both supplemented each other. Reason proved the necessity and veracity of religion and gave light and guidance to reason. But some 'ulamâ' of today regarded science and scientific knowledge against religion and forbade Muslims to have any secular education. The Afmadiyyah Movement helped in removing such misunderstandings from Muslim minds, and made it clear that the material progress of the world would also, in the long run, lead mankind to higher spiritual progress beneficial to the cause of humanity. The denial of spiritual values was only due to lack of real knowledge of faith.

With the progress of knowledge Islam would also progress, for it was a rational religion, a religion that encouraged scientific outlook on life. Islam is truly a liberal and tolerant religion. It regards the entire human race as one nation and declares that, like physical and natural laws, there is only one spiritual law for the whole of humanity, and that every nation had its spiritual leaders who called people to righteousness. But this prominent feature of Islam was completely ignored. It was Afmadiyyat which threw light on this point as well, laid emphasis on the fact that the prophets were sent to every nation and thus revived the liberal and universal outlook of Islam. Islam is a progressive religion. Although the principles of Faith have been laid down in the Qur'ân and their explanations have been given in ʿĀdith to some extent according to the needs, as Islam is universal in its concept, and man is faced with a host of new problems with the advancement of civilization, the doors of ijtihād (exercise of judgment) in Islam have not been closed. That is, according to the needs of every age and every country, people have the right to work out their own laws best suited to their own requirements under the guidance

of the Qur'ân and ʿĀdith. Islam is no doubt a religion of unity and fraternity. According to the clear injunctions of the Qur'ân, nobody has any right to excommunicate a brother Muslim from Islam who declares his faith in the unity of God and Prophethood of Mufammad. But in this age different sects among Muslims thought that salvation was their exclusive privilege, and each declared the other to be heretics and the inmates of hell. Afmadiyyat revived the principle again that all the professors in the Kalimah were Muslims and nobody could dub a person kāfir who declared that There is no god but God: Mufammad is the messenger of God. Before Islam, religion was considered to be a combination of outward rituals and ceremonies, a source of getting future reward or escaping from future punishment.

Islam gave a new turn to the conception of religion, associated it with day to day activities of man, and made it a source of development of human faculties. Muslims again had forgotten this great fact about the teachings of Islam to which Afmadiyyat drew their attention. The Afmadiyyah Movement has also thrown light on many other problems concerning Islam.

### **Distinguishing Features of the Afmadiyyah Movement**

The foremost task to which the founder devoted his attention, after his claim of being a mujaddid, was to demonstrate this truth once more to the world that God still spoke to His righteous servants. This was, in fact, the main theme of his first book, the Barāhīn Afmadiyyah; and even afterwards, he has not laid so much emphasis on Jesus Christ's death as on this subject. The basis of his claim, in fact, was the point that communion of God with man continues and will remain so forever. His real claim was that of mujaddidiyyat, and a mujaddid (renovator) is a mufaddath whom God appoints to uphold the cause of religion. And mufaddath is a person who is not a prophet, but God communicates with him frequently. Thus the basis of the Founder's claim is that, in spite of the finality of Prophethood, God speaks with the righteous persons in this ummah. His claim of being the Promised Messiah is a part and parcel of his claim to mujaddidiyyat; it is just one aspect of his claim of being a mujaddid. This aspect, no doubt, is based on the conception of the death of Jesus Christ but the basis of his real claim, that is of his being the renovator, is the phenomenon of Divine communication. If we go through the matter a little carefully, we find that for the revival of faith in religion, the first point is to prove the authenticity of Divine communication with man as this has been most vehemently denied in this age. The conception of a mechanical God in the form of the cause of causes is even admitted by a materialist, but the real foundation of religion was, and is, on the fact of God's communication with man. All nations of the world consider some book or the other to be the word of God, which shows that the basis of almost all religions is the phenomenon of Divine revelation. But there is no religion except Islam that advocates that even now God communicates with man as He used to do before. One of the attributes of God expressly mentioned in the teaching of Islam is that God speaks with man and God's attributes are never suspended. But this concept was so much weakened even among Muslims that for all practical purposes they had neglected this phenomenon. Wahābism was a strong

movement in Islam which appeared before the advent of Afmadiyyah Movement, but its followers, called Ahl Īadīth (people of the Īadīth) also believed that God's communication with men was meant for times gone by, although in authentic fadīth it was clearly mentioned that there would be persons in this nation who would not be prophets and yet God would communicate with them. Under the influence of modern education, Sir Sayyid Afmad Khān of Aligarh went rather far in this respect and entirely rejected the conception of God's revelation to human beings. He thought that revelation only emanated from man's own heart. This was in fact the ultimate result of that attitude which Muslims had gradually adopted towards religion. If this fundamental fact of revelation was thrown overboard, nothing was left of religion. As has been discussed before, the whole structure of religion stands on this foundation. If it is said that God used to speak before and has ceased to do so now, then His speaking only becomes a narrative of the past. Such an attitude creates serious doubt as to the very institution of religion. If God spoke before, He speaks now. If He does not do so now, we have no proof that He ever did so before. If speaking is a Divine attribute, it could not be limited to one particular age. The first and the greatest task of Afmadiyyat was to clarify this point that God the Most High communicates with His righteous servants. Accordingly the Founder of the Afmadiyyah Movement established this point from the Qur'ān and Īadīth that Divine communication had not come to an end. The testimony of the Qur'ān and Īadīth and the saints of this nation could only be an evidence for Muslims but as atheism and materialism were rampant in this age, it became essential that all nations should be provided with a conclusive proof of this living reality. The mujaddid of this age was, therefore, appointed to show that God actually spoke with man, and this favour could be obtained even today by righteous Muslims. So he challenged the followers of other religions to give any proof of such a Divine favour by following their respective religions. He put forward his own example to make this favour of God known to the world. In the Barāhīn Afmadiyyah he has mentioned many prophecies which had come true and had also made a very forceful assertion that it was only in Islam that Divine communication continues, and therefore Islam is the only living religion in the world. All the other religions failed to help their followers to achieve this high stage of communication with God. It was in this respect that he put forward his own person as a living example for the truth and supremacy of Islam. The same fact lay concealed under his prophecies, that is to say, that they were advanced in support of the truth of Islam. They were indeed a sign for him, but they were also signs for the truth of Islam.

#### Footnotes

1. Sacred House of God at Makkah towards which Muslims turn their face while offering the prayers.
2. Mirza Bashīr al-Dīn Mafmūd Afmad, *The Truth about the Split* (Qādiān, India, Second Edition, 1938 C.E.) pp 55, 140, 185, etc.
3. These words are rather prophetic in their nature which found partial fulfilment in 1954 C.E. when a written statement by the delegate of the Qādiān section was submitted to the Court of Inquiry that: "A Muslim is a person who belongs

to the ummat of the Holy Prophet and professes belief in kalimah Ḍayyibah," (Report of the Court of Inquiry into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953, p. 218.) At another place in this report it has been mentioned that: "On the question whether the Afmadīs (i.e. the follow ers of the Qādiān section — T.) consider the other Musalmān to be kāfirs in the sense of their being outside the pale of Islam, the position taken before us is that such persons are not kāfirs and that the word kufr, when used in the literature of the Afmadīs in respect of such persons, is used in the sense of a minor heresy and that it was never intended to convey that such persons were outside the pale of Islam" (p. 199). The above are the remarks by the Judges. The actual answers given at the Court were as follows: "Q. Do you include Mirza Ghulām Afmad 'āfīb among the māmūrs (appointed ones of God — T.) whose acknowledgement is necessary to be called a Muslim? "A. I have already answered this question. No one who does not believe in Mirza Ghulām Afmad 'āfīb can be taken as out of the pale of Islam." (Proceedings of the Court of Inquiry, 84th sitting, dated 14th January 1954 C.E.) "Q. Please look at page 22 of Dhikr-i-Ilāhī, which contains the following passage: (i.e., My belief is this that there are two groups in the world, viz. one mu'min (believer) and the other kāfir. Thus those who declare faith in the Promised Messiah (i.e. Mirza Ghulām, Afmad — T.) are mu'mins and those who have not believed in him — there may be any reason for their non-belief — are kāfirs — T.) Is not the word kāfir used here in contradiction to the word mu'min? "A. In this context the word Mu'min means one who believes and the word kāfir means one who does not believe in Mirza Ghulām Afmad 'āfīb. "To Court: "Is belief in Mirza Ghulām Ahmad 'āfīb, therefore, a part of īmān? "A. No. The word mu'min here has been used merely to convey the sense of belief in Mirza Ghulām Afmad 'āfīb, not of belief in the fundamentals of Islam." (Ibid. 85th sitting, 15th January 1954 C.E.) Mirza Bashīr al-Dīn Mahmūd Afmad, Head of the Afmadiyyah community at Rabwah, admitted that belief in the Founder of the Afmadiyyah Movement was not a part of faith (juzw-i īmān), but forty years before he had openly declared:

"Belief in the Promised Messiah is a part of faith (juzw-e īmān). Thus who can have the heart to say by standing in opposition to him is not a part of faith?" (Al-Fa'ī, Qādiān, 20th May 1914 C.E.)

4. "That all those so-called Muslims who have not entered into his bai'at formally, wherever they may be, are kāfirs and outside the pale of Islam, even though they may not have heard the name of the Promised Messiah. "That these beliefs have my full concurrence I readily admit." (Mirza Bashīr al-Dīn Mafmūd, *The Truth about the Split — Qādiān, India, Second Edition, 1938 C.E.* pp. 55-56). The contradiction in the above statement is obvious.
5. The Qur'ān, 3: 103.
6. Al-Bukhārī, 65: 12.
7. Imām Mufammad Ōāhir of Gujraī, *Majma' Bifār al-Anwār* (Lucknow India, Nawal Kishore Press), Vol. I, p. 286 and *Ikmāl al-Ikmāl Sharf Muslim*, Vol. I, p. 265.
8. The Qur'ān, 3: 143.
9. See Annexe, Chapter 2 "Ulama of Egypt on the death of Jesus Christ" and passages from the *Message of the Qur'ān* by Mufammad Asad, available at [www.muslim.org/books/pdf/trueconc/conts.htm](http://www.muslim.org/books/pdf/trueconc/conts.htm).
10. The Qur'ān, 5: 3.
11. Al-Bukhārī, 2: 32.
12. The Qur'ān, 2: 256.

“The main difference of beliefs between the two sections are as follows”; -

**Lahore Section .....**

1. Muhammad ( may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is khatam al-Nabiyyin, the interpretation of which is that he is the greatest and last of all the prophets.
2. The Holy Quran is the final Shariah (code) for the world.
3. No prophet, whether new or old, shall come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad.
4. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian was not a prophet but a Mujaddid ( Reformer) and Promised Messiah and Mahdi in Islam.
5. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad never changed claim, views or definition of prophet hood in in 1901 with the Publication of Ek Ghalati ka Izala.
6. Belief in the advent of Mirza Sahib as a Mujaddid is not essential for becoming Muslim but his acceptance is necessary in the interest of progressive Islam.
7. Any one who profess faith in the Kalima-LA-ilaha illa Ilahu Muhammad ur Rasul Allah (there is only one God and Muhammad is His Apostle ) - is a Muslim and not a Kafir.
8. It is permitted to say prayers behind any Muslim Imam provided he is not guilty of dubbing other Muslims.
9. Marriage relations with non-Ahmadis are permitted.
10. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad ( peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) Wahi-e-Nabuwat has ceased, only Wahi-e-Walayyat (Saintly revelation) is continued. Hazrat Mirza Sahib's revelation was Wahi-e- Walayat and not Wahi-e-Nabuwat.
11. The Founder of the Lahore Section was Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A.LL.B. Translator of the Holy Quran into English, a companion and disciple of the Founder of the Movement.
12. The members of this section call themselves Ahmadis, and are generally known also as Ahmadis or Ahmadis of Lahore Movement.

**Qadian Section .....**

1. Muhammad ( may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is khatam al- Nabiyyin, the interpretation of which is that he is the greatest though not last of all the prophets.
2. The same.
3. Prophets may come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad.
4. Mirza Ghulam Ahamd was a prophet as well as Promised Messiah and Mahdi in Islam.
5. The first written evidence of the change of the belief with regard to prophet hood was the poster *EK GHALTI KA IZALA*.
6. Belief in the mission of Mirza sahib as a prophet is essential for becoming Muslim.
7. Any one, who does not believe Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian to be a Prophet, is a kafir.
8. It is not permitted to say prayers behind any Imam who does not recognize Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's claim.
9. Marriage relations with non-Ahmadis are not permitted.
10. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) Wahi-e-Nabuwat is continued. Hazrat Mirza Sahib's revelation was Wahi-e-Nabuwat.
11. The Founder of the Qadian Section was Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, who was the son of the Founder of the Movement and was a youngman in his teens at the time of his noble father's death.
12. The members of this secion call themselves Ahmadis, but are generally known as Qadianis.

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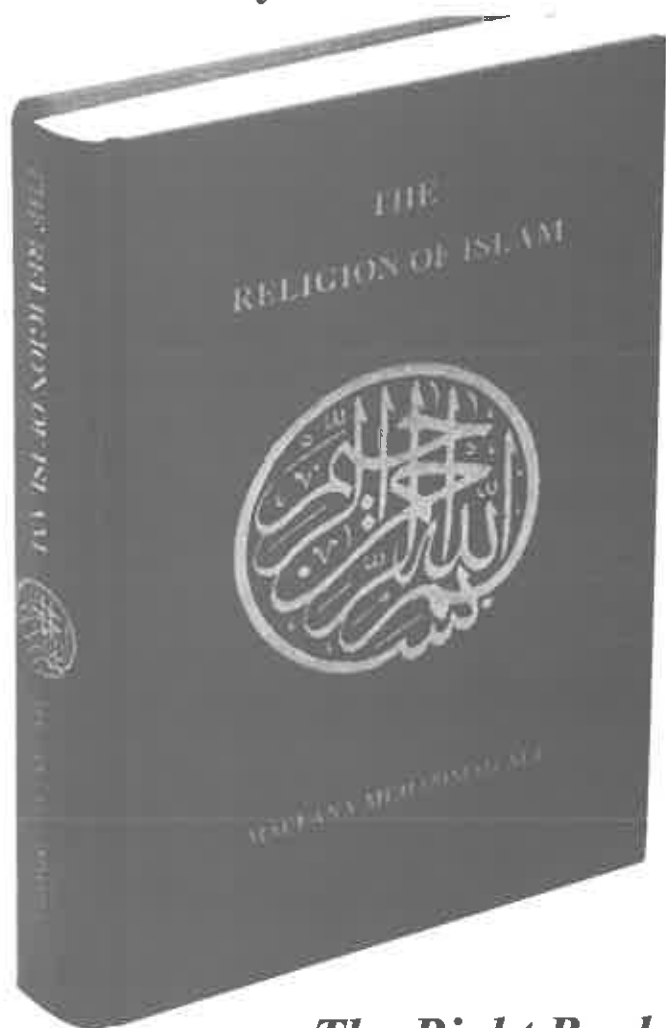
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