

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

The Muslim Thinker

Quarterly journal of
THE AHMADIYYA ANJUMAN ISHA‘AT ISLAM LAHORE (U.K.)
(Founded 1913 as the Working Muslim Mission)

A periodical devoted to showing that Islam is:
PEACEFUL – TOLERANT – RATIONAL – INSPIRING

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All communications should be sent to The Imam at the address on front cover.

The *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore* is an international Muslim association, founded in 1914, dedicated to the propagation of Islam. It presents the *true, original* message of Islam, as found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, a message obscured today by grave misconceptions.

We believe that Islam seeks to *attract the hearts and minds of people* towards the truth, by means of reasoning, persuasion and a display of its own inherent beauty. It condemns the use of coercion, force or political power to advance the faith.

Some Islamic teachings which we stress are as follows. Islam is:

- (1) **Peaceful:** Only allows use of force in unavoidable self-defence; teaches Muslims to live peacefully under any rule which accords them freedom of religion. (2) **Tolerant:** Gives full freedom to everyone to hold and practise any belief or religion. (3) **Rational:** In all matters, it urges use of reason and the ever-growing knowledge of mankind; blind following is disallowed, and independence of thought granted. (4) **Inspiring:** Worship is not a ritual, but a living contact with a living God. God listens to man, answers his prayers, and speaks to His righteous servants even today.

Our Founder, *Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad* (d. 1908), was a servant of Islam, with the mission of bringing about the spiritual and intellectual victory of Islam. He believed that, after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, NO prophet is needed or can arise. However, Divinely-ordained reformers will continually arise to rejuvenate the religion and rekindle a true, living faith within the hearts.

Lahore Ahmadiyya Association Report

Under the above title, we recently compiled and sent to the Home Secretary a Report about our history, aims, work and beliefs. It is now reproduced in this journal, starting below and concluding in our next issue.

Date: 15 March 1988

To: The Secretary of State for Home Affairs, Home Office, London

From: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore (U.K.)

'Darus Salaam', 15 Stanley Avenue, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 4JQ

Sir,

It appears from *The Times* of 17 August 1987 that the Home Office is conducting an inquiry into Muslim organisations in Britain. As we are such an organisation, we present to you a description of our aims and work. Our organisation is very probably the first Muslim body ever in this country, and for many decades it was the only such body and the sole representative of Islam and Muslims here.

1. Origin and parent body

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded one hundred years ago in the Punjab, India, by a highly regarded scholar and saint by the name of MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD of the village of Qadian (1835-1908). One of the aims of this missionary movement was to correct the false image of Islam prevalent in the West, and to propagate its true teachings in these lands where this faith had been much maligned and misunderstood. Another aim was to reform certain prevalent notions and practices of Muslims which were contrary to the original teaching and spirit of the faith.

In 1914, some leading followers of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (whom he had appointed, shortly before his death, as trustees to

administer the movement) founded in Lahore an organisation known as *The Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam* (Ahmadiyya Association for the Propagation of Islam). It is also sometimes called the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement. The head of this organisation was Maulana MUHAMMAD ALI (1874-1951), who is well-known in the English-knowing Muslim world as the author of several excellent works on Islam. Another founding member was KHAWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN (d. 1932), a distinguished Muslim lawyer who founded the Working Muslim mission in this country.

The guiding philosophy of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Anjuman is that if Islam is presented in its original, true light, and the widespread misconceptions about it are proved to be wrong, then the people of the world will be attracted by the truth and beauty they will find in this religion. The prejudice and hostility against Islam shown by the advanced nations will decrease and gradually give way to respect and appreciation.

To this end, the Lahore Ahmadiyya Anjuman has produced extensive Islamic literature (particularly in European languages), and established missions and branches around the world to promote its picture of Islam. The English books by Maulana Muhammad Ali have acquired international acclaim, and are a standard part of Islamic literature in English. The following may be especially mentioned here:

1. *The English translation of the Holy Quran with full commentary.*
2. *The Religion of Islam:* a voluminous work covering all aspects of the faith of Islam. (A review on this magnificent book is quoted later in this Report.)
3. *A Manual of Hadith:* Sayings and Doings of the Holy Prophet. (This book has proved so popular that a British publisher, the Curzon Press, have published two editions of it themselves.)
4. *Muhammad The Prophet:* biographical work.
5. *The New World Order:* how Islam can deal with modern world problems.

6. *Living Thoughts of the Prophet Muhammad*: written by the Maulana at the invitation of English publisher Cassell and Co.

Due to the immense international demand and popularity of these books, they have been translated into many other languages. This has not only been done by our movement, but in many instances when the original books reached various non-English speaking countries, translations were produced by the people there at their own initiative. (Some of these books have been translated into Arabic by Arabs themselves, and this fact is a remarkable tribute because, throughout history, works on Islam have been translated *from* Arabic into other languages.)

The Lahore Ahmadiyya Anjuman has also been establishing missions and centres around the world. The Woking Mission is dealt with fully in the next section, as it is relevant to Islam in Britain. Some other centres may be briefly listed here. The Anjuman built a mosque in Berlin in 1925, which is now located in West Berlin and houses a mission. We have a sizeable following in Holland (mostly of Suriname origin), with buildings in the Hague, Utrecht, Rotterdam and Amsterdam. Elsewhere in the world we have missions and branches in: U.S.A., Canada, South Africa, Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname, Indonesia, India, the Fiji Islands, Australia and other places.

2. The Woking Mission

It was in 1912 that KHAWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN came to England in connection with his legal practice, to plead a case before the Privy Council (the highest court of appeal for India at the time). He stayed on to establish a Muslim mission here and start a monthly magazine *Muslim India and the Islamic Review* (later known as *The Islamic Review*). He learnt that a mosque had been built in Woking, Surrey, in 1889 by a deceased English orientalist, Dr. G. W. Leitner, but was lying empty and unused. Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din arranged for the mosque to be opened and established the Woking Muslim Mission there in 1913. The mosque is set in large grounds with a residential building, which served as the mission.

The Woking Muslim mission became the one and only centre of Islam in Britain, and retained this position for over fifty years. Although its primary function was the propagation of Islam among the native Christian population, it also became a cultural and social centre for all Muslims in Britain. During most of the life of the mission, the Muslim community here largely consisted of students, business men and diplomats from the Islamic world. Distinguished Muslim visitors to this country, such as members of royal families, political leaders, intellectuals etc., very often made a point of coming to Woking to see the mosque and attend the mission's meetings. (Among numerous examples, four may be cited here: King Faisal of Saudi Arabia when he was foreign minister in the 1930s; Mr Jinnah, later Founder of Pakistan, in 1932; Mr Ayub Khan, later President of Pakistan, in 1954 when he was commander-in-chief of the army; Tunku Abdul Rahman, Prime Minister of Malaysia, in 1961.) Muslim scholars from all over the world contributed articles to the mission's magazine, *The Islamic Review*, and it became probably the first international Muslim organ in English.

By the early 1960s, the *Eid* prayer gatherings at Woking attracted congregations of about 3000 people from all over Britain. These events were covered by reporters from national newspapers and the television channels. The government for long consulted the mission when there was some matter concerning Muslims. (During the First World War, at the request of the government, the Imam of Woking performed the duties equivalent to chaplain for wounded and dying Muslim soldiers of the British army shipped here from France.)

In its missionary and religious work, the Woking mission used a totally non-sectarian policy. In fact, it had a slogan: There are no sects in Islam. It advocated that the differences between the various so-called sects of Islam relate only to secondary issues, and that Muslims of all persuasions agree on the fundamentals of Islam. In the prayer services at Woking, the same congregation contained Muslims from different Sunni sects, and Shiah sects, and prayers would be led by anyone regardless of his sect. (A mixed congregation is almost

unthinkable in the Indian subcontinent due to sectarian bigotry; and this animosity has regrettably been brought into Britain now as well.) The Woking mission also had sponsors and trustees belonging to different Muslims sects. Many renowned members of the Indian Muslim community (who were not in the Ahmadiyya movement) supported the mission, for instance: Sayyid Ameer Ali (author of the famous English book *The Spirit of Islam*), the Begum of Bhopal (a Muslim princess), Mirza Sir Abbas Ali Baig (a member of the Imperial India Council), Sir Muhammad Shafi, etc.

Among the converts to Islam won over by the Woking mission in its early days were distinguished figures including: Lord Headley, a peer of the realm; Sir Archibald Hamilton, related to the royal family; Lady Evelyn Cobbold; Sir Umar Hubert Rankin; Deputy Inspector-General C. W. Buchanan Hamilton (Royal Navy); etc. etc.

The Woking mission was run by an independent trust on non-sectarian lines. But heads of the mission, imams of the mosque, and many other officials were members of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Anjuman. The ideological inspiration of the mission came from the Lahore Ahmadiyya movement, and the literature it disseminated for the propagation of Islam was also produced and supplied by the Lahore Ahmadiyya.

This situation lasted till the mid-1960s. By that time, a number of sectarian Muslim religious leaders had arrived in this country from Pakistan. Owing to their animosity towards our movement, they campaigned to end the link between the Woking Trust and the Lahore Ahmadiyya Anjuman. They were able to exploit the non-sectarian nature of the administration of the mission, and its tolerant attitude towards all sections of Muslims, to take control of the mission.

Since that time, the Woking mosque has been reduced to the same kind of inter-Muslim sectarian squabbling which is the sad spectacle seen in many an Islamic centre in Britain.

Our movement in England now operates from a centre in Wembley.

3. Reaction of general Muslims

At the close of the last section, the hostility of some Muslim religious leaders towards our movement has been mentioned. An understanding of our movement would not be complete without considering the attitude adopted towards it by Muslims outside the movement. Generally speaking, eminent Muslim leaders, political as well as religious, have appreciated and applauded our aims and work. On the other hand, petty sectarian religious leaders or what might be called the professional priests of Islam, especially those who seek political power under the cloak of religion, have shown us bitter hostility. First we quote the opinions of two sunni Muslim religious scholars and two political leaders as typical of the appreciation of our movement.

i) Marmaduke Pickthall (d. 1936)

He was a famous British Muslim whose English rendering of the Quran is one of the most popular translations today. Shortly before his death, he wrote a review of Maulana Muhammad Ali's book *The Religion of Islam* in which he said:

"Probably no man living has done longer or more valuable service for the cause of Islamic revival than Maulana Muhammad Ali of Lahore. His literary works, with those of the late Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, have given fame and distinction to the Ahmadiyya Movement. In our opinion the present volume is his finest work . . . It is a description of Islam by one well-versed in the Quran and the Sunna who has on his mind the shame of the Muslim decadence of the past five centuries and in his heart the hope of the revival of which signs can now be seen on every side. . . .

"Such a book is greatly needed at the present day when in many Muslim countries we see persons eager for the reformation and revival of Islam making mistakes through lack of just this knowledge. . . .

"We do not always agree with Maulana Muhammad Ali's conclusions upon minor points — sometimes they appear to us

eccentric — but his premises are always sound, we are always conscious of his deep sincerity; and his reverence for the holy Quran is sufficient in itself to guarantee his work in all essentials. There are some, no doubt, who will disagree with his general findings, but they will not be those from whom Islam has anything to hope in the future.”

(*Islamic Culture*, quarterly review published from Hyderabad Deccan, India, October 1936, pp. 659–660)

ii) *Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi* (d. 1977)

He was a well-known Muslim theologian of India, and a recognised leader of orthodox opinion. In a message at the death of Maulana Muhammad Ali (in 1951), he wrote:

“To deny the services of the deceased to Islam is to deny the existence of the sun in daylight. Twenty-one years ago, when I was drowned in the poison and heresy spread by western ideas, it was the deceased’s English translation of the Quran which guided me. Otherwise, only God knows how much longer I would have been lost, and only God knows for how many people, as for me, it proved to be the guiding light. Then his writings: the Urdu commentary of the Quran, translation of Bukhari, Early Caliphate, Life of the Holy Prophet, Islam the Religion of Humanity, A Manual of Hadith — each more useful and excellent than another, are in existence.”

iii) *Mohamed Ali* (d. 1931)

A namesake of our Maulana Muhammad Ali, he was a famous Indian Muslim nationalist leader who worked alongside Gandhi for some-time. In his autobiography, he writes:

“It was about this time that a kind friend sent to us a gift than which nothing could be more acceptable, a copy of the Quran, printed in a very high quality, accompanied by a most authentic translation and informative notes which are based on a deep study of commentaries of the Quran and the Jewish

and Christian scriptures. This was the work of my learned namesake Maulvi Muhammad Ali of Lahore, leader of a fairly numerous religious community, some of whose members were doing missionary work in England. They have established a mission at the Woking mosque. This translation and the notes under it are an essential antidote to the poison found in the footnotes of the translators such as Sale, Rodwell and Palmer ... and in the frame of mind in which I then was I wrote back to my friend who had sent these copies of the Quran that nothing would please me better than to go to Europe as soon as I could get out of the 'bounds' prescribed by my internment and preach to these war maniacs from every park and at every street corner. And preach to them the holy religion which can silence the noise of these war-mongering nations with the unifying peace of Islam."

(English book *My Life — A Fragment*, edited by Afzal Iqbal, published by Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1966, pp. 115-116)

iv) Mr Feroz Khan Noon

He was a famous Pakistani statesman of the 1950s. At the time of Maulana Muhammad Ali's death in 1951, when he was Governor of East Bengal, he sent the following message:

"This is a great loss, which not only myself but the whole Islamic world will share with you. The Maulana's writings will live forever. I do not know of any other person who rendered such great service to revive Islam, as did the Maulana. No example can be found in the past five hundred years."

(First published in Ahmadiyya newspaper *Paigham Sulh*, special issue, 26 December 1951, p. 58)

The above reviews have been quoted as illustrating the high regard in which many eminent Muslim figures held our movement's work.

When Pakistan was created, the ruling elements belonged to the liberal, enlightened class of Muslims, who seek guidance from the

spirit and purpose of Islamic teachings, and are tolerant of differences of opinion. They had high regard for the Lahore Ahmadiyya movement, and often sought guidance from our literature to see how Islamic ideals could be introduced in a modern world. As opposed to this, there are the literalist religious fundamentalist groups whose objective is to restore, in every detail, that decadent form of Islam which came to prevail during the middle and later stages of Muslim history. These groups in general, and particularly the Jama'at-i Islami led by the late Maulana Maudoodi, opposed the founders and the foundation of Pakistan very bitterly. So when Pakistan came into being despite their opposition, the leaders of these groups naturally found themselves discredited with the masses.

In order to gain popularity, they seized upon the idea of making the Ahmadiyya movement a scapegoat which they could portray as an enemy of Islam, and which they could claim to be fighting in the name of Islam. In 1952 and 1953, these religious leaders instigated public disturbances in the province of the Punjab, demanding government action against Ahmadis. After the agitation was put down, the Punjab government set up a public court of inquiry headed by Chief Justice Munir to examine the causes. The inquiry produced a detailed, incisive and authoritative document, popularly known as the *Munir Report* (Punjab Government, Pakistan, April 1954). The court searchingly questioned all the zealots about their demands for an 'Islamic state', and showed that their views were a total anachronism in this day and age. The report also shows that the leaders of the disturbances were solely interested in political power, as opposed to their claims of a moral, religious basis for their agitation. This report, published in 1954 by the provincial government of the Punjab, and produced by Pakistan's most distinguished supreme court judge Mr Muhammad Munir, is today not available from that country's authorities. (In a book published in 1980 shortly before his death, entitled *From Jinnah to Zia*, Justice Munir has quoted many essential passages from his report.)

The influence of the politically-motivated religious leaders remain-

ed limited during the 1950s and 1960s. But as the memory of their opposition to the creation of Pakistan faded with time, their influence grew, and eventually in 1974 they forced Mr Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's secular government to incorporate in the constitution clauses to say that Ahmadis are not Muslims but constitute a religion separate from Islam. (This action was an irony and a farce because during the election campaign which brought Mr Bhutto to power, he and his party had themselves been branded as *kafir* and outside the fold of Islam by the same religious leaders.)

Then in April 1984 President Zia-ul-Haq took further measures by issuing a Presidential ordinance prohibiting Ahmadis from referring to themselves as Muslims and following certain Muslim practices, on pain of penalty. (This is another irony and farce, because President Zia's government considers Mr Bhutto's regime as having been anti-Islamic with no authority or competence to act in the name of Islam.) Through its embassies abroad, the Pakistan government has been distributing extensive anti-Ahmadiyya literature in all countries where there are Muslim communities, and the Muslim public is being told today that Ahmadis are enemies of Islam and holders of objectionable and heretical beliefs. This is why we have quoted the reviews above, to show the very different views held about us by Muslim leaders of a generation or two ago.

It may be noted that the introduction of the anti-Ahmadiyya legislation in Pakistan has, as a wider consequence, exacerbated the inter-sectarian feuding between other Muslim sects. Demands are now constantly being made by one sect or another for the government to declare some rival group as being non-Muslim in the same manner in which Ahmadis were declared non-Muslim.

The response of the Lahore Ahmadiyya movement to these hostile circumstances is to continue to adhere to its long-standing non-sectarian approach. Our belief is that Islam is a force for unity and harmony for all mankind. We could hardly preach these virtues of Islam and at the same time indulge in sectarian squabbles ourselves! We continue to stress, both to our Muslim brothers and to our friends

of other faiths, that there are NO differences of essential belief among various Muslim groups, no differences which should lead to division, separation or mutual animosity. Secondary differences, which should be a matter of tolerance, are being exploited by politically ambitious religious leaders.

We hold, in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet, that if a person calls himself a Muslim, or if a person adheres to any of the basic signs of a Muslim (e.g. acknowledging the *Kalima*, or saying prayers in the Muslim fashion), then no one has the right or authority to announce that he is not a Muslim.

(The last Section of the Report, dealing with our beliefs, will appear in the next issue.)

About Ourselves

As mentioned in the last article, the Woking Mission was founded in 1913 and a periodical, *The Islamic Review*, was started which appeared for over fifty years. It was a high quality magazine which carried articles correcting the wild and deeply-held misconceptions about Islam prevalent in the West, and presenting its true picture. It also battled to refute the doctrines of those faiths which were constantly attacking and denouncing Islam. The contents of the journal drew their inspiration heavily from the exposition of Islam given by *Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad* and the Lahore Ahmadiyya movement. The Woking mission had the collaboration of many eminent Muslims of the time, from the general Muslim world, and they realised, no doubt, that this exposition of Islam met the needs of the time, while it would be of no avail to present the *Mulla's* concept of the faith.

For a variety of reasons, that *Islamic Review* did not touch any distinctive "Ahmadiyya" issue: Islam was only just being introduced to this country; and there was no sectional distinction in the tiny Muslim community here.

From the 1960s, the situation changed as Muslims began to settle here, and shortly following them came the petty religious leaders, bringing with them sectarianism, a medieval picture of Islam, and hostility to the Ahmadiyya movement and its reform work. Under these circumstances, as elaborated earlier, the Woking mission with its policy of unity and support for reform could no longer function as a collaborative effort, and closed down.

Soon afterwards, so-called “fundamentalists” (more aptly, *literalists*) came to prominence in the Islamic world, and since then their image of Islam has been widely broadcast all over the world, including this country.

When the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore created its present branch in the mid-1970s to replace the Woking mission, the new circumstances dictated two new, crucial aspects to its work. First, we have to present the true image of Islamic teachings in clear and sharp contrast to the highly-publicised pronouncements of the “fundamentalists”, and prove conclusively that only the former truly represents the actual teachings of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Second, the widely-spread false propaganda against Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and our movement has to be refuted, and the poisonous misconceptions about his work and claims have to be corrected.

Some ten years ago, we started a quarterly, *The Islamic Guardian*, with these objectives in mind. It was published until 1985, when pressure of other work led to its suspension. But demand and need for such a journal have become more than ever. We are, therefore, commencing publication of the quarterly now in your hands, under the title *The Muslim Thinker*. It will both strive to show the truth of the religion of Islam, and to prove that Islam as presented by Hazrat Mirza and the Lahore Ahmadiyya movement is true to the Quran and the Holy Prophet’s example. It will also show that whatever Hazrat Mirza wrote or did in pursuance of his mission accords with, in fact stems from, the path followed by the righteous of all times, and the fourteen centuries long Muslim spiritual tradition.

False Story of Revelation from Devil

Satan cannot corrupt word of God to a Prophet

There is a baseless story, found in some Muslim classical works, referring to a time in his early mission when the Holy Prophet Muhammad was at Makka preaching to the idolators against their false deities. It is asserted that once, while the Holy Prophet was reciting out his revelation (i.e. the Quran) before the idol-worshipping Makkans, as he came to the words referring to the names of three idols, "Have you considered Lāt and Uzzā, and another Manāt" (chapter 53 verses 19–20), the devil put it into the Holy Prophet's mind to add the spurious words: "these are exalted females whose intercession is to be sought". This concession to Arab idolatry, according to the story, greatly pleased the idol worshippers. Then God acted to cancel this satanic insinuation, restoring the purity of His word, and in another passage (chapter 22 verse 52) reminded the Holy Prophet that sometimes the devil can exploit the human desires of prophets, altering their revelation accordingly, but that God always annuls any such corruption.

It is this story which forms the basis of the view put forward in the much controversial book *The Satanic Verses*. In his English translation and commentary of the Holy Quran, Maulana Muhammad Ali has conclusively refuted this whole account. We quote below from his footnote to verse 53:21. (*Muir* referred to below was an English author on Islam.)

"Verses 19–21 are made the basis of the false story of what is called the 'Lapse of Muhammad' or 'Compromise with idolatry' by Christian writers. Certain reports by Wāqidī and Ṭabarī are the sole authority for this charge against that incessant preacher against idolatry, every incident of whose life condemns it as a bare falsehood. . . . The fact is that the story was quite unknown to the earlier Muslims. There is not a single trustworthy hadith that lends support to this story.

“Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, who died as early as 151 A.H., does not mention the incident, while Muir’s earliest authority, Wāqidī, was born more than forty years later. It is stated in the *Baḥrain* that when questioned about it, Ibn Ishāq called it a fabrication of the *zindeeqs*. And the famous Bukhārī, the most trustworthy authority on the sayings of the Holy Prophet, was Wāqidī’s contemporary, and his collection of sayings contains no mention of the story.

“As regards Wāqidī, all competent authorities entertain a very low opinion of his trustworthiness. The *Mizān al-ʾItidāl*, a critical work on the lives and characters of the reporters of Hadith, speaks of Wāqidī as unreliable and even as a fabricator of reports. As regards Ṭabarī, Muir himself represents him as guilty of ‘indiscriminate reception’. As against these two unreliable authorities, ‘those who reject this story are highly learned men’ (see the commentary *Rūḥ al-Maʾānī*). The six collections of reports known as the *Ṣiḥāḥ Sitta* (or the *Six Reliable Works*) do not mention it at all, and contain instead a report which essentially contradicts the story of the so-called compromise.

“Internal evidence, too, is against the story. We are told that instead of verse 21 the Prophet read the words: *Tilk al-gharānīq al-ʾulā wa inna shafāʾata-hunna la-turtajā*, i.e., *These are exalted females whose intercession is to be sought*. But the insertion of these few words in a chapter which is wholly directed against idolatry is quite out of place: v. 23 condemns idols; v. 26 denies their intercession; v. 28 condemns the giving of names of female deities to angels, and so on. . . . Moreover, if the Prophet had made any such compromise, it could not have been a sudden event, and traces of it would have been met with in other chapters revealed about the same time. But a perusal of these shows clearly that the Quran’s condemnation of idolatry was never marked by the slightest change.”

Commenting on the other verse (22:52), which allegedly refers to the devil inspiring revelation in accordance with a prophet’s human

desires, Maulana Muhammad Ali writes in his footnote 1701:

“This story has been rejected by all sound and reliable commentators. Thus Ibn Kathīr says: ‘Many commentators relate here the story of the *Gharānīq* ... but it is from sources not traceable to any Companion’. According to Rāzī, *commentators who aim at accuracy and truth say that this story is false and a forgery*. Baiḍāwī makes similar remarks.

“... Moreover, it is absolutely inconceivable that such an important incident as the Prophet’s having accepted the intercession of idols should have been mentioned in the Quran eight years after it happened. The 53rd chapter, in which the change is said to have taken place, was revealed before the fifth year of the Prophet’s call, while this chapter was revealed on the eve of the Prophet’s departure from Makka. That more than half the Quran should have been revealed during this long period without a single reference to the alleged story, and that it should then have been quite unnecessarily referred to in a chapter where it is quite out of place, is alone sufficient to give the lie to this story.”

It is the prime duty of Muslims to stress that the criterion of the truth of a reported event from the Holy Prophet’s life is *not* that it is found recorded in a classical biography or history of Islam. The report must be consistent with the irrefutable facts of the life of the Holy Prophet contained in the Quran and the works of Hadith, the Quran being the *contemporary* record of his life and times, whose authenticity is admitted by friend and foe alike. A report clearly at variance with these key sources is false, no matter how classical or voluminous the work in which it may be found.

An example of the neglect of these sound principles was the book *Muhammad*, by Martin Lings, which is replete with fairy tales of the same category as this story. On what grounds it was awarded a prize of five thousand dollars by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Pakistan in 1984, we are utterly at a loss to understand.

In the Face of Religious Abuse

The response which Islam teaches

The Holy Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said:

“The Muslim who mixes with the people and bears patiently their hurtful words, is better than one who does not mix with people and does not show patience under their abuse.”

(*Mishkāt*, Book: *Ethics*, ch. *Gentleness, modesty and good behaviour.*)

The question we examine in this article is: What are the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad about how Muslims should respond to verbal abuse against their faith. There is not only definite guidance about this in the text of the Holy Quran and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet, but also there is the practical example of the Holy Prophet himself. We are not dealing here with how a Muslim should reply to criticism of his faith, but specifically with how, according to Islam, one should react when offended and hurt by painful words used against our cherished beliefs.

Firstly, the historical fact must be noted that, throughout his life, the Holy Prophet Muhammad faced verbal abuse on very many occasions. Never did he have anyone punished for merely abusing him or the religion of Islam. The Holy Quran actually records the accusations made against him by his opponents (e.g. that he was insane, or that he fabricated his revelation), and it answers these charges, but does not require any kind of punishment to be inflicted on the accusers. The Quran has itself, therefore, given permanence to these allegations and the replies thereto, obviously anticipating that similar charges would be made by critics at later times. If such abuse or criticism could weaken faith, why should the Quran itself have quoted so much of it from its opponents' mouths?

Teachings of the Holy Quran.

The Holy Quran tells Muslims:

1. "You will certainly hear much abuse from the followers of previous books and from the idol-worshipping people. And if you are patient and keep your duty — this is surely a matter of great resolution." (3:185)
2. "Many of the followers of previous books wish that they could turn you back into disbelievers after you have believed . . . but you should pardon and forgive." (2:109)

In connection with these verses, it is recorded in the Hadith collection *Bukhārī*:

"The Messenger of Allah and his Companions used to forgive the idolators and the followers of previous books, as Allah had commanded them, and they used to show patience on hearing hurtful words."

— Book: *Commentary on the Quran*, ch. 16 under *Sura 3*.

Addressing the Holy Prophet, God says in the Quran:

1. "Bear patiently what they say." (20:130 and 50:39)
2. "Obey not the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and disregard their hurtful talk." (33:48)

In all the verses quoted above, Muslims are taught to bear their feelings of hurt and anger with patience, and to ignore the abuse.

Withdrawing from company.

Muslims are told:

"When you hear Allah's messages disbelieved in and mocked at, sit not with them until they enter into some other discourse." (4:140; see also 6:68).

These verses deal with the case when the religion is being mocked and derided (as distinct from being criticised). A Muslim is required to do no more than to withdraw from such a company, and even that only while the mocking continues, and to rejoin the same company afterwards. Any criticism underlying the abuse must, of course, be

answered. But the response to any sheer abuse, ridicule or mockery is withdrawal of oneself from the company.

Some incidents from the Holy Prophet's life.

1. A man called Suhail ibn Amar had a voice suited to oratory, and used to employ this talent in making speeches against the Holy Prophet. He was captured by the Muslims at the battle of Badr and brought before the Holy Prophet. A Muslim suggested that some of Suhail's teeth should be knocked out to disable him from speaking well. The Holy Prophet said: "If I disfigure any of his limbs, God will disfigure mine in retribution".
2. Once when the Holy Prophet divided some wealth among his followers, one man accused him to his face of being unfair and told him: "Fear God, O Muhammad". After the man had left, the following conversation took place between Khālid ibn Walid and the Holy Prophet, as recorded in *Bukhārī*:
 - Khālid: "Shall I strike off his neck?"
 - Holy Prophet: "No, perhaps he is a man who says prayers."
 - Khālid: "There are many people who pray, but what they say is not what is in their hearts."
 - Holy Prophet: "I have not been commanded by God to cut open people's chests to see what is inside their hearts."

(Book: *Maghāzī*, ch. 63.)

Here a man insults the Holy Prophet to his face, and a Muslim asks permission to kill the man. The Holy Prophet advances the possibility of there being some good in the culprit, but Khālid argues that the man's prayers are only for show. The Holy Prophet then makes it clear that we cannot know about people's motives or sincerity, but have to accept that what they are doing is in good faith.

3. Some Jews, when addressing Muslims, would distort the greeting *as-salāmu alaikum* and say it as *as-sāmu alaikum*, which means "death be upon you". When they once addressed the Holy Prophet in this manner, his wife Āisha retorted back in the same words. The Holy Prophet disapproved of this reply and said that God did not like harsh words.
4. Once there were four men who spread an accusation of immorality against the Holy Prophet's wife Āisha. Their accusation was ultimately proved to be false because they failed to back it up with any witnesses. One of the four men, *Mistaḥ*, used to receive monetary support from *Hazrat* Abū Bakr, Āisha's father. After this incident, *Hazrat* Abū Bakr swore never again to help *Mistaḥ*. The following verse was revealed to the Holy Prophet on this occasion:

"Let not the possessors of grace and means among you swear against giving to the near relatives and the poor and those who had to flee in God's way. Pardon and overlook. Do you not love that God should forgive you?"
(24:22)

Hearing this, *Hazrat* Abū Bakr exclaimed: "Indeed, I certainly love that God should forgive me". He then resumed providing assistance to *Mistaḥ*, as before. (*Bukhārī*, Book: *Testimony*, ch. 15.)

Note that this allegation was not made against just an ordinary Muslim woman, but the wife of the Holy Prophet, and therefore it struck at the holy household at the centre of the religion of Islam, which was required to be a model of purity for all Muslims. In view of this, the forgiveness taught in the above verse becomes *all the more generous and magnanimous*.

If Muslims today were to follow and proclaim these teachings of Islam, they would earn respect and admiration for their faith, its Holy Founder and themselves in the eyes of all reasonable people in the world.

Nature of Religious Prejudice

From the work *Barahin Ahmadiyya* (Part V) by
Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

It should be remembered that indulging in mere squabbles, abusive language, harsh words and foul talk which, out of one's low desires, is claimed to be done in the name of religion, while one does not correct one's own evils nor create a true connection with the Real Beloved, and the attacks of one group upon another in the manner of beasts, without human decency, displaying every kind of viciousness under the guise of supporting the faith — this foul technique is not worthy of the name *religion*. Lamentably, such people do not know why they came into the world, and what is the real and chief object of this brief life. Rather, they remain ever blind and of an impure mind, and call their bigoted feelings as *religion*.

In support of their imaginary god, of whose existence they have no proof, they show rudeness and impudence in the world. What use is that religion which does not worship a living God. Such a god is like the dead body carried in a funeral, only moving by the support of others; if the support is removed, it falls to the ground.

If the followers gain anything from such a faith, it is only bigotry. They entirely lose feelings of true love for God and real sympathy for mankind, which are the best of qualities. When they meet a person who disagrees with their religion and creed, taking this difference to heart they become inimical to his life, property and honour. If a person of another faith stands in need of them in some matter, they abandon justice and fear of God, and want to destroy him utterly. The mercy, justice and sympathy, which is the highest quality of human nature, is entirely eliminated from their nature, and the fire of bigotry kindles a wicked savagery in them. They know not what is the real purpose of religion. These are the evil people who care not at all for truth or true knowledge of God or purity, and give the name *religion* to their own low urges. They spend all their while in futile

disputes and controversies and foul talk, while not finding the time, even in their dreams, which must be spent in solitude with God.

Their work is to denigrate, insult and defame the righteous, while their own inner selves are totally and obnoxiously unclean. On their tongues are many tall claims, but their hearts are far from God. Wallowing in the muck of the world, they claim to be reformers of the people. They cannot listen to anyone with a fearful heart, nor bear to give a reply patiently. They consider everything in Islam to be objectionable, without even one good thing. Curiously enough, they are happy in this state, and when they do harm to a person of a different faith they consider it to be a work of great virtue or a display of courage and manfulness.

It is a pity that in this age most nations believe this prejudice to constitute *religion*. We do not exclude Muslims in general from this reprehensible behaviour. They will be called to account more in the sight of God because they were given the religion called *Islam* whose meaning God Almighty has Himself disclosed in the Holy Quran as follows: "*Nay, whoever submits himself whole-heartedly to God, and does good to others*" (2:112). That is, there are two parts of Islam. The first is to be so engrossed in seeking the pleasure of God that, discarding your desires, you place your head at the Divine threshold to attain His pleasure, and the second is to do good to all mankind. What an admirable religion, based on good and virtuous principles from whose teachings they have deviated so very far. This ruination came about when there was a departure from the teachings of the Holy Quran, intentionally or by mistake, because any departure whether from the text or the sense deprives one of the grace of God. By *departing from the text* we mean that a man is an open denier of the word of God, and by *departure from the sense* is meant that although he is not a denier outwardly, yet is so overwhelmed by the weight of custom, tradition, self-interest and alien teachings that he cares not at all for the word of God. (Pages 19-20 of the first edition, published 1908.)

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

The Muslim Thinker

Quarterly journal of
THE AHMADIYYA ANJUMAN ISHA‘AT ISLAM LAHORE (U.K.)
(Founded 1913 as the Woking Muslim Mission)

A periodical devoted to showing that Islam is:
PEACEFUL – TOLERANT – RATIONAL – INSPIRING

Issue no. 2

JANUARY TO MARCH 1990

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All communications should be sent to The Imam at the address on front cover.

The *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore* is an international Muslim association, founded in 1914, dedicated to the propagation of Islam. It presents the *true, original* message of Islam, as found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, a message obscured today by grave misconceptions.

We believe that Islam seeks to *attract the hearts and minds of people* towards the truth, by means of reasoning, persuasion and a display of its own inherent beauty. It condemns the use of coercion, force or political power to advance the faith.

Some Islamic teachings which we stress are as follows. Islam is:

- (1) **Peaceful:** Only allows use of force in unavoidable self-defence; teaches Muslims to live peacefully under any rule which accords them freedom of religion.
- (2) **Tolerant:** Gives full freedom to everyone to hold and practise any belief or religion.
- (3) **Rational:** In all matters, it urges use of reason and the ever-growing knowledge of mankind; blind following is disallowed, and independence of thought granted.
- (4) **Inspiring:** Worship is not a ritual, but a living contact with a living God. God listens to man, answers his prayers, and speaks to His righteous servants even today.

Our Founder, *Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad* (d. 1908), was a servant of Islam, with the mission of bringing about the spiritual and intellectual victory of Islam. He believed that, after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, NO prophet is needed or can arise. However, Divinely-ordained reformers will continually arise to rejuvenate the religion and rekindle a true, living faith within the hearts.

Heart and Soul of Islam

From the work *Ā'īnah Kamālāt Islām* by
Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

(At the request of our U.S.A. branch, Dr. Zahid Aziz recently translated into English an extract from Hazrat Mirza's writings, dealing with the very heart of Islam, and added a foreword to it. A shortened version of this tract is reproduced below.)

TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

Explanations of the teachings of Islam usually represent this faith in terms of dogma, ritual, and aspects of outward behaviour. A strong impression is produced that Islam only requires from its followers a merely mechanical belief and observance, without any involvement of thought or feeling or the creation of a relationship with God. Moreover, in such a manner is the meaning of the word *Islam* given as 'submission' that it implies a forced, unwilling, unloving obedience to an Autocrat.

Yet a study of the Quran and the Holy Prophet's life shows such a projection of Islam to be entirely unjustified. It is in the later development of Islamic theology that we find religion conceived of largely in terms of outward forms.

One of the chief tasks for which Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad appeared as a *Mujaddid* was to revive that lost, real spirit which, according to the Quran and the Holy Prophet, should underlie a Muslim's belief and actions. In the extract presented here from his writings, Hazrat Mirza lays bare the real essence of what is Islam and what it means to be a Muslim in the true and actual sense. The heart and soul, feelings and desires, along with the body, i.e. the entire self, must be devoted to God, and not just a superficial bodily observance with an empty heart.

It will be noticed that Hazrat Mirza has based his explanation on a text of the Holy Quran, and it is from this text that he shows certain Sufi concepts to be derived. Hazrat Mirza accepted only those sound Sufi notions which were rooted in the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet's practice, and he showed that these concepts were only a means of further expounding the principles already laid down concisely in the sources of Islam.

This extract satisfies the paramount need today to present the spiritual side of Islamic teachings, and it does so in a way warranted by the Holy Quran.

HAZRAT MIRZA ON WHAT IS ISLAM ?

Before turning to any other discussion, it is highly important to set forth a discourse as to what are the ways of attaining the real essence and crux of Islam, and what are the fruits of adherence to that reality? For, in order to gain an understanding of many fine and subtle points, one needs a good knowledge of the essence of Islam, the ways to attain it, and its fruits. It shall be of great advantage to our opponents belonging to our own faith to study carefully the discussion about the essence of Islam, because the doubts and questions which beset them are mainly due to not pondering over the real essence of Islam in its most perfect and highest sense, the paths to it, and its fruits. There is no doubt that if, after considering all these facts, my opponents from our own faith read my replies to their objections, they will be relieved of many doubts and misconceptions. The proviso is that they should study thoughtfully, and then, keeping this text in view, consider all my replies which I have written to remove their doubts. Likewise, the opponents of the religion of Islam will benefit very much from an exposition of these truths. From this discussion, they can come to understand what is religion and what are the signs which prove its truth.

Meaning of *Islam* and *Muslim*

So let it be clear that, in the Arabic language, *islām* is the word for

paying the price in advance for a thing, or to give the charge of one's affairs to someone, or to ask for peace or to give up a matter or a dispute.

The technical meanings of Islam are those indicated in the following verse:

“Nay, whoever submits himself whole-heartedly to Allah, and he is a doer of good to others, he shall have his reward from his Lord. And there is no fear for such people, nor do they grieve.” (The Holy Quran, 2:112)

It means that a Muslim is one who gives over his entire self to the path of God, the most high. That is, he dedicates his being to Allah and for the pursuance of His will and for the attainment of His pleasure, and then he devotes himself to doing good works for God, and employs all his practical faculties in His way. The meaning is that he should be solely for God, in belief and deed. In terms of belief, it means that he must truly consider all his being to have been created in order to know God, to obey Him, to love and adore Him, and to gain His pleasure. In terms of deeds, it means that purely for the sake of Allah he must perform acts of true virtue that are associated with every power and every God-given faculty, and with such fervour, zeal and presence of mind as if he is seeing the face of his real Master in the mirror of his obedience.

The meaning of the rest of the verse is that if a person's beliefs and deeds are founded on such personal love, and good deeds are done by him with such instinctive passion, he is the one who deserves reward in Allah's view, and such people have no fear nor grief; that is, they have ready salvation. For, when a man is in full accord with Allah, by believing in His Being and attributes, so that his purpose is akin to God's will and all joy is in His obedience, and all good deeds come to be performed not by hard effort but by the attraction of joy and delight, that is just the state which must be called success, salvation and deliverance. And in the next world, whatever is perceived and felt are, in reality, the images and impressions of this constant state

which will be manifested physically in that world. The meaning is that a heavenly life begins in this very world, and the root of the torment of hell too is the impurity and the blind life of this world.

Complete devotion of life in God's way

By looking carefully at the verses which have been extolled above, every wise person can see that the real essence of Islam can only be established in someone if all his being, with all its inner and outer faculties, is devoted solely for God and His way, and all that he has received from God as a trust is returned to the Real Giver. It should not only be in terms of belief, but in terms of deeds as well he must display the full image of Islam and its perfect essence. That is, the person claiming to be a follower of Islam must prove that his hands, feet, heart and mind, his sense, reason, anger, mercy, gentleness and knowledge, all his spiritual and physical powers, his honour and property, his rest and comfort, and all that he has, from the hair of his head to the nails of his toes, both outwardly and inwardly, so much so that his intentions, apprehensions, and feelings — all these have become as obedient to God as a person's limbs are in his control. In brief, it must be established that his sincere step has reached the stage where whatever is his, is not his, but has become God's; and all his limbs and faculties are so engaged in the service of God as if they were the limbs of God.

By pondering over these verses, it is also plainly and clearly seen that to devote one's life in the way of God, which is the essence of Islam, has two sides to it. First, God must be believed to be the One Who is to be worshipped, sought and loved. In serving Him, loving Him, fearing Him and expecting from Him, no one must be taken as being His associate. Celebration, glorification and service of God, all the forms and commands in relation to serving Him, the commandments and prohibitions, and matters relating to the destiny ordained by Him, must all be accepted with one's heart and soul. All these orders, limits, laws, and circumstances ordained for us, must be borne with complete devotion, in the most humble and submissive manner. And one must learn thoroughly all the pure truths and knowledge

which are the means of realising His vast powers, the medium of discovering the elevated glory of His dominion and kingship, and a powerful guide for recognising His favours and blessings.

The other aspect of devoting one's life for God is that it must be dedicated to the service, sympathy and help of his creatures, and the bearing of their burdens, and the true sharing of their griefs. One must bear hardship to provide relief to others, and for their ease tolerate discomfort for oneself.

This discourse shows that the essence of Islam is very high and lofty, and no one can be truly accorded the honourable title of *follower of Islam* until he gives to God the whole of his being, with all its powers, desires and aims, and leaving aside his egotism and all its implications, devotes himself in the path of God. Therefore, a person can only be called a Muslim, in the real sense, when a mighty revolution has overtaken his life of indifference, obliterating forever the stamp of his lower self and all its passions, and after this "death" a new life of *doing good for the sake of Allah* has been born within him, a life so impeccable that it consists of nothing but obedience to the Creator and sympathy for His creation.

Obedience to God and service to His creatures

Obedience to the Creator must be like this. One must be ready to accept dishonour and degradation in order to display God's power, glory and uniqueness; to keep alive the idea of His unity, one must be prepared to accept death a thousand times; in the way of obeying Him, one hand must be cheerfully willing to cut off the other one; and the love of the greatness of His commands, and the thirst for attaining His pleasure, should make one detest sin as if it were an all-consuming fire or a fatal poison or lightening which reduces everything to ashes, from which one must escape using all one's might. In brief, to accept His will, one must give up all the pleasures of the soul, and to receive His dressing, one must accept being hurt with mortal wounds, and to show proof of connection with Him, one should sever all human ties.

Service to the creation of Allah is like this. As regards all the needs of His creation, and all the various ways in which Divine Providence has made some people dependent on others, one must do good with all the real, selfless and true sympathy that one can show, solely for the sake of Allah, and help every needy person with one's God given ability, exerting oneself to bring about reform and improvement in their life of this world and the next.

This devotion in the way of God, however, can only be worth its name when all the faculties show the mark of Divine obedience as if they were an instrument of God which manifests Divine acts now and again, or a clear mirror in which the will of God is reflected as a perfect image. When obedience and service for the sake of God reaches this perfect stage, then by the blessing of this Divine colouring it is correct to say, in the sense of the unity of attributes (*wahdat ash-shuhūd*), as regards the limbs and organs of a man of this description, that, for example, these eyes are the eyes of God, this tongue is the tongue of God, this hand is the hand of God, these ears are the ears of God, and these feet are the feet of God. For, all these limbs and powers, by being inspired with the purposes of God and having become an image of His will, in the Divine paths, deserve to be called His manifestation. The reason is that, just as a person's limbs are fully under the control of his will and intent, likewise when the perfect man reaches this stage he acquires complete conformity with the will and intent of God. God's greatness, unity, kingship and lordship, and every wish and command, are as dear to him as they are to God Himself. Hence, this great and grand obedience and service for the sake of God, which was attained through love and affection, and is replete with sincerity and real substance — that is Islam, its essence and gist, which is attained after the elimination of one's self, desire and will.



Lahore Ahmadiyya Association

Report – II

(We recently compiled and sent to the Home Secretary a Report about our history, aims, work and beliefs. This Report has been serialised in this journal, starting in the last issue and concluding below. The final part consists of the section dealing with our beliefs.)

4. BELIEFS

To give an idea of the nature of our propagation of Islam, and the philosophy underlying it, we briefly list below some of our beliefs. It must be mentioned that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement derive all their beliefs from the acknowledged sources of Islam, i.e. the Holy Quran, the practical life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and his sayings as recorded in books of Hadith. There are certain aspects of these beliefs which require to be stressed and clarified in present times in order to meet the needs of the age and to remove harmful misconceptions about Islam.

(a) God — Lord of all the worlds

The Islamic concept of God as “Lord of all the worlds” (the Quran 1:1) has the following implications:

1. God sent His prophets and His guidance to all nations of the world, and Muslims must believe in all the prophets of the previous religions. This applies not only to the prophets of the Israelite tradition (such as Moses and Jesus), but also to the great religious teachers of other faiths such as Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.
2. God treats all nations and peoples equally. No people are His favourite by birth or by mere belief, not even those calling themselves Muslims. He rewards and accepts good works equally by any human being. His chosen ones are those who

sacrifice their desires in His way and do good to mankind. (To reach this stage to the highest possible level, however, one needs the guidance God gave through the Holy Prophet Muhammad.)

3. A Muslim must deal justly with all human beings, though they may belong to other races and religions. Bigotry and intolerance towards others is forbidden.

(b) Islam is a religion for today

1. Islam offers guidance on all the modern problems of today, whether on the individual, or social, or national, or international level. It bases its teachings on arguments, reasons and facts, which is the approach required by modern thinking.
2. It urges the acquisition and increase of knowledge. It condemns blind, unthinking obedience, and requires everything to be determined in the light of man's reason and knowledge.
3. It allows each man and woman full freedom of belief, conscience and opinion. It teaches that no ideology should employ any kind of force, pressure or coercion to make people accept it or continue to follow it.

(c) Islam is a religion of experience

1. In the modern age of materialism and denial of matters spiritual, Islam provides the ways of attaining spiritual experience.
2. The acts of worship in Islam are not empty rituals, but paths of spiritual advancement (if practised properly).
3. The door of communication with God, and from God, is still open today for the honoured saints who devote themselves to this path. Their example shows others that there is a living God Who still speaks to man.

(d) Islam is a religion of peace

1. By requiring Muslims to believe in all the prophets, Islam lays down the basis of peace between its followers and those of other

religions.

2. It gives the teachings to establish peace among Muslims themselves. It requires Muslims to look upon any person who professes the minimum basics of Islam as being a brother Muslim. No inquisition can be carried out against such a person regarding his or her beliefs, nor can he or she be expelled from Islam.
3. It allows war against others only for the purpose of unavoidable self-defence.
4. Acts of terrorism, kidnapping, hijacking, etc. are NO part of Islamic teaching, for whatever cause or end. Islam requires its followers to strictly observe and fulfil any international treaties, conventions and codes to which they may have pledged themselves.
5. *Jihad* (or struggle) in the way of God means a struggle to overcome one's low, base desires, and a struggle to take the Message of Islam to others by word and pen. The term *jihad* may also be applied to the kind of defensive war mentioned in (3) above, if it had to be undertaken to save Muslims from destruction by an aggressive foe.
6. It is NO objective of Islam, and has NEVER been so in history, to acquire power and rule over countries and peoples. Its objective is to conquer the hearts and minds of people by means of argument and showing a good example.
7. Islam requires Muslims to live as law-abiding citizens of any state which grants them freedom to practise their religion. The Muslim residents of a country are regarded as having made a compact with the authorities to observe the law, and Islam strongly teaches the observance of all compacts. (Of course, Muslims may adopt all lawful means of trying to get a particular law changed, but rebellion against any system of law and government is prohibited by Islam, if Muslims living under that system can fulfil all their basic religious duties.)

8. An 'Islamic' system is not created by acquiring political power and imposing so-called Islamic laws upon the people. It is created in people's hearts first, by convincing them freely of the truth of Islam, and it then spreads out by example.

The last mentioned points of belief have been given to counter certain widespread misconceptions about Islam. It is alleged in many quarters that a Muslim can only live a truly Islamic life under an Islamic system, and that therefore Muslims must constantly struggle for the "establishment of the Islamic system". This is only true in the sense that Muslims must strive to convince others of the truth of Islamic teachings through reason, argument and example, and persuade them to adopt Islamic modes of behaviour. But if it is meant that Muslims must try to acquire political power, and struggle to overthrow a system of government under which they are able to live peaceably as Muslims, this is contrary to Islam. (In fact, this attitude has caused division and disruption in Muslim countries themselves, because a government which one group calls 'Islamic' another will call 'un-Islamic'.)

In conclusion, if there is one characteristic which distinguishes the Lahore Ahmadiyya movement it may be summed up in the one word: *Tolerance* — Tolerance of differences of views among Muslims themselves, Tolerance of the religious sentiments of members of other faiths; acknowledging the human right of others (granted by Islam itself) to choose and follow their own beliefs, while trying to persuade them, out of sympathy and not arrogance, of the truth of Islam as understood by us.



(*Note:* This Report was prepared when we learnt through a newspaper that the Home Office was conducting an enquiry into the nature and work of Muslim organisations in this country. It was despatched to the Home Office in May 1988, bearing the names of the President and the Secretary of the A.A.I.I.L., UK.)

Introduction to Islam

Answers to common questions about Islam.

1. *What is the name of our religion?*

The name of our religion is ISLAM. This word is pronounced as:

IS — as in the word *this* (NOT like *is*).

LAM — LA as in the word *large*.

A follower of Islam is known as a MUSLIM, pronounced as:

MUS — *u* as in *pull*, and a soft *s*.

LIM

2. *What do these words mean?*

The word *Islam* means 'entering into peace' and also 'submission to God'. *Muslim*, therefore, means one who has made peace, with God as well as with man.

3. *Who gave these names to this religion?*

These names are to be found in the Holy Quran, the sacred Book of the Muslims. For instance, God says:

"I have chosen for you (O mankind) Islam as a religion."

(chapter 5, verse 3, or 5:3 for short.)

and

"He (God) has named you as Muslims." (22:78)

4. *What is the basic teaching of Islam?*

It is to make peace with God, which means to submit to and obey God completely. And also to make peace with man, which means to do good to people around us. This basic teaching is summed up in the Holy Quran as follows:

“Whoever submits himself completely to God, and does good to others, he shall have his reward from his Lord.” (2:112)

(Note that “he” here does not mean man only, but any person).

5. *How did Islam come into the world?*

The religion of Islam in its present form came to us through the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, who lived and preached in Arabia some 1400 years ago (born 571 C.E., died 632 C.E.). However, the Holy Prophet taught that he was not bringing a completely new religion into the world, because the basic principles of Islam had also been preached by all the great founders of the various religions before him. Islam, therefore, did not begin with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, but was also the religion of Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Krishna, Buddha, and every other prophet of God.

6. *Why is this religion not named after Muhammad, the Holy Prophet?*

Because, properly speaking, the Holy Prophet Muhammad was not the Founder of Islam, but was himself a Muslim — a follower of Islam. Prophets before him too are called *Muslims* in the Holy Quran. Our religion was not named after the Holy Prophet Muhammad in order to stress that it teaches the same basic principles that were originally taught by all the prophets who appeared before him in various parts of the world.

7. *Are there any special reasons why our religion is called Islam?*

Yes. Because it teaches that, just as the world around us obeys the laws God has devised for it, man too should submit to the guidance the Almighty has revealed through His prophets. It teaches that *Islam* or ‘submission to God’ is only another name for human nature; and that every human child born is a ‘Muslim’ because he (or she) behaves according to true human nature.

8. *If previous prophets had also taught the same basic ‘Islam’, what was new about the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad?*

The original teachings given to the different nations of the world

by the prophets who appeared in them, had gradually become lost, altered and obscured. God then sent the Holy Prophet Muhammad to:

- i) re-establish those original principles,
- ii) preach other truths which had not been preached before, but were necessary now because mankind had advanced,
- iii) to collect together the best of every religion into one faith. So the Holy Prophet Muhammad appeared as the Last Prophet to give to the whole world one, perfect and ever-lasting, religion — Islam.

9. *What does one have to believe in order to become a Muslim?*

A person becomes a Muslim by declaring in public an oath known as the *Kalima Shahada*. This runs:

Ash-hadu an la ilaha ill-Allah

(I bear witness that there is no god except Allah)

Wa ash-hadu anna Muhammad-an rasul-Ullah

(and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah).

The *Kalima* contains the two basic points a Muslim has to believe: that there is only one God — Allah, and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is God's Messenger to mankind.

10. *Is there a list of basic Muslim beliefs?*

Yes. The *Kalima* itself is known as the 'brief expression of faith'. It summarises the basic Muslim beliefs, which are five in number. These are belief in:

1. God, Who possess the most perfect and excellent qualities.
2. Angels, who act upon the heart of each person, inspiring him to do good.
3. The Prophets and Messengers of God sent to all the nations of the world, who taught virtue by their own high moral example.
4. The Books of God, which were revealed to all the nations

through their respective prophets, containing guidance on how man should live and conduct himself.

5. The life after death, when each person shall become conscious of all the deeds, good or bad, he did in this life, and shall face the consequences.



Hazrat Mirza and the terms 'Nabi' and 'Rasul'

Applied to him only as meaning 'saint'

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908), the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement and the greatest Divine Reformer to arise within Islam, is widely accused of laying claim to be a prophet (*nabī*) and a messenger (*rasūl*), in breach of the Islamic belief that the Holy Prophet Muhammad was the last Prophet. The main ground for this *untrue accusation* is that Hazrat Mirza has applied to himself the terms *nabī*, *rasūl* and *mursal* (a variant of *rasūl*). In reply to this charge, Hazrat Mirza again and again gave explanations such as the following:

“I am a servant of Islam, and this is the real reason for my coming. The words *nabī* and *rasūl* are figurative and metaphorical. *Risālat* in the Arabic language is applied to ‘being sent’, and *nubuwwat* is to expound hidden truths and matters upon receiving knowledge from God. ...

“However, in the terminology of Islam, *nabī* and *rasūl* mean those who bring an entirely new Law (*sharī‘ah*), or those who abrogate some aspects of the previous law, or those who are not called followers of a previous prophet, having a direct con-

nection with God without benefit from a prophet. Therefore, one should be vigilant to see that the same meaning is not taken here, because we have no Book but the Holy Quran, and no religion but Islam. We believe that our Prophet, peace and the blessings of God be upon him, is the last of the Prophets, and the Holy Quran is the last of the Books.”

Thus the words *nabī* and *rasūl* can be applied, in terms of their common meanings in the Arabic language, or in a metaphorical sense, to one who is not a prophet as defined in Islamic terminology. Applying these words to someone in this manner does not mean that he is being considered to be an actual prophet.

Hazrat Mirza also pointed out that this broad or figurative use of the words *nabī* and *rasūl* is to be found in the Holy Quran and Hadith, and the writings of recognised Muslim theologians. It was not Hazrat Mirza who had introduced this usage as a novelty. We give below an extract from his writings referring to previous such usage. (The asterisks within brackets are placed after text which we elaborate upon after the extract.)

“Do not make false allegations against me, of claiming prophethood in the real sense. Have you not read that a *muhaddas* (saint) is also a *mursal*? [*]. Do you not remember the words *wa lā muhaddas*? [*]. Then how senseless is this criticism that I have claimed to be a *mursal*. O ignorant ones, tell us whether one *who is sent* should be referred to in the Arabic language as *mursal* or *rasūl*, or as something else.

“We believe and accept that, according to the real meaning of prophethood, after the Holy Prophet Muhammad neither a new prophet nor a previous one can come. The Quran prohibits the coming of any such prophets. However, in a metaphorical sense, God can refer to any inspired saint by the word *nabī* or the word *mursal* [*]. Have you not read those hadith in which occur the words: *rasūl* of the *rasūl* of God? [*]. The Arabs to this day call even the message-bearer sent by a human being as

rasūl [*]. So why is it forbidden for God to use the word *mursal* in a metaphorical sense as well? Do you not even remember from the Quran the words: So they said, we are *mursals* to you? [*]. ... I say it repeatedly that these words *rasūl* and *mursal* and *nabī* undoubtedly occur about me in my revelation from God, but they do not bear their real meanings.”
(*Sirāj Munīr*, p. 3)

We now give detailed quotations to support the references which Hazrat Mirza has briefly cited in the above extract.

I. THE HOLY QURAN

1. The words *wa lā muhaddas* (“nor *muhaddas*”)

These words were used by Ibn Abbas, a Companion of the Holy Prophet and one of the greatest authorities on the Quran, in connection with verse 22:52 of the Quran (see *Bukhārī*, book 62, chapter 6). That verse says that “no *rasūl* nor *nabī*” receives revelation but it is entirely free from any element of human desire or satanic corruption. By saying *wa lā muhaddas* (“nor *muhaddas*”), Ibn Abbas explains that the same also applies to a *muhaddas*. So the words *nabī* and *rasūl* used in this verse also include a *muhaddas* or saint.

2. “They said: We are *mursals* (messengers) to you.”

In *Sūra Yāsīn* of the Quran, there is a story of three messengers being sent to a town, who said to the people: We are messengers to you (36:13-21). Renowned commentators of the Quran have held that these three were not real *rasūls*, but only saints who are called *mursal* here metaphorically. Explaining this verse, Sayyid Ismail Shaheed (d. 1831), famous Muslim religious leader in India, writes: “Bearing in mind the relationship between *muhaddasiyyat* (sainthood) and *risālat*, it should be accepted that a *muhaddas* is also called a *rasūl*” (*Abqaat*, p. 402).

3. Holy Prophet’s Companions called messengers

A verse in the Quran says: “O ye messengers (*rusul*), eat of the good

things and do good deeds" (23:51). The word used here is *rusul*, plural of *rasūl*.

In the renowned, classical dictionary of the Quran, the *Mufrādāt* of Raghīb, it is recorded that "messengers" here means the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his chief Companions.

4. Ordinary messengers called *rasūl* and *mursal*

Relating the history of Joseph, the Quran records: "So when the *rasūl* (messenger) came to him ..." (12:50). *Rasūl* here refers to a messenger sent by the king to convey a message to Joseph in prison.

Messengers sent by the Queen of Sheba to Solomon are called *mursal* in the following verse which records her as saying: "And I am going to send them a present, and see what answer the messengers bring back" (27:35).

II. THE HADITH

1. Terms *nabī*, *rasūl* applied to saints

In a well-known hadith, the Holy Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said that the total number of prophets who appeared is 124,000. Shah Wali-ullah, the eminent Muslim *mujaddid*, philosopher and writer, who lived two centuries ago, writes as follows about this hadith:

"Know that the hadith which mentions a very large number of prophets includes *muhaddaseen* in its count."

(*Al-Khair al-Kasīr*, p. 246; see p. 97 of the English translation published Ashraf, Lahore, 1974.)

Sayyid Ismail Shaheed wrote as follows:

"Some scholars of Hadith have said that in the report quoted from the Holy Prophet about the number of prophets, the word *nabī* refers not only to prophets but also to *muhaddaseen*."

(*Abqāt*, pp. 401-402)

2. *Rasūl* of the *rasūl* of God

In a long narration in *Bukhārī*, a Companion of the Holy Prophet relates: "Then the *rasūl* of the *rasūl* of Allah came to me" (book 64, ch. 81). Here a messenger sent by the Holy Prophet is described as his *rasūl*.

III. ARABIC LITERATURE

1. The eminent Egyptian author, Taha Husain, writing about the students of the Islamic reformer and scholar Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905), describes them as follows:

"They were messengers (*rusul*) of reform, renovation and renaissance." (*Fis-Saif*, Cairo, 1933, p. 44)

Here the word *rusul* is applied to those who brought a message of reform for Islam (i.e. removing un-Islamic beliefs prevalent among the Muslims, and restoring the original teachings of Islam).

2. When the Indian Prime Minister Nehru visited an Arab country in 1956, he was greeted with the words:

Marhabā rasūl as-Salām

meaning *Welcome, messenger of peace* (reported in daily *Kohistan*, 27 September 1956).

• • • • •

Attack upon the Quran

Reply to Anthony Burgess' criticism

In the *Observer* for Sunday 1 October 1989, the writer and reviewer Anthony Burgess begins his review of the *Revised English Bible* with the following vehement condemnation of the Holy Quran:

"In common with many of Salman Rushdie's fellow writers, I have spent some time this year reading the Koran in Dawood's translation, looking for a textual justification for the proposed murder of a distinguished author. The holy book is so full of murder and mutilation, occasionally mollified by reference to Allah's infinite mercy, that it becomes wearisome. It is not, whatever Muslims believe, a work of genius.

"It has been a relief to return to the Bible, which undoubtedly is. Islam has certainly little justification — either moral or aesthetic — for regarding the Children of the Scripture (Jews and Christians together) as inferior people who ought to rush to be converted." (p. 48)

The following Sunday, a letter from a non-Muslim reader was published, admirably refuting this unjustified attack. It said:

"Why does Anthony Burgess begin his review of the Revised English Bible with a silly and offensive remark about the Koran ?

"Does he expect us to admire him, the great polyglot, for having spent the summer reading Dawood's translation ?

"And what does he mean by then declaring it not a work of genius? To the unbeliever the 'genius' of a work of revelation lies in its literary quality: nobody thinks much of Dawood, whereas there are many non-Muslim Arabic scholars who appreciate the Koran. But what I find most depressing about Mr Burgess' remarks is the casual disrespect they show for a book which many millions of people hold sacred. ..."

In support of the point advanced in the above letter, we may quote the following scholarly Western opinion on the Quran:

"We may well say that the Quran is one of the grandest books ever written. ... Sublime and chaste, where the supreme truth of God's unity is to be proclaimed; appealing in high-pitched strains to the imagination of a poetically-gifted people where

the eternal consequences of man's submission to God's holy will, or of rebellion against it, are pictured . . .

"Here therefore its merits as a literary production should, perhaps, not be measured by some preconceived maxims of subjective and aesthetic taste, but by the effects which it produced in Muhammad's contemporaries and fellow-countrymen. If it spoke so powerfully and convincingly to the hearts of his hearers as to weld hitherto centrifuged and antagonistic elements into one compact and well-organised body *animated by ideas far beyond those which had until now ruled the Arabian mind*, then its eloquence was perfect, *simply because it created a civilised nation out of savage tribes*, and shot a fresh woof into the old warp of history."

(Steingass in Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam*; our italics.)

"The Quran is unapproachable as regards convincing power, eloquence and even composition. . . . And to it was also indirectly due the marvellous development of all branches of science in the Muslim world."

(Hirschfield, *New researches*, 1902.)

"That the best of Arab writers has never succeeded in producing anything equal in merit to the Quran itself is not surprising."

(Palmer, in the introduction to his English translation of the Quran.)

The editor of *The Muslim Thinker* took up the allegation of the Quran being "full of murder and mutilation" and Burgess' claim that he found "relief" upon turning to the Bible. A short letter was sent to the *Observer*, and subsequently an expanded version of the same to Anthony Burgess himself, which is reproduced below:

I note from your review of the Revised English Bible (1 October) that you are studying the Quran to ascertain if it applies the death penalty to authors whose writings offend against

Islam. For your information I enclose herewith a copy of our quarterly, *The Muslim Thinker*, which has an article on page 18 addressing this issue. If my arguments can satisfy you that, far from the death penalty, the Quran does not prescribe any worldly punishment whatsoever in such cases, can we hope that you will tell your readers that you are now convinced that the Quran is not responsible for such teachings?

After all, as you have made a remark denigrating the Quran (as being "full of mutilation and murder"), it is only fair that if you find something which disproves this (to your satisfaction) then you proclaim that just as openly.

Your charge that the Quran "is so full of murder and mutilation" can only be properly refuted if you actually quote the relevant texts, and moreover show that they constitute the bulk of the Quran. However, we can certainly rebut your assertion that you found it "a relief to return to the Bible".

The Old Testament books of law are full of penalties of death, stoning and mutilation for numerous offences (most of which are not even punishable in Islam). The book of Joshua recounts battle after battle in which the Israelites, having captured a town, slayed all the inhabitants. To quote the Bible, they "utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God had commanded" (Josh. 10:40). Elsewhere, God told them to treat the defeated foe as follows: "... do not spare them, but kill both men and women, infant and suckling ..." (1 Samuel 15:3). Do you find relief in these passages?

If you can supply us with those verses of the Quran to which you have taken exception, we would gladly publish in *The Muslim Thinker* a comparative study of these passages with Biblical extracts of the kind mentioned above. People can then form their judgments in the light of facts.

To date, no reply has been received from Mr Burgess (three months after this letter was sent.)

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- The Ahmadiyya Case** Pp. 358
Full details of the court case in 1985 in which the beliefs of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad were proved to be fully Islamic.

To obtain these books and information about other publications and free literature, please contact the Book Depot at our address on the front cover.

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

The Muslim Thinker

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A periodical devoted to showing that Islam is:
PEACEFUL – TOLERANT – RATIONAL – INSPIRING

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Letters are welcome and should be sent to The Editor at the address on front cover. Any articles in this magazine without an indication of author or source are contributed by the Editor.

The *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore* is an international Muslim association, founded in 1914, dedicated to the propagation of Islam. It presents the *true, original* message of Islam, as found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, a message obscured today by grave misconceptions.

We believe that Islam seeks to *attract the hearts and minds of people* towards the truth, by means of reasoning, persuasion and a display of its own inherent beauty. It condemns the use of coercion, force or political power to advance the faith.

Some Islamic teachings which we stress are as follows. Islam is:

- (1) **Peaceful:** Only allows use of force in unavoidable self-defence; teaches Muslims to live peacefully under any rule which accords them freedom of religion.
- (2) **Tolerant:** Gives full freedom to everyone to hold and practise any belief or religion.
- (3) **Rational:** In all matters, it urges use of reason and the ever-growing knowledge of mankind; blind following is disallowed, and independence of thought granted.
- (4) **Inspiring:** Worship is not a ritual, but a living contact with a living God. God listens to man, answers his prayers, and speaks to His righteous servants even today.

Our Founder, *Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad* (d. 1908), was a servant of Islam, with the mission of bringing about the spiritual and intellectual victory of Islam. He believed that, after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, NO prophet is needed nor can one arise. However, Divinely-inspired reformers will continually arise to rejuvenate the religion and rekindle a true, living faith within the hearts.

Our Teachings

From the work *Kishtī-e Nūh* (Noah's Ark)

by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

Relationship with God

To follow me it is necessary in the first place to believe in One God, the Creator and the Supporter of all existence, powerful over all, eternal, everlasting and unchanging in His attributes, neither being a son nor having a son, and free from suffering injuries, cross or death. Being far off, He is yet very near, and being near He is still very far. He is One but His manifestations are many. For those who renew themselves, He is a new God, and His dealings with them are new. They witness a transformation in God to the extent to which they transform themselves. But it is not God Who changes, for He is unchanging and perfect in His attributes from all eternity. It is a new manifestation of Divine which is disclosed to a man when he is transformed by a renewal of his mind. As a man rises higher, a higher manifestation of Divine power is revealed to him. When he shows an extraordinary transformation, Almighty God reveals to him extraordinary manifestations of His power. This is the root from which signs and miracles spring.

Such is my Lord, in Him you must believe and Him you must set before you. Let God be uppermost in your mind; let Him be dearer to you than your own selves, your comforts and all your connections. Be constant and firm in His path so that no storm might shake you. The world trusts in its resources and prefers not God to its own dear objects, but you should trust in God alone and prefer Him to all else, so that you may be numbered in heaven with His people. Almighty God has been exhibiting His signs of mercy from ancient times, but you cannot avail yourselves of His tender mercies until you are one with Him and fulfil all the laws of righteousness. His will must be

your will and His desires your desires. Be faithful to Him in adversity and lie at His door whether He hearkens to your voice or not, so that His will be done in all cases. If you trust in Him thus, the Living God Who has long hidden His face from the world will manifest Himself in you. Is there anyone among you who acts upon these ordinances, who can seek to do the will of God and submit to the decree of Heaven without uttering a word of complaint? When adversities encompass you all about, your faith in Him should be the greater.

Treatment of fellow beings

Let all your power be exerted to establish His unity upon earth. Be kind and merciful to the creatures of God. Let not your tongue speak evil against them or your hands do injury to them. Do not oppress them, but try your best to do good to them. Speak not the word of pride and vanity to anyone though he be your subordinate or servant. Abuse not anyone though he might abuse you. Walk upon earth in humility and meekness and sympathise with your fellow beings that you may be accepted of God. There are many who show meekness outwardly but inwardly they are ravaging wolves. There are many who are smooth in appearance but they have the nature of a serpent. You cannot be accepted of your God until your tongue conforms to your heart. If you are in a high place, glory not in your greatness and do not look down upon the lowly but have mercy on them. If you are learned, glory not in your learning and do not despise the ignorant with vanity but give them a word of kind advice. If you are rich, glory not in your wealth and behave not proudly towards the poor, but serve and assist them. Shun the paths that lead to destruction. Fear God and be righteous. Worship not the creatures, but severing all your earthly ties become wholly devoted to God. Let not your delight be in this world. Serve God only, and devote your life to His service. Hate every impurity and evil for God's sake, for your Lord is holy. Let every morning bear witness that you have passed the night with righteousness, and let every evening bear witness that you have passed the day fearing God.

True inner reform

Fear not the curses of this world, for they are like the smoke which disappears instantly and cannot turn the light of your day into the darkness of night; but fear the curse of God which comes down from heaven, and brings ruin, both in this life and the next, upon the heads of those upon whom it descends. You cannot save yourselves with hypocrisy, for your Lord sees the inmost secrets of the heart. Can you deceive Him? Therefore stand uprightly before Him, purge your hearts of every impurity and cleanse them of every dross. If the slightest darkness remains in you, it shall overcome your light and all shall be darkness. If there is vanity, hypocrisy, self-approbation or idleness in you, you cannot be acceptable in the sight of God. Be not deceived that a few words which your lips utter are the goal of your life, for Almighty God wishes to bring about a thorough transformation in your lives. He demands of you a death, after which He shall breathe a new life into you. Be at peace with each other and forgive the trespasses of your brethren, for wicked is the person who does not agree to be at peace with his brother. He is in danger of being cut off, for he sows the seed of dissension.

(From the translation published in the *Review of Religions*, 1902.)

• • • • •

Deliver the Message

Importance of the propagation of Islam.

by Shaikh Sharif Ahmad, *Imam*, A.A.I.L.L.(U.K.)

“O messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to thee from thy Lord; and if thou do it not, then thou hast not delivered His message. And Allah will protect thee from men. Surely Allah guides not the disbelieving people.” (5:67)

This verse is a part of the chapter revealed to the Holy Prophet in Madina between 5th to 7th year of *Hijra*. The Holy Prophet had been enjoined to convey to others what had been revealed to him. To lay emphasis on this issue, it had been clearly termed as non-performance of his messengership if he failed to deliver the message. It is to be borne in mind that a messenger is sent to a people when they are in utter darkness. Morally, the Arabs were sunk deep in the mud of indecency; socially they were worse than beasts; and intellectually they were stranded in the cobwebs of superstitions and uncertainties. What was worst in fact was considered by them to be the best. The task of a messenger of Allah is to lift them out of the abyss and take them to the pinnacles of a highly civilised, decent and virtuous life, and to reshape the style of their lives in the spiritual mould of his teachings and example.

Holy Prophet protected by God

The Holy Prophet's clarion call sounded strange to them. Taking his opposition to be an affront to their centuries-old notions and beliefs, they rose up against him, and opposed him tooth and nail. Finding him undaunted, they felt no hesitation in removing him from their midst. Confrontation with a whole people needs a prowess of very high degree. The Holy Prophet was soon surrounded by a small but courageous band of men, women and children, prepared to lay down their lives for the cause of Islam.

A very heavy responsibility was placed on the Holy Prophet by saying: deliver that which has been revealed to you by your Lord, failing which you will be considered to have not performed your duty. The Holy Prophet was not a self-appointed prophet. He was chosen by God for this purpose and deputed to be His messenger. He was promised full protection:

“And Allah will protect thee from men.”

It not only encouraged the Messenger of Allah, it also deepened in the hearts of his Companions the truth of the message received by him. The Holy Prophet was to deliver the message to mankind. His

safety ensured the success of his mission. This promise and prophecy, though made in the 6th or 7th year of *Hijra*, was virtually operating from the day the Holy Prophet was charged with the heavy and onerous duty of the reformation of mankind. In spite of ruthless and stormy opposition in Makka, ever changing tactics of the opponents, their concerted efforts to eliminate the Holy Prophet immediately before his migration to Madina, the Makkans could not harm his person. After *Hijra*, the wars imposed on him was the final and apparently very effective plan to eliminate the Muslims and their Master. Every attempt proved futile, producing only adverse effect. From every trial the Holy Prophet and his Companions emerged victorious. Finally, the Holy Prophet's triumphant entry into Makka was the last nail in the coffin of his opponents.

In the last words of the verse, there is yet another promise:

“Surely Allah guides not the disbelieving people.”

It is also a prophecy, and its fulfilment is as obvious as the Holy Prophet's immunity from the hands of his opponents. They always looked misguided. Their plans, schemes, machinations and tactics ended in complete failure, as if all of their schemes were engineered by misguided and perverted brains.

Muslims' duty of delivering message

Admittedly the Holy Prophet was the most successful of all the religious personalities. He not only delivered the Divine Message, but also ensured that to whomever the message was delivered fully, they understood it and were acting upon it. Not only the Holy Prophet but also his Companions were very clearly directed in the following words:

“Continue then in the right way as thou art commanded, as also (should) those who turn (to Allah) with thee. And be not inordinate (O man). Surely He is Seer of what you do.”
(11:112)

It is thus incumbent on all of the followers of Islam that they

should continue to deliver the message received by them through the Holy Prophet to their contemporaries. They should consider the warning extended to them equally, that if they fail to deliver the message they will be guilty of not performing their duties properly. If they tread the right path, make it obligatory for themselves to take the Quran to all the four corners of the earth, they will also be the recipients of the blessings and the favours promised by Allah to their Master.

Propagation of Islam in England

We see today millions of Muslims in China. We hear the call of *Allahu-Akbar* from the minarets of hundreds of mosques in that country. The seed of Islam in China was sown by only one Companion of the Holy Prophet. Islam was a hated name in Europe. It was considered to be the creed of barbarous bedouins, backward and ignorant people. Today Islam occupies an honoured position in the hearts of those who happen to know something of this religion. Much credit for this change must go to Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, the pioneer Muslim missionary to England. The love of Islam was imbued in his heart by *Hazrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The Khwaja was alone in a country where the voice of *Allahu-Akbar* had hardly been heard. The call first looked strange. Then it became familiar, and at last a time came when men like Lord Headley, Sir Abdullah Archibald Hamilton, Sir Umar Hubert Rankin and Habibullah Lovegrove embraced Islam. Today the Muslim fraternity mentions the names of those distinguished personalities with pride and love. They also know that it was Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din who brought them in the fold of Islam. They are required to be told that Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din was a disciple of *Hazrat* Mirza and had drunk deep at the fountain made to flow by that great Reformer of the fourteenth century *Hijra*. Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din diverted the flow of that stream to Europe and England. His name stands imprinted in the pages of history and that of the Reformer of the century who infused in the Khwaja the love of Islam.

When Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din set foot on the soil of this country,

he carried Islam in his head. There was very little literature available at that time. The Holy Quran, with English translation and commentary, was published in 1917 by Maulana Muhammad Ali. Hazrat Maulana's second greatest work, *The Religion of Islam*, was published in 1936. A few pamphlets and booklets were all the Khwaja brought with him. Today we have, by the grace of Allah, literature which has virtually overwhelmed the religious world. All that is needed today is to take that literature to those of our non-Muslim friends who really stand in need of it.

The Divine order "deliver that which has been revealed" stares us in the face. To obey it, will lead to success; its disobedience is an unpardonable sin. We also know that this world will not end until the sun of Islam rises from the West. Rise it will, but ensure that its rays fall on us while we are still alive. Whoever carries the message of Islam to his fellow beings will find the hand of Allah working for him.

"We will soon show them Our signs in the farthest regions."
(41:53)

It is Allah's promise:

"And who is more true in word than Allah." (4:88)



Easter and other festivals

Their pagan origin.

(Taken from an *Islamic Review*, of the 1920s.)

Easter Sunday is the day of the greatest Christian festivity. Jesus, they say, arose from the dead; this day he overcame death and brought a new life to mankind; so goes the belief.

But the festival existed thousands of years before Jesus was born.

Easter was the goddess of spring, in whose honour the festival was celebrated about the end of March or the beginning of April. The Saxons of the pre-Christian days used to enjoy their Easter eggs and hot cross buns while worshipping the goddess whom they called *Eostre*.

The celebration of the festival with hot cross buns and eggs was not peculiar to this country. The Egyptians and the Greeks of the olden days did the same. Eggs and buns were regarded as signs of creation by the old Egyptians; spring brings life to creation, hence the festivities at this particular time of the year. The same is true in India and Persia till today, festivals taking the names of *Besaakhi* and *Nauroz*. The sign of the cross is also a legacy of the ancient day worship of Mithra, the sun-god.

Pagan origin of Christian sacred days

The fact that the date of Easter has to be fixed according to the full moon, at the spring equinox, clearly shows that the festival has more to do with the worship of some luminary than with any event in the life of Jesus. These views are strengthened when we consider other Christian sacred days. Christian scholars only speak the truth when they confess their inability to ascertain the date of the birth of Jesus. No one can do so with certainty. That the day of the birth of the sun-god was celebrated by the sun worshippers in the pre-Christian world on or about the 25th of December in Persia, Rome, Egypt, or Greece, is an established fact. Then comes the Sabbath Day in Christian lands. Jesus observed the Sabbath, but it was on Saturday, and not on Sunday; and so did the apostles and the early fathers of the Church. The change was brought about by Constantine, whose favourite god was Apollo, the sun-god.

Jesus takes Apollo's place

Political reasons induced Constantine to embrace Christianity. He kept everything of old worship in the newly created Church excepting the figure-head. The seat of Apollo was given to Jesus, while every other thing was left as it was before. The altar, with its face towards the East, the chancel, the choir, the acolytes, the pages, the monks

and the nuns, with the characteristic tonsure in honour of the disc of the sun, and the Cross itself — in short, every paraphernalia of a Catholic Cathedral — is the remnant of the Temple of Apollo. Sunday is not God's day, but the day of the sun-god. It is not the church of Jesus which is adhered to, but the Church of the sun-god, and if today she has lost her hold on the public mind, the reason is obvious. Ignorance and credulity will accept and revere anything in any form, but the modern mind is too enlightened to stand the absurdities of the medieval days.

Cross — Symbol of sun-worship

The cross as a symbol is of immemorial antiquity, far antedating the Christian era. Almost all ancient religions were different forms of sun-worship, with the Cross as its symbol. The seasons of the year, depending on the position of the sun, have been divided into four parts — spring, summer, autumn and winter. If you divide the earth's orbit around the sun into four parts, it will form a cross. The revivification of the earth in spring, at the vernal equinox on March 21st, when the sun enters the sign Aries, heralds the regeneration of vegetation and the life of Nature, hence the festival of Easter, which is celebrated even today in different forms under different names in Persia and India.

Mythical life of Persian sun-god

Mithra was the sun-god, and the Cross was his symbol. He was born of a virgin, in a cave, on December 25th. He had twelve companions or disciples (the twelve months); he was buried in a tomb and rose again. He was called Saviour and Mediator, and was sometimes figured as a lamb. Sacramental feasts were held in remembrance of him. Mithraism was adopted by the Romans and brought by them to England and France. Mithraic remains have been found in various places in England and on the continent. In Ireland, a figure on a cross has been found, but the effigy wears the Iranian regal crown and not the crown of thorns.

Some sort of baptism was also in vogue in the Mithraic ritual which

was performed by marking the forehead with a cross; the worshippers also partook of a sacrament of a small wafer; it was a round cake, emblematic of the solar disc; the worshippers named their host *Mizd*, and some authorities derive the word *mass* from the same.

Christmas — birthday of various sun-gods

The date of Christmas throws a good deal of light on the subject; the 25th of December, or some date very near to it, happens to be the birth-date of many gods in various mythologies — Bacchus, Osiris, Attis, Adonis and Quetzacoatl — the respective sun-gods of Greece, Egypt, Phrygia, Phoenicia and Mexico. If they were born on the 25th of December, their parents must have had their marriage on the 25th of March, which day is, again, Our Lady's Day in the Christian calendar. It is curious that the conception of Ishtar, the mother of the sun-god, was kept as a festival in Phoenicia and was celebrated on the same date. In this connection it may be mentioned that there was a cave at Bethlehem in which Mithra was worshipped in pre-Christian days. The existence of the said cave is admitted by the Christian Fathers (Irenaeus among other).

The story of the Passion is, again, a repetition of an old Passion Play, acted thousands of years before the reported events of the Cross and Resurrection.

Do these facts need any comment? Are they not eloquent enough to show that the Church of Christ is really the Church of the sun-god? (The facts given above may be verified from scholarly sources such as: Robertson, *Pagan Christs*, and Frazer, *The Golden Bough*.)

The Quran's verdict. The modern discovery that these Christian beliefs and festivals are copied from ancient idolatrous nations was indicated in the Quran centuries earlier. Referring to the exaggerated status that is claimed for Jesus, the Quran tells Christians:

“O people of the Book, exaggerate not in the matter of your religion unjustly, and *follow not the low desires of nations who went astray before* and led many astray, and went astray from the right path.” (5:77)

Introduction to Islam

Answers to common questions about Islam.

(For continuity, the first question below is repeated from the last instalment.)

10. *Is there a list of basic Muslim beliefs?*

Yes. The *Kalima* itself is known as the 'brief expression of faith'. It summarises the basic Muslim beliefs, which are five in number. These are belief in:

1. God, Who possess the most perfect and excellent qualities.
2. Angels, who act upon the heart of each person, inspiring him to do good.
3. The Prophets and Messengers of God sent to all the nations of the world, who taught virtue by their own high moral example.
4. The Books of God, which were revealed to all the nations through their respective prophets, containing guidance on how man should live and conduct himself.
5. The life after death, when each person shall become conscious of all the deeds, good or bad, he did in this life, and shall face the consequences.

11. *What is the most important point Islam teaches about belief?*

It is this, that *belief* does not just mean believing something in one's heart, but also acting on the belief. Mere faith counts for nothing if not carried into practice. The purpose of belief is to show us what to do in practice. No 'belief' by itself can bring salvation.

12. *How does this apply to the five beliefs of Islam?*

It applies as follows:

<i>Belief in:</i>	<i>Means we should:</i>
God	Try to perfect ourselves and acquire the best qualities.
Angels	Follow our good thoughts and impulses.
Prophets	Try to model our lives on the examples set by the righteous in all the nations on earth.
Books of God	Follow all the truths, in whatever scripture or religion they may be found.
Life after death	Remember that all our actions, good and bad, open and secret, will be judged.

13. *What are the basic practices a Muslim has to perform?*

In order to submit to God, and also to be at peace with his fellow beings, a Muslim has to perform his duties to God and his duties to man. The duties to God are: prayer (*salaat*), fasting (*saum*), and the Pilgrimage to Makka (*hajj*). The duty to man is to spend one's resources, time, energy, money, etc. for the welfare of others, and in particular to give a part of one's wealth and possessions to help those in need; this is known as *zakaat* or charity.

14. *What is the main point to remember about these practical duties?*

It is that the purpose of performing these duties is to draw us closer to God, and to lead us to do good to others and refrain from wrongdoing in our daily lives. Therefore, we should carry out these duties, not as rituals, but remembering God from the bottom of our hearts. Performing these acts of worship can only benefit us if we use them as the basis for improving our character and conduct in daily life. If a person prays and fasts, but fails to do good and give up bad habits, his prayer and fasting will be useless.

ISLAMIC BELIEFS: 1. GOD

15. *What is the basic teaching of Islam about God?*

Islam teaches that there is one, and only one, God Who is the Creator

and Controller of the entire universe. He is unique in every respect, and there is nothing which bears any likeness to Him. He is the Knower of all things, and has full power over the whole of creation. He does not stand in need of anything at all, while everything is totally dependent on Him. He possesses all the perfect qualities, and man should worship Him, and Him alone.

16. *Is there any name for God that Muslims use specially?*

Yes. According to Islam, the *personal* name of God is the Arabic word *Allah*. Personal name means that it is the name which refers only to Him, and to Him rather than to any particular quality that He possesses. It is pronounced:

AL — as in *alarm*.

LAH — *la* as in *large*.

The word *Allah* denotes that God is *the One Who possesses all the perfect attributes*. The Quran itself gives this meaning when it says: "Allah has the most excellent names (or qualities)"; ch. 7, v. 180. The names of God in other languages, such as *God* in English, or *Khuda* in Urdu, only convey some particular attribute of the Divine Being, and they are also used for others than God (as in *god, gods, goddess, etc.*). *Allah*, however, has only ever been applied to God Himself.



Television Review

1. *Encounter*. ITV Sunday 28 January 1990

This programme in the *Encounter* series showed the daily work of the senior Imam of the Central London Mosque, Gamal Solaiman. Through the activities shown, the Imam came over as a moderate, balanced and enlightened figure. It was clear that the programme

was presenting the lenient, accommodating and gentler side of Islam, as must have been the Imam's intention, manifested in the solution provided to various individuals' problems.

An office worker was seeking the Imam's advice about his anxiety that in performing his ablutions (*wuḍū*) at work, he was only wiping over his socks, not having the facilities to wash his feet. The Imam reassured him that Islam allowed this concession for such circumstances, and that his *wuḍū* was indeed proper. It could also have been added that what really matters is how far one attains the object of prayer. A *wuḍū* performed most meticulously is useless if the ablutions and the prayers are treated as nothing more than rituals.

A *Shariah* council was shown, which seemed to have the functions of an Islamic domestic court. A woman had applied to it to have an Islamic divorce decree issued. She had been divorced for some time in the civil courts, but wanted the marriage nullified under Islamic law as well. Her husband had refused to give her the Islamic divorce, and hence she took the case to this body. The council considered the case and agreed to her application. While this instance showed Islamic law acting sympathetically towards a wife against her unreasonable husband, why should a man in the first place have the arbitrary and absolute power of divorcing his wife and of withholding the divorce? If the positions are reversed and the man wants the divorce, the woman cannot withhold it from him and compel him to approach courts or councils to obtain an Islamic annulment. These inequities are due to mistaken interpretations given to Islamic teachings.

Brookwood cemetery

A scene in the film showed the Imam arriving at a cemetery, indicated on the caption as *Brookwood cemetery, Woking*, praying for all the deceased, and then attending to a couple of graves. We wish it to be known that it was through the strenuous efforts of the late Maulana Sadr-ud-Din (d. 1981), the second head of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, while he was in charge of the Woking Muslim Mission during the First World War, that the Muslim burial ground at this cemetery was established. Buried there are several early British

Muslims associated with the Woking mission, and some members of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement who served at Woking. As Muslim prayers for the dead are meant only for the Muslim deceased, the Imam's words of prayers show that he includes Ahmadis among Muslims, and we congratulate him on his generosity of spirit.

We must also point out that while the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement obtained a cemetery in England to be used by all Muslims, our members in many parts of world are being denied the right of burial in Muslim cemeteries by the so-called orthodox Muslim religious leaders. In some countries, such as South Africa, there have even been civil court actions to determine whether Ahmadis could be buried in cemeteries allocated for Muslims. Thus does tolerance stand in contrast with bigotry.

2. *Antenna*, BBC2 Wednesday 31 January 1990

This science programme carried a feature presented by Mr Zia-ud-Din Sardar, well known commentator on the subject of Islam and science, the main thrust of which was that Islam can provide an ethical and moral framework enabling scientific developments to be exploited for the benefit of mankind, not to its detriment. The Islamic concepts of *tauḥīd*, *khilāfa*, *istiṣlah* ("public interest"), and *ijmā'* were referred to as having the following implications: (1) that all nature was one, (2) that man was God's trustee on earth to act as custodian of His creation and not its absolute master, (3) that "public interest" must be the paramount consideration in putting the discoveries of science into practice, and (4) that *ijmā'* or public consensus could be used to decide whether certain lines of research (such as embryo research) should be pursued. Concern was expressed by Mr Sardar and the Muslim scientists he interviewed over the disturbing and disastrous consequences of an uncontrolled science, for example, animal experiments, global pollution, spread of nuclear weapons, and modern medical attitudes. A science tempered by the ethics of Islam would be free of dangers of this kind.

How original is this?

It must certainly have been valuable for viewers to learn that Islamic teachings have a bearing on what are considered to be advanced areas of life, and provide guidance on modern problems. But one is bound to notice that none of the points made could be considered as an exclusively Islamic contribution. Have not various organisations and individuals, who do not belong to Islam or even to any religion, been deeply perturbed about these issues for years? There have been protests, and even illegal acts, to stop animal experiments, spread of pollution, proliferation of nuclear weapons etc. There has been discussion for over two decades about the need for "social responsibility" in science, and associations have been formed to promote this idea. Alternative medicine too has been so much in the news. Can it therefore be seriously suggested that it is Muslim scientists, much more so than anyone else, who are concerned about this abuse of nature because the principles of "Islamic science" lead them to recognise these evils?

As regards the various Islamic concepts, noted above, which could provide an ethical framework to govern science, again these values are widely advocated by those outside Islam, and so this report did not offer much which a non-Muslim would consider as novel or original. For instance, conservationists regard man as part of nature and say that he has no right to maltreat other living things, which is the same idea as man being the custodian and not the master of nature. Again, if Islam has *ijmā'*, then modern democracies have elected legislatures which represent public opinion.

The problem is not so much with modern science itself, nor is it that there is a lack of good principles to guide man in this sphere. It is that those who exploit the discoveries of science violate these principles because of being motivated by greed, for personal, business or national ends. The report should therefore have shown how Islam, besides providing the necessary teachings to use science beneficially, proposes to restrain these human weaknesses. It mentioned producing Muslim scientists who work "only for the pleasure of Allah". But

the exploitation of their work will depend on Muslim industrialists, business people, bureaucrats and politicians. How is it proposed to produce people in these categories who work only for the pleasure of Allah?

“Islamic Science”

It is not clear what was intended by this term, but a lecturer teaching this was shown comparing the theory of evolution with instantaneous creation. He told his class that, according to Islam, creation happened instantly because the Quran uses the expression *kun, fa-yakūn* (God says “Be”, and it is). This is not Islamic science but a naive, simplistic interpretation of the Quran. It may be noted that to God Almighty all time is one, and therefore even if two events are separated by millions of years *on the human scale*, in Divine terms there is no delay between them. Therefore the Quranic expression, “God only says to it, Be, and it is”, does by no means indicate immediate creation. In another connection, the report made the point that a Muslim scientist would tend to prefer theories involving ‘oneness’ because this accords with the belief in *Tauhīd*. On this basis one might argue that a theory which postulates that various life forms can be traced to a common origin is more acceptable in Islam than the belief that each living thing was a separate creation from the beginning.

Omissions

The feature omitted to mention or make clear certain key points which show that Islam is the only religion which satisfies the needs and demands of the scientific age. Firstly, Islam accepts, indeed urges, the use of observation and reasoning as a means of advancing knowledge and discovering truth. It makes even religious doctrines subject to the test of reason, though they cannot be established by it. Secondly, Islam is the only religion whose teachings directly led its followers, at an early stage in its history, to study nature and develop science. When Muslim supremacy and civilisation was at its height, so was the Muslim contribution to science; and when their civilisation went into decline so did their research of science.

In discussing the early Islamic contribution to the sciences, it was rightly said that the Muslim scientists questioned everything freely and showed an independent spirit of enquiry; hence their success. We ask, however, whether the "Islamic science" of today is reviving that spirit, or rejecting it when its conclusions clash with traditionally received interpretations of religion?



Muslim history – an echo of Israelite history

Dr Israr Ahmad agrees with Hazrat Mirza
Muslim downfall similar to that of the Israelites.

Dr Israr Ahmad is one of Pakistan's foremost Sunni religious scholars, and a well-known speaker and writer on the teachings of Islam. Recently he wrote a series of articles in the Pakistani newspaper *Jang*, in one of which he commented on a prophecy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, relating to the decline of the Muslims in their later history, as follows:

"The Holy Prophet Muhammad foretold that the same evils would arise among his followers as had arisen among the Israelites. He said: 'If they — the Israelites — had crawled into the hole of a lizard, you will crawl into it too'. His words go so far that although one is hesitant to quote them, but they are the words of the Holy Prophet which I put before you. He said: 'If there was a wretched man among the Israelites who committed incest with his own mother, then among you also shall arise such a wretched man'.

"The meaning is that all the evils, in terms of religion, doctrine, thought, knowledge and deeds, which came to prevail among

the Israelites, shall also come to prevail among the Muslims. The text of the hadith is as follows: '*All the things which happened to the Israelites shall also happen to my followers, just as one shoe matches the other shoe*'. This is a most eloquent comparison. Look at a pair of shoes, and because the front parts of the two point in opposite directions, you see one shoe being apparently different from the other. But put the soles of the two shoes together, and they are identical. Similarly, the circumstances of the Israelites and the Muslims appear to be different, because after all, there is the span of fourteen hundred years, and so there is some difference on the face of it. But if you look between the lines, you find that there is not a hair breadth's difference. And as to the condition of the Jews described in the Holy Quran, each one of us must look at himself to see whether he has not fallen prey to that condition."

(*Jang*, London edition, 19 October 1987, page 3.)

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad applied exactly this prophecy about a hundred years ago to the condition of the Muslims in these times. In the extract below, he cites the same saying referring to "shoes" which Dr Israr Ahmad has quoted. Writes Hazrat Mirza:

"Moses' people had so thoroughly gone astray by the fourteenth century (after Moses) that righteousness and virtue had disappeared altogether. The Jewish divines were pre-occupied with needless dissensions and selfish controversies, much evil and wickedness had spread among them, and the worldly condition of the Jews had suffered great disintegration as well. Precisely this is the condition of the Muslim people at this time, and events before our eyes are plainly testifying that in reality this people and its divines are following in the footsteps of the Jews of Jesus' time. . . .

"Leaving aside the prophecies for a moment, look at the situation rationally as a truth seeker, as to whether the case of the Muslims of this age and the Jews of Jesus' time fulfils the words

'one shoe matching the other', or not. Look at the Gospels with care and read whether what Jesus has described of the condition of the Jewish priests and lawyers, exposing their hypocrisy, is to be found in the present day Muslim religious leaders, or not. Is it not true that our leaders, like the Jewish priests, are day and night engaged in futile disputes, are utterly devoid of spirituality, and are constantly attempting to prove others as *kāfir* while they themselves know not what Islam is? ... Pick up the histories of the Jews and see how intensely similar are these Muslims in their religious and worldly destruction to the Jews of Jesus' time." (*Shahādat al-Qur'ān*, published 1893, pp. 43,44)

Just compare Dr Israr Ahmad's concluding words with the following from Hazrat Mirza:

"When we read in the very first part of the Quran passages regarding the Jewish priests, to the effect that 'you preach goodness to others, but forget your own souls' [etc.] ... the heart cries out spontaneously that all these verses apply to most of our own religious leaders." (*ibid.*, p. 48)

Hazrat Mirza's claim

Hazrat Mirza has presented this resemblance as an evidence of his claim to be the Messiah whose advent is promised among Muslims. The prophecies about the similarity of the Muslims to the Israelites do not merely speak of the resemblance of the evils arising in the two nations. Muslims are also promised in the Quran and the Hadith that *khakīfas* (deputies to the Holy Prophet Muhammad) and inspired saints would be raised among them *instead of, but in the likeness of*, the prophets of the Israelites. It is prophesied in particular that the Messiah would appear among the Muslims. Referring to both aspects of this intense similarity, Hazrat Mirza wrote:

"Just as in the last days of the Mosaic law a prophet arose named Jesus, in a time when the moral condition of the Jews

had deteriorated completely — they had strayed very far from real piety, virtue, mutual sympathy, unity and true godliness, their knowledge and thought was confined merely to formalism and letter-worship, and in their worldly position they had become weak and humiliated — similarly it is necessary that among the Muslim people too there should arise a *muhaddas*, in the likeness of that prophet and of his time, when they have also degenerated in the same manner as that in which the Jews had fallen in Jesus' time." (ibid., p. 43)

The resemblance with the Israelites is in two points, he wrote, and the second must be accepted if the first is acknowledged. These two points are:

"... firstly, in the disintegration of the nation, the decline in worldly standing, and the change for worse in virtue, faith and righteousness; and secondly, in the coming of a *mujaddid* at such a time, who has the name Promised Messiah and who restores the original state of faith. ... Since our Muslim brethren accept that one of these two signs has been fulfilled in this age, to turn away from the second sign is just like saying that the sun has undoubtedly risen but it is not daytime yet." (ibid., p. 48)

What an elegant and simple explanation has Hazrat Mirza given! If Muslims have degenerated to a condition akin to that of the Jews of Jesus' time, as was prophesied, then the Messiah who was to revive the Muslims must have appeared as well, in accordance with the rest of the prophecy.

Note that Hazrat Mirza has plainly stated in one extract that the Messiah to arise among Muslims would be a *muhaddas*, and in another that he would be a *mujaddid*. Therefore, in his capacity as the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza claims *not to be a prophet*, but to be a non-prophet who receives revelation (i.e. *muhaddas*), and a reformer like the several Muslim religious reformers who had preceded him.

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Letters are welcome and should be sent to The Editor at the address on front cover. Any articles in this magazine without an indication of author or source are contributed by the Editor.

The *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore* is an international Muslim association, founded in 1914, dedicated to the propagation of Islam. It presents the *true, original* message of Islam, as found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, a message obscured today by grave misconceptions.

We believe that Islam seeks to *attract the hearts and minds of people* towards the truth, by means of reasoning, persuasion and a display of its own inherent beauty. It condemns the use of coercion, force or political power to advance the faith.

Some Islamic teachings which we stress are as follows. Islam is:

- (1) **Peaceful:** Only allows use of force in unavoidable self-defence; teaches Muslims to live peacefully under any rule which accords them freedom of religion.
- (2) **Tolerant:** Gives full freedom to everyone to hold and practise any belief or religion.
- (3) **Rational:** In all matters, it urges use of reason and the ever-growing knowledge of mankind; blind following is disallowed, and independence of thought granted.
- (4) **Inspiring:** Worship is not a ritual, but a living contact with a living God. God listens to man, answers his prayers, and speaks to His righteous servants even today.

Our Founder, *Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad* (d. 1908), was a servant of Islam, with the mission of bringing about the spiritual and intellectual victory of Islam. He believed that, after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, NO prophet is needed nor can one arise. However, Divinely-inspired reformers will continually arise to rejuvenate the religion and rekindle a true, living faith within the hearts.

Our Teachings

From the work *Kishtī-e Nūh* (Noah's Ark)

by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

Be not deceived that you have fulfilled your duty by merely believing a few things, for Almighty God wishes to bring about a complete and thorough transformation within you. He demands of you a death (of former ways), after which He shall breathe a new life into you. Make reconciliation among yourselves, and forgive the faults of your brethren, for wicked is the person who does not agree to be at peace with his brother. He is in danger of being cut off, for he sows the seed of dissension. Renounce your base passions in every way and settle your differences quickly. Despite being in the right, humble yourselves like one who is in error, that you may be forgiven. Get rid of the fatness of low desires because a fat man cannot enter the narrow gate to which you are called. Luckless is he who does not accept those words which have come out of the mouth of God and have been taught by me. If you wish that God may be pleased with you upon heaven, be at harmony with one another as twin-born brothers. The greatest among you is he who most forgives his brother's trespasses. Wretched is he who is stubborn and does not forgive; he has no share in me.

True connection with God

Fear the displeasure of God, for He is holy and has a high sense of honour. Evil doers cannot attain the nearness of God. The proud, the unjust and the dishonest cannot approach Him. Everyone who is not jealous for the name of the Lord cannot draw nigh to Him. Those who are bent low upon sordid worldly gain, like dogs, ants or vultures, and seek material comforts, cannot have access to Him. An evil eye cannot see Him, and an impure heart cannot know Him. He who casts himself into fire (of tribulations) for His sake, shall be

delivered from hell-fire; he who weeps for Him shall laugh; he who cuts asunder the ties of this world for His sake shall meet Him. Be the friends of God with a sincere heart, truly and fervently, so that He may befriend you.

Show kindness and mercy to your juniors, your wives and your poor brethren, so that mercy may be shown to you from heaven. Be for God in right earnest, so that He may be for you. The world is a place of trials and afflictions; so take hold of God with firmness and fidelity, that He may keep these calamities from coming near you. No misfortune arises upon earth until a decree is issued from heaven, nor can an evil be removed until mercy descends from heaven. It is prudent to take hold of the root and not to trust to the branch. It is not forbidden to you to make use of medicines or means, but it is forbidden to you to put your trust in these, for only that will ultimately happen which God intends. For those who are willing to endure it, trusting in God is the best course.

Reverence for Holy Quran and Holy Prophet

It is essential that you do not forsake the Holy Quran, for in it is your life. Those who honour the Quran shall be honoured in heaven; those who give precedence to the Holy Quran over every tradition and saying shall be given precedence in heaven. There is no book on the face of the earth for the guidance of the world but the Holy Quran, and no apostle or intercessor for mankind but the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Endeavour to have true love for this Holy Prophet of honour and glory, and give not excellence to anyone over him, so that you may be included in heaven among those who are saved. Remember that salvation does not begin *after* death, rather, true salvation is that which reveals its light in this very life.

Who is saved? He who is certain that God is truth, and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the intercessor between men and God. Under heaven there is no other apostle of equal rank with the Holy Prophet, nor any Book of equal excellence with the Holy Quran. For none has Almighty God willed an everlasting life, but for this chosen Holy Prophet who lives forever. . . .

O all you people who call yourselves my followers: You cannot be recognised as my followers upon heaven until you truly follow the path of righteousness. Say your five daily prayers with such awe and attention, as if you actually see Him. Keep your fasts faithfully for the sake of God. Everyone who is liable to pay *Zakāt* must do so. If the *Hajj* to Makka is obligatory upon you, and there is no impediment, you must perform it. Do good so as to love it well, and forsake evil so as to hate it. Know it for certain that no deed goes up to God which is devoid of true righteousness. Righteousness is the root of every goodness; if the root has not been neglected, the deed shall not go to waste either.

It is necessary that you should be tried with various afflictions and adversities as the faithful before you were tried. Beware that you do not stumble! The earth cannot inflict any harm upon you if you have a strong bond with heaven. It is your own hands, and not your enemy's, that cause you a loss. If your earthly honour is all lost, God will give you an eternal glory upon heaven. Forsake Him not, therefore. You must suffer various afflictions, and be deprived of some long-cherished hopes, but grieve not, for your God tries you as to your steadfastness in His path. If you wish that even the angels should praise you in heaven, rejoice when you are persecuted, and be thankful when you are abused, and sever not the tie when you meet with failures.



Introduction to Islam

Answers to common questions about Islam.

(Continued from last issue.)

17. *Does Islam give any arguments to prove the existence of God?*

Yes, the Holy Quran gives three kinds of arguments on this point.

Firstly, it refers us to the physical world which shows great order and arrangement, works according to laws, and where everything has a set purpose in the whole scheme of things. There is also immense beauty in nature which attracts man's heart. Science is discovering more and more of these characteristics of the world all the time. So behind this highly purposeful and beautiful working of nature must be One, single Intelligence of great beauty and attraction. Secondly, the Quran tells us about the close and deep connection between God and the inner nature of every person. There is an in-built desire in each and every person to search for something higher than oneself, and when in difficulties a person instinctively wants to call upon a Hidden Power to help him. Thirdly, and most convincingly, Prophets and men of God appeared in every nation in the world and showed their people the reality of God through their teachings and works. Just as most of us learn about science not by making all the discoveries ourselves, but by accepting the work and evidence of those who devote themselves to the study of science, similarly the proof of the existence of God is provided by the lives of the great luminaries whom God sent all over the world for this very purpose.

18. *Other religions also teach the existence of God. Is there any difference between their teaching and the Islamic concept of God?*

Yes, there are some important differences. The first major difference is that Islam teaches the absolute one-ness of God, with Whom no one can share in Divinity. No idol, nor any religious or spiritual teacher, can possess some Divine power or attribute. Secondly, Islam teaches the highest conception of God, and does not accept any limitation to His power and knowledge, while other religions set limits to Him. For instance, Islam rejects the Hindu belief that God is not the Creator of matter and souls but exists alongside them. It also rejects the Christian doctrine that God is unable to forgive sins unless He punishes someone, and so He sent His 'son' to suffer the punishment for all humanity. Moreover, a son is needed to take the place of the father when the father dies, and clearly this cannot apply if God is perfect. Thirdly, Islam refutes the idea that any human being, however great,

was a 'manifestation' of God on earth, or a Divine incarnate.

19. What are the practical consequences of these three differences?

These differences dignify and elevate the position of man. Belief in the one-ness of God means that man should not worship or be a slave to anything in the world, such as idols, forces of nature, heavenly bodies, religious leaders, kings, dictatorial systems, etc. So man is meant to conquer the world around him, not be afraid of it; and each person is meant to use his or her own intelligence and reason, not blindly obey someone else.

Belief in the highest conception of God means that man's own progress is unlimited. His knowledge and power, though insignificant as compared to God's, can go on increasing. Rejecting the belief that a person could be a 'manifestation' of God, means that one should look upon the great Founders of religions, not as 'gods' shrouded in mystery and possessing supernatural powers, but as mortal human beings who by their own lives and example showed others how to live.

20. Is there any other important distinctive feature of the Islamic concept of God?

Yes. Islam teaches that Allah is "the Lord (*Rabb*) of all the worlds". (*Rabb* is pronounced like the word *rub*.) Allah is, therefore, not just the 'god' of the Muslims, nor the god of a particular race, religion or nation, but the only One God for the whole of mankind. As the Lord of all the nations He has not only provided means of physical sustenance for all the countries on earth, but also sent His guidance to every nation for its moral progress. He is equally just and loving towards every section of humanity, and has no favourite or chosen people, or rejected ones.

21. How does man stand in relation to God, according to Islam?

God has given man not only a body, but also a soul through which he can come into contact with his Creator. But whereas the body, like the rest of nature, is bound to obey the laws of God, the soul is free to follow God's guidance or to reject it. The soul's development

lies in willingly following the guidance God has revealed through His prophets.

According to Islam, each person's soul is "God's Spirit" which has been breathed into him or her. This means that man's soul has a special relationship with God, and man is capable of emulating the Divine attributes on his own small scale (see no. 23 below). God is unimaginably near to man's soul, nearer to it than even man himself. He knows a person's innermost thoughts, even those which the person himself does not consciously realise. In man's soul there is implanted love for God and yearning after God, and it cannot find complete contentment without God.

22. *What are the other things the Holy Quran tells us about God?*

It tells us a great deal. Most frequently it calls God *Rahmaan* (Beneficent) and *Raheem* (Merciful). *Rahmaan* really means that God is so loving and generous that He has granted man innumerable blessings as free gifts without any effort on man's part. God is *Raheem* means that He is merciful so that when man makes the effort to use his God-given bounties for good purposes, God helps him to succeed. For instance, God has given man all sorts of physical resources in this world, without any effort on his part. When man tries to exploit these resources for the good, God makes him successful. The Holy Quran also tells us that God is Forgiving, Affectionate, Supreme, Just, very close to each person, and knower of his thoughts and deeds.

23. *What is the purpose of believing that God possesses these attributes?*

So that man can try to acquire and display the same kind of qualities in his life. God is the *Rabb* (the Provider and Fosterer of the whole world), so man should try to provide for others. God is *Rahmaan*, and so man too should take the initiative in doing good to other people. God is *Raheem*, and so man should help and encourage those who are doing good. God is All-Knowing, All-Seeing, and Wise, so man too should try to perfect his knowledge and acquire wisdom. Believing in the Divine attributes also stops one from harming others

for personal gain. A person who truly believes God to be his *Rabb* (Provider) knows that He will always look after him, and so such a person would never try to take someone else's due. A person who truly believes that God is All-Seeing and All-Knowing would know that he could never hide any bad deed, however secret, from God.



Message of a Universal Faith

by Dr Allah Bakhsh

Late General-Secretary, Central A.A.I.I. Lahore

In the world today, two matters stand out uniquely prominent: consciousness of world peace, and happiness and prosperity of all mankind. Modern scientific inventions have transformed our globe into a kind of cosmopolitan city. The big cities of today present the spectacle of almost a resort of universal nature, wherein can be found persons of all races and nations. Such an intermingling of all mankind on the physical, political and cultural basis, is a challenge for various faiths to discover *a universal religion*. Faith, if rightly understood in its true spirit and if practised in life by its votaries, is by far the most potent factor conducive to peace, happiness and prosperity of man. Even if faith be considered as one of the factors, is not the time beckoning various faiths to unite? While mankind is already on the threshold of unity in secular spheres, does it not call for a united faith-front, in order to complete that union? All faiths have a common origin and a common aim: a Divine origin, and the aim of surrender to God's will and service to mankind. In view of these common fundamental concepts of faith, the differences should sink into insignificance. But where minor and formal rituals assume the form of disputes and discord, the fault must be found with the over-enthusiastic and fanatical followers, and not with the teachings of the faith itself.

Characteristics of a universal faith

Let us then consider the characteristics of a universal faith. These are mainly four: a universal God, a universal Guide, a universal code of laws, and a universal brotherhood. Only a conception of a universal God can unite all mankind, because it is His universal attributes of dispensation, mercy, beneficence, and equal treatment of all mankind without any racial, national or religious discrimination, that are conducive to bring about union among humanity. His universal law of requital of good and evil must be equally operative for all, without the least partiality or prejudice of any kind.

A universal guide should be a historical personality, who in his life presents a perfect model and panorama of all kinds of human activities. Only a perfect exemplar who has experienced all vicissitudes of life, can hold homage from all human beings, and be a source of inspiration for unity. A universal teaching must be comprehensive, containing all truths, ever previously revealed or ever needed for an advancing humanity. Lastly, the resultant of these three universal factors, comprising the fundamental concepts of a universal faith, should be the formation of a universal brotherhood. If such a society comes into being, all discord and differences are bound to disappear. It should not be mistakenly thought that natural differences between man and man will be altogether eliminated. It is wrong to conceive and expect such an unnatural state of affairs. But the formation of a universal fraternity on the basis of universal concepts of faith as described, is sure to bring about a real union conducive to universal peace, and the progress and prosperity of mankind, and therefore to usher in an era of universal happiness which is the agreed aim of all man's activities.

As a critical student of the faith of Islam, I present a few aspects of this religion, and leave it to the reader's fair judgment if the universal characteristics, enumerated above, form a part of Islam.

Islam — a universal faith

The God of Islam is named as *Rabb-ul-‘ālamīn*, its Holy Prophet

(peace be upon him) is called *Raḥmat-ul-lil-‘ālamīn* and its book *Zikr-ul-lil-‘ālamīn*. All the three names are suffixed by the word *‘ālamīn* which means *worlds*. Thus translated they mean: a Providence for the world, a Mercy for all the nations, and a Reminder for all human beings. Universality is, therefore, indicated by the very titles of God, the Holy Prophet and the Book of Islam. Let me go a little into detail.

God would not be universal if He behaves differently with different persons and peoples. He must treat everyone in an equitable and just manner. He should have one law for all His servants, whether belonging to this or that nation, and to this creed and faith or the other.

Here is His universal law of treating equitably all His subjects, as stated in the Quran:

“The person who does an atom’s weight of good shall see it, and one who does an atom’s weight of evil shall also see it.”
(99:7-8)

Certain people have distorted the above Divine law by making exceptions on account of religion or race etc. Their notions about a chosen race are refuted in the following verse:

“They say: None shall enter the garden except a Jew or a Christian. Say: Bring your proofs if you are truthful. Nay, whoever surrenders himself to God and is a doer of good to others, he shall have his reward from his Lord; and there is no fear nor grief for such.” (2:111-112)

And in another verse the idea of a chosen nation on account of faith has been rejected thus:

“Those who believe, the Jews, the Christians or the Sabians — whoever believes in God and the hereafter and does good deeds, he shall have his reward from God, and no fear or grief shall come upon such.” (2:62)

In this verse it is clearly stated that the Divine law of retribution is equally operative on the basis of one's faith in God and the hereafter, and good actions, and not merely on lip-belief. A Muslim, a Christian, a Jew and persons of any other persuasion are all placed on an equal footing.

The converse is also equally true. We read in the Quran:

"They say: Fire shall not touch us but for a few days. . . . Nay, whoever earns evil, his sins overwhelming him on all sides — such are the inmates of the fire." (2:80-81)

"Neither according to your wishes, nor according to the wishes of the people of the Book, whoever commits an evil, he shall be requited for the same, not finding any friend or helper against God. But whoever acts virtuously, whether male or female, being a believer, these will enter the garden, not being dealt with unjustly a whit. And who has a better religion than the one who submits himself wholly to God, and is a doer of good deeds." (4:123-125)

Differences in doctrine no bar to goodwill and peace

Doctrinal and ritualistic differences shall always remain. Even then the God of the Quran is a universal God Whose universal law of retribution operates equally. Another verse says:

"If they reject thee, say: my work is for me and your work is for you; you are clear of what I do and I am clear of what you do." (10:41)

Justice is administered on an equal basis of nature of deeds because such is the character of a universal Providence. The Quran says:

"I am commanded to do justice between you. Allah is our Lord as well as your Lord; we shall have reward for our deeds and you for yours. Thus there is no contention between us and you." (42:15)

As the reward is to be bestowed on actions, so at another place, as

in the above verse, the Quran enjoins ending of all disputes:

“Do you then still dispute with us about God? He is our Lord, and also your Lord; for us are our deeds and for you your deeds. We are sincere to Him in obedience.” (2:139)

Universal spiritual dispensation

The dispensation, whether secular or spiritual, of a universal God is on an equal footing for all nations. Accordingly, the Quran says:

“There is not a people but a Divine warner has been raised among them.” (35:24)

“Every nation had a Divine messenger.” (10:47)

“Every nation had a Divine guide.” (13:7)

“For every one of you, We have appointed a law and a guide.” (5:48)

Due to such universal teachings of equity and equality of mankind, the Quran concludes thus:

“All people are but a single nation.” (2:213)

“People are naught but a single nation, but they disagree.” (10:19)

Addressing all the prophets, the God of the Quran says:

“This your community is one community, and I am your Lord, so keep your duty to Me alone. But they (the followers) became divided, each faction rejoicing in what is with them.” (23:52-53)

Divisions and disputes are the creation of the divergent tendencies in man, whereas God has been good, gracious and bountiful, equally to all His people.

Muslims have been prohibited to speak harshly or abusively of other gods thus:

“Do not abuse gods whom they worship besides Allah, lest they through ignorance abuse Allah in return.” (6:109)

Of course, it is not the intention that mutual discussions for finding out the truth should be dispensed with. But in this regard also, the aim should always be mutual understanding, and not such which results in bitterness and bickering. Thus the Quran says:

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with people in the best possible manner.”
(16:125)



Uses of word *Nabī* (Prophet)

Classical Muslim saints and scholars apply *Nabī*
to Non-prophets

The words *nabī* (prophet) and *rasūl* (messenger) are generally applied only in their narrow, specialised sense, referring to the great prophets of God in whom Muslims are required to believe. The Last and final such Prophet was the Holy Prophet Muhammad, after whom no prophet is to come. However, without violating the finality of prophethood, these words have been applied, in a broad and non-technical sense, to the saints who arose within Islam.

1. Mujaddid Alif Sani (d. 1624)

Referring to the first two Khalifas of Islam (Hazrat Abu Bakr and Umar), this great Mujaddid of India wrote:

“These two men, on account of their eminence and greatness, are counted among the prophets (sing. *nabī*) and have their qualities.”

(*Maktubat, Daftar I, part iv, letter no. 251, p. 64*)

He has thus applied the word “prophet” to Hazrat Abu Bakr and Umar, who were *muhaddases* and not prophets.

2. Jalal-ud-Din Rumi (d. 1273)

He was one of the greatest mystical poets and philosophers of Islamic history, and his work *Masnawi* is commonly known as *the Quran in the Iranian language*. He has used the word prophet for non-prophets in the following verses of poetry:

- i. "O disciple! He [your spiritual guide] is the prophet of the time because he reflects the Holy Prophet's light."
- ii. "In the path of virtue, be anxious to serve humanity, so that you may attain prophethood within the Muslim nation."

We give below the opinion of three modern-day Muslim theologians on these verses.

a. Allama Khalid Mahmud is a leading opponent of the Ahmadiyya Movement who attended the Cape Town court case in 1987 to assist the anti-Ahmadi side. In a book he has quoted and explained these verses as follows:

"In the path of virtue be anxious to serve humanity, so that you may attain prophethood within the Muslim nation."

"This does not refer to the attainment of the rank of prophethood, but the attainment of qualities of prophethood. If there is brevity here, it should be interpreted in the light of Maulana Rumi's belief about the finality of prophethood given earlier. To interpret a writing contrary to the intent of the author is utterly against the rules of knowledge and integrity. In this respect, the Maulana refers to every spiritual guide who follows the *Sunna* as metaphorically a prophet: '*O disciple, he is the prophet of the time, because he reflects the Holy Prophet's light*'."

(*'Aqidat al-Umma fi Ma'ni Khatam an-Nubuwwat*, p. 112)

We only ask Allama Khalid Mahmud to apply the same principle to the writings of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. During the court hearings, referred to above, this passage was quoted in the presence of Allama Khalid Mahmud.

b. Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi (d. 1977) was an Indian religious scholar of recent times. Regarding the use of the word *nabi* for saints, who are not prophets, he once wrote in his newspaper as follows:

“Recently, by co-incidence, I found an example of it in the poetry of Maulana Rumi. And that too, not in some apocryphal work, but in the renowned and famous, authentic book *Masnawi*. Regarding the status and excellence of the spiritual guide it is written:

‘When you give your hand into the hand of a spiritual guide, you seek to imbibe wisdom as the mentor is the knowing and discerning. O disciple, he is the prophet of the time because he reflects the Holy Prophet’s light.’

“It is clearly stated here that the perfect spiritual guide is the prophet of the time because he reflects the light of prophethood. Great theologians, philosophers, and spiritual men have written commentaries on the *Masnawi*, but none of them took exception to this form of expression. Rumi’s own son, Sultan Walad, has made the following comment: ‘The exaggeration in likening a saint to a prophet refers to the penetrating effect of his guidance; otherwise, at no time was prophethood thinkable after the Holy Prophet Muhammad.’ — *Masnawi*, vol. v, p. 67, footnote 13, printed at Kanpur.

“Obviously we will still call it lacking in due caution, but it is equally obvious that instances of such lack of caution are to be found in the writings of the great religious leaders of classical times.”

(Newspaper *Sidq Jadeed*, 8 August 1952)

(Note: Hazrat Mirza did not show any “lack of caution” in his use of these terms. He was anxious to take the greatest care to ensure that these terms were not misunderstood and abused.)

c. In an introduction to Rumi’s *Masnawi*, Maulana Sajjad Ahmad

writes:

“Usually the word *nabī* is used in a specialised sense, but Rumi applies *nabī* to reformers of a high rank, as in the verse: ‘*In the path of virtue, be anxious to serve humanity, so that you may attain prophethood within the Muslim nation.*’”

(*Muqaddama Masnawi Rumi*, p. 23)

3. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (d. 1943)

He quotes the classical theologian Sayyid Abdul Wahhab Shi‘rani and then gives his own comment:

“‘When the Holy Prophet Muhammad realised that some people among his followers would take the termination of revelation with dislike, he proposed a part of apostleship (*risālat*) for the specially-chosen ones of his nation. He instructed those who were present at his preaching to convey the teachings to those who were absent. Hence he commanded them to deliver the message, so that the word *rusul* [pl. of *rasūl*] may apply to them.’

“Now look, in this text he has referred to mere preaching as apostleship.”

(*Al-Tanbiyya al-Tarbi fi Tanziyya Ibn Arabi*, pp. 100–101)

4. Maulana Sana-ullah of Panipat

A classical commentator of the Quran, he writes in his commentary:

“*Rasūl* has a broad significance, applying both to men and angels. . . . Some scholars say that, as a general metaphor, the word *rasūl* is applied to saints as well.”

(*Tafsir Mazhari*, p. 140)

5. Maulana Mufti Kifayat-ullah

He was a theologian of this century, and head of the *Jami‘at al-‘Ulama*, India. He defined a *muhaddas* as follows:

“A *muhaddas* is he who receives the word of God by special revelation. Some scholars consider such a one to be a prophet

of a low rank, and others consider him to be a saint of a high order.”

(*Majālis al-Abrār*, footnote, p. 18)

MUSLIM SAINTS CALLING THEMSELVES ‘PROPHETS’

1. Abu Bakr Shibli (d. 945 C.E.)

It is recorded of this famous Iraqi saint:

“Have you not considered this, that when the Holy Prophet Muhammad appeared in the form of Shibli, he [Shibli] said to a student of his who was a recipient of visions: Bear witness that I am the Messenger of God. So the student said: I bear witness that you are indeed the Messenger of God. This is not something unlawful and wrong. It is just as a sleeping man [in a dream] sees one person in the form of another. And a low-ranking type of vision is one where what a person sees in a dream he sees while awake.”

(*Al-Insān al-Kāmil*, vol. ii, p. 46, by Abdul Qadir Jili; see also the English translation in R. A. Nicholson’s *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, Cambridge University Press, 1980, p. 105)

2. Abdul Qadir Jilani (d. 1166 C.E.)

i. The following spiritual experience was related by him:

“God gave me the blessing of attending at Madina. One day I was busy in the remembrance of God in solitude when He took me from this world and from my own self, and then returned me. And I was saying: ‘*Had Moses been alive he would have obeyed me*’. This was as if I was the author [of the Saying], and not as relating this Saying. So I knew that this was due to me being drawn away by God. I was effaced [*fanā*] in the Holy Prophet, and at that time I was not just so-and-so [i.e. Abdul Qadir], but I was certainly Muhammad. Otherwise, what I had said would merely have been relating something from the Holy Prophet.”

(*Saif ar-Rabbāni* by Sayyid Muhammad Makki, published in Bombay, p. 100)

The words '*Had Moses been alive he would have obeyed me*' are a Saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

ii. He writes in a poem:

"I was in the higher world with the light of Muhammad, In God's secret knowledge was my prophethood."

(From poem known as *Qaṣīda Rūḥī*)

3. Khawaja Mu'in-ud-Din Chishti of Ajmer (d. 1236 C.E.)

He was the *mujaddid* of his time and the saint who laid the foundations of the propagation of Islam in India. He wrote the following verses:

i. "Every moment the Holy Spirit [angel Gabriel] inspires into Mu'in,

"So it is not me who says this, but the fact is that I am the second Jesus."

(*Diwan Khawaja Ajmeri*, ode no. 70, p. 102)

ii. It is recorded:

"Once in our presence a man came to enter into the discipleship of the Khawaja of Ajmer. The Khawaja asked him to recite the *Kalima* [i.e. *There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*]. The man recited the *Kalima*. The Khawaja said to him: 'Say it like this, *There is no god but Allah and Chishti is the Messenger of Allah*'. The man did so, and the Khawaja accepted the pledge from him and invested him with the robe of honour."

(*Fawā'id as-Sālikīn*, p. 18)

4. Farid-ud-Din Shakar Ganj of Pak Patan (d. 1265 C.E.)

He says in a poetic verse:

"I am *wali* [saint], I am Ali, I am *nabī* [prophet]."

(*Ḥaqīqat Gulzār Ṣābirī*, sixth edition published by *Maktaba*

Sabiriyya, Qasur, Pakistan, 1983, p. 414.)

Revelation to Muslim Saints

Proves Quran is word of God

by Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din

Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din (d. 1932) was the founder of the Woking Muslim mission in this country, where in his propagation of Islam to the West he had to confront both traditional Christianity and the expanding atheism. He found that in this work his most powerful weapons were those principles of Islam which had been particularly highlighted in this age by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, his mentor and master who had inspired him to become a missionary of the Islamic religion. One such principle is that the righteous among Muslims can attain to a stage where God speaks to them, reassuring them, thus proving that God exists and that He revealed His word to prophets in the past.

We translate below extracts from the book *Mujaddid-i Kāmil* by the late Khawaja in which he has explained the importance of this teaching. In a discussion with the Bishop of Murphy at Cambridge in 1913, the Khawaja put to him the following challenge, based on a teaching of the Bible itself:

“Studying the Bible has confirmed me on one principle, which I consider to be the best criterion of the truth of any religion. ... Besides the great prophets who hold a very high rank, the Bible frequently mentions individuals to whom God used to speak and they received the messages of God as needed. The angels of God guided them from time to time. This is also seen in the life of Jesus, and to a certain extent the same is true of his disciples. However, there is no mention of it in the later

history of Christianity. I ask you only this, Are there among you today, persons of this kind who have communication with God, and who receive revelation and solace from God? If there are, the truth of your religion stand proved to me.”

The Bishop was unable to refute this argument, and had to evade the question.

The rest of this article consists of extracts from this book regarding the continuation of revelation among Muslims and the need for it.

Revelation continues

My demand to the Bishop was in accordance with the Holy Quran. Believers receiving revelation, or the coming of the angels to them to give them solace, are the distinctive blessings which God Almighty has reserved for the Muslim people. In the five daily prayers, our seeking the “right path” points to the fact that we are praying for this very blessing. We ask to be guided on the right path which was the path of those “on whom Thou bestowed favours”. Later the Quran gives as examples of such people the prophets, the truthful, the righteous and the faithful (*nabī*, *ṣiddīq*, *ṣāliḥ*, *shahīd*). It is not necessary that every person who reaches the rank of faithful or righteous also receives revelation; it is God Who bestowes this favour. Nonetheless, we are required to ask for this favour, and we can obtain it. ...

Again, the coming of angels to such people, and answering them, is clear from a plain text of the Quran:

‘Those who say that Allah is our Lord, and are then steadfast upon this declaration, angels descend upon them saying: Fear not, nor grieve, and receive good news of the garden which you are promised.’ (41:30)

... This verse gives the glad tidings that angels descend upon those who yearn for God, and steadfastness is the grade of the believer at which angels descend upon him. That rank is very hard to attain.

To sum up, revelation and the descent of angels are proven matters, and some saints among the Muslims attained this blessing. How-

ever, this is not revelation of that grandeur which was received by the prophets till the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and by means of which the Divine books were revealed. No angels ever brought a commandment of law to a Muslim recipient of revelation. But it is necessary that the fine and subtle points of the Book of God be disclosed by these means, and it is through revelation that the knowledge of the Quran is made known to the world. . . .

Modern age denies revelation to prophets

Till the start of the nineteenth century, followers of all religions believed that their revealed books contained actual words spoken by God. However, with the advancement of science and modern knowledge, together with the absence for centuries of any individual in these religions who received revelation, this belief lost its strength. Science is no adversary of religion; it is rather its servant, and has performed a great service for religion by showing the existence of God in an intellectual sense. But when there is no claimant to revelation, how can this phenomenon be studied? Gradually, it came to be believed that only the general sense of the Divine books had been inspired into the hearts of the holy recipients, or that they could read the Divine intent, and it was these ideas from God which they conveyed to people in their own words. In Islam, the belief that the Quran was revealed in words has existed from the beginning, and it means that every word of the Quran is of Divine origin. But when, on the one hand, there are hardly any recipients of revelation, and on the other, Western thought denied revelation absolutely, there arose a group among the Muslims as well which denied that the words of the Quran were revealed, but considered that the meanings were from God. The leader of this group in the last century was Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. . . .

As I have said, we can prove by arguments that the Holy Quran is a book full of wisdom and meets the needs of mankind, being sufficient for every human requirement. We can also show that the Quran is from the Divine source. But to believe that it consists of words actually spoken by God is not possible until it is accepted that God

speaks. The trouble is that since the last century the intellectuals have considered it impossible that God can speak to a man. . . .

To accept that a book is from God, in the form of words, is only possible if a man claims not only that God speaks to him, but also that some of his companions and associates can attain to Divine communication as well. His own prophecies may occasionally not be convincing for some people, but if reliable persons from among his followers testify that they heard hundreds of prophecies from him which came true miraculously, and that they too receive a measure of this blessing, this would prove that revelation is in words.

After the Holy Prophet Muhammad's time, it was in the thirteenth Islamic century that the existence of revelation was denied. Previously the debate was about which Book should be considered as being from God, and that required giving arguments of a different kind. Today it is denied that any Book could have come from God. . . . Jews, Christians and Arya Hindus, as I have stated above, do not generally believe today that their books were revealed in the form of words. Among the Muslims too, the intelligensia hold the same view as Sir Sayyid. If it is a correct belief that the Quran consists of words spoken by God, then the prime duty of the *mujaddid* of this century was to lay stress on the existence of Divine revelation. . . .

We do not need a new Book from God, nor a new prophethood, since the Holy Quran and the example of the Holy Prophet have met our needs fully and perfectly. We only seek to establish the possibility of revelation from God, and sufficient proof of that is *mubashshirāt* (revelation to saints in Islam). The Last of the Prophets promised us that this blessing would continue among his followers. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad laid claim to this. In support of this, on the one hand he repeatedly made prophecies, and on the other, he cited such persons as witnesses who could be accepted as true witnesses in all worldly matters.

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