

Paigham-E-Haqq

MESSAGE OF TRUTH



Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-I-Islam (Lahore) Fiji
(Ahmadiyya* Society for the propagation of Islam)

(There is but one God
Muhammad is the
messenger of God)

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

ISSUE 109 - 110

اللَّهُ
نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

“God is the Light of the heavens and the earth” (The Qur’an 23:35)

وَلَكِنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْعُرْفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

AND FROM AMONG YOU THERE SHOULD BE A PARTY WHO INVITE TO GOOD AND ENJOIN
THE RIGHT AND FORBID THE WRONG AND THESE ARE THEY WHO ARE SUCCESSFUL

(The Qur’an 3:103)

CONTENTS

Abrogation versus Interpretation	4
Islam and a Civilized Society	6
Reclaiming Islam	8
Racism and Islam	16
The Significance of Salat-un-nabi or Darood	18
Need of Imam of the Age - 1	20

احمدیہ انجمن اشاعت اسلام فیجی

OUR BELIEFS

Ashha'du an la ilaha ill allahu wahdahu la sharika lahu wa ashhadu anna Muhammad anabduhu wa rasuluhu.

1. We believe Allah to be the Possessor of all the perfect attributes free from all defects and imperfections. Unique in His Person, unrivalled in His Attributes and Works, and One without a partner.
2. We hold it essential to believe in angels, all of the Divine Books, and all the Prophets and Messengers of God
3. We believe that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the *Khatam al Nibiyyin*. With his advent, religion has been perfected, so he is the Last Prophet after whom no Prophet shall come, neither a new one nor a former one.
4. We believe in the life after death, and in all matters relating to the grave, the Day of Judgment and paradise and hell, that are proven from the Qur'an and Hadith.
5. From the depth of our Hearts, we hold the Righteous Caliphs, the Holy Companions (*ashab*), the Purified Wives, and members of the Holy Household (*ahl bait*) as beloved, worthy of respect, and honourable in the sight of God.
6. We hold the Imams Abu Hanifah, Shafi I, Malik, and Ahmad Hanbal to be the leaders of jurisprudence (*fiqh*); and saints such as Shaikh' Abdul Qadir Jilani, Khawajah Naqshband; and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi to be leaders of *Tusawwaf* (the spiritual sciences). We believe all such elders of the religion to be worthy of esteem.
7. In accordance with the Holy Prophet's sayings about Mujaddids and Muhaddaths, we believe in the truth of the Mujaddids of all the centuries, and in accordance with the same tradition, believe in Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian as the Mujaddid of the fourteenth century of Hijrah, *not as a Prophet*.
8. We consider each such person to be Muslim who professes to believe *la ilaha ill allah, Muhammad ur rasul Allah* (*there is no God but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*) and calls himself a Muslim.
9. All the members of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at I- Islam Lahore believe in acting according to God's Book the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and if no specific direction is found there, they give precedence to the Hanafi School of jurisprudence.
10. The Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at I Islam Lahore has not only been proclaiming these *beliefs* but, for over Eighty years, it has been engaged in the propagation of Islam and service to its cause. The whole world and in particular the Muslim religious scholars of the Indo Pakistan sub- continent have borne witness to this fact.

SWORN DECLARATION OF HAZRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD OF QADIAN

"I make it clear to the public that I swear by Almighty Allah that I am not a *Kafir*. My belief is *la ilaha ill allah Muhammad ur rasul Allah*, and regarding the Holy Prophet I believe that "he is the Messenger of Allah and *Khatam al-Nabiyyin* (*The Qur'an*, 33:40). I swear to this statement as many times as the Holy Qur'an, and as many times as there are Excellency of the Holy Prophet in God's eyes.

No belief of mine is opposed to the directions of God or of the Holy Prophet, and he who thinks otherwise is mistaken. Whoever still considers me a *kafir*, and does not refrain from declaring me as such should remember with certainty that God will question him after his death."

"In all matters my beliefs are the same as those of the other *ahl sunnah*. In this house of God, I admit most clearly that I believe in the finality of Prophethood of the *Khatam al-anbiya*, the Holy Prophet. Whoever denies the finality of Prophethood, I consider him to be a disbeliever and outside the pale of Islam."

SWORN DECLARATION OF HAZRAT MAULANA MUHAMMAD ALI, FIRST HEAD OF THE LAHORE AHMADIYYA COMMUNITY:

"I, Muhammad Ali, Head of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Community, do swear by Almighty God that my belief is that Hazrat Mirza Sahib was a Mujaddid and the Messiah, but not a Prophet, and that a person cannot become a *kafir* and excluded from the pale of Islam by denying him as such; this was also the belief of Hazrat Mirza Sahib himself " O God, if I have lied in swearing by Thy name, send upon me such exemplary punishment as could not come from human means, and by which the world would see how terrible and frightening is God's punishment for those who deceive His creatures by swearing falsely in His name."

Instructions and Guidance for the Ahmadiyya Jama at

*For every Ahmadi to read from start to
finish, and to note whatever applies to him
and to put it into practice.*

by

Maulana Muhammad Ali
First Head of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement

SUMMARY

Our work: To prepare resources of Islamic knowledge, to produce translations of the Holy Quran in different languages of the world, and to spread them throughout the world.

Distinctive features of our jama at.

1. The aim of our lives is the propagation of Islam.
2. To make sacrifices of one's person and possessions for this end.
3. To learn about Islam and its history, and about other faiths.
4. To follow the teachings of Islam and respect its institutions.
5. To show tolerance and broad mindedness in the propagation of Islam, and to have love for Muslims.
6. To respect and honour the service of Islam.

Our system of organization:

1. We all follow one call and respect that call.
2. That call is the call of the consensus of the *Jama at*, from which no individual should deviate.
3. The financial system is that all members must:
 - a. give two thirds of their *zakat* to the *Jama at*,
 - b. pay out of their income one *sixteenth* for every *dollar* as contributions, and
 - c. donate towards specially arising needs.
4. To respect and honour one another, think well of one another, and also hold the leaders to account.
5. To take such a close interest in the work of the community so as to give it precedence over personal business.

Paigham-E-Haqq پیغامِ حق

MESSAGE OF TRUTH

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-I-Islam (Lahore) Fiji
(Ahmadiyya Society for the propagation of Islam)

Publisher

Dr. M. S. Sahu Khan

Editor

Mehboob Raza

Headquarters

Masjid Noor

12 Bau st., P. O. Box 407, Suva,
Fiji Islands

Phone : (679) 331 3549

Fax : (679) 331 5994

Email: masjidnoor@connect.com.fj

Website: www.aaiil.org

Design & Printed by

Max Marketing & Publishing Ltd

35 Ackland St, Vatuwaqa

Ph: 3375 041

www.maxmarketingfiji.com

Dear Readers [peace be upon you]

By the Grace of Almighty Allah we continue to make progress in the publication of this magazine. We hope to ensure that this reaches you cordially.

However, in order to improve the contents and its quality we would like to hear your views as to how you think the contents could be better improved or what subject matters you would like us to expand on.

In this regard your response will be highly appreciated.

Furthermore, should you wish to receive additional copies or if you know of others that would like to be placed on our distribution list, please do not hesitate to let us know and we will try to accommodate.

Finally we thank Almighty Allah for giving us the opportunity of publishing this magazine - the soul purpose of which is to present an informative and balanced picture of the True Teaching of Islam.

Blessing of Allah be upon you.

The Editor.

ABROGATION VERSUS INTERPRETATION

Assessing Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's view on the Islamic concept of "Jihad"

By Maulana Muhammad Ali

[There is a serious misconception regarding the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement's view on the topic of Jihad in Islam. It is claimed by some that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad advocated that the Islamic doctrine of Jihad is now abrogated. This perception was so prevalent that the government of Pakistan cited it as one of the two reasons for which members of the Ahmadiyya Movement were to be regarded as "non-Muslim". Just as the first reason that formed the basis for Pakistan's Anti-Ahmadiyya Declaration was wrong – that is, despite the common misperception, Hazrat Mirza never claimed he was a "prophet" as the term is commonly used in Islamic terminology – so too was the second reason – the misperception that Hazrat Mirza viewed the Islamic concept of Jihad as abrogated – completely unfounded. Reproduced below is a section from Maulana Muhammad Ali's book "Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement". As is clearly shown, it was the incorrect view that Jihad was synonymous with "holy war" that Hazrat Mirza denounced, not the true concept of Jihad as taught in the Quran and illustrated by the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Hazrat Mirza, one hundred years prior to 9/11 mind you, stressed the importance of eradicating the false "violent" concept of Jihad held by the masses and warned of the dire consequences should this not be done. Today, we see most Islamic scholars agreeing with the exact position taken by Hazrat Mirza; an earlier adoption of such public declarations and concerted reformatory efforts, though, as called for by Hazrat Mirza a century ago, could have saved the world from much unnecessary bloodshed and prevented the prevalent misperceptions in the West of Islam being a violent, hostile faith.]

Doctrine of Jihad not abrogated

Another charge against the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement is that he denied the doctrine of jihad. It is easy to see that anyone who accepts the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad cannot deny jihad, injunctions relating to which occupy a considerable portion of the Holy Quran. The orthodox Muslims believe that some verses of the Holy Quran have been abrogated by others. The Ahmadiyya movement has long been fighting

against this doctrine, and many enlightened Muslims now accept the Ahmadi view that no verse, not even one word or one jot of the Holy Quran was abrogated. Under the heading, "A statement of some of our beliefs", the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement wrote:

"God speaks to His servants in this umma, and they are given the semblance of prophets, and they are not really prophets, for the Quran has made perfect the needs of Law, and they are given only an understanding of the Quran, and they cannot add to, or detract from it aught; and whoever adds to, or detracts from it, he is of the devils who are wicked." (Mawahib al-Rahman, pp. 66-67)

It is therefore impossible that, holding such a belief, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad could say that he abrogated jihad, which was made obligatory by the Holy Quran and which was one of the five fundamentals of Islam. I quote a passage from his pamphlet entitled The Jihad to show that he differed from the 'ulama only in his interpretation of jihad as inculcated by the Holy Quran:

"It should be remembered that the doctrine of jihad as understood by the Muslim 'ulama of our day, who call themselves Maulvis, is not true . . . These people are so persistent in their belief, which is entirely wrong and against the Quran and Hadith, that the man who does not believe in it and is against it is called a Dajjal." (The Jihad, pp. 5-6)

Misconceptions about Jihad

It would appear from this that, according to the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement, the doctrine of jihad as understood by the 'ulama was opposed to the true teachings of the Holy Quran and Hadith. What Ahmad rejected was not the doctrine of jihad but the orthodox interpretation thereof, which had given rise in the West to grave misconceptions regarding the doctrine of jihad, so that even unprejudiced Western writers thought the word jihad to be synonymous with war undertaken for forcing the religion of Islam upon non-Muslims. Thus, in the Encyclopaedia of Islam, the article on "Jihad" opens with the following words: "The spread of Islam by arms is a religious duty upon Muslims in general". Klein, in his Religion of Islam, makes an even more sweeping statement: "Jihad . . . The fighting against unbelievers with the object of either winning them over to Islam, or subduing and exterminating them in case they refuse to become Muslims."

In the Muslim popular mind there was an even greater misconception, that the killing of an unbeliever was jihad and that such an act entitled the perpetrator to be called a ghazi. This conception, coupled with the prevailing belief in the advent of a Mahdi who would put all non-Muslims to the sword if they refused to accept Islam, opposed as it was to the plain teachings of the Holy Quran, was doing immense harm to the cause of the spread of Islam among non-Muslims. With very few exceptions, even educated Muslims were victims of the wrong impression that Islam enjoined aggressive war against non-believers, and the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement had to carry on incessant war, not against jihad as inculcated by the Holy Quran, but against the false conceptions of it prevalent among both Muslims and non-Muslims.

War to spread religion never allowed

The way was cleared for removing these misconceptions by establishing two principles: (1) That jihad means exerting oneself to the extent of one's ability and power, whether it is by word or deed, and that the word is used in this broad sense in the Holy Quran; (2) that when it is used in the narrower sense of fighting, it means fighting only in self-defence. If, therefore, all exertions to carry the message of Islam to non-Muslims by simple preaching, or what may be called spiritual warfare, fell within the purview of jihad, a war carried on for the propagation of Islam, if such a one was ever undertaken by a Muslim ruler, was quite outside the scope of its true significance, as it was against the basic principle laid down in the Holy Quran that "there is no compulsion in religion" (2:256). If Ahmad ever spoke of the abrogation of jihad, it was of this misconception of the word jihad, not of the jihad as inculcated by the Holy Quran, every word of which he believed to be a Divine revelation which could not be abrogated till the day of judgment. Here is another passage from the pamphlet quoted above:

"Their contention that, since jihad was permitted in the early days [of Islam], there is no reason why it should be prohibited now is entirely misconceived. It may be refuted in two ways; firstly, that this inference is drawn from wrong premises and our Holy Prophet never used the sword against any people, except those who first took up the sword [against the Muslims]...secondly, that, even if we suppose for the sake of argument that there was such a jihad in Islam as these Maulvis think, even so that order does not stand now, for it is written that, when the Promised Messiah appears, there will be an end of jihad with the sword and of religious wars." (The

Jihad, p. 6)

It will be seen that the prevalent idea that Islam allowed a jihad for the spread of religion is refuted in two ways. In the first place, it is stated that this conception of jihad is against the Holy Quran and Hadith, as the Holy Prophet raised the sword only in self-defence, not for the propagation of religion. Further, it is added that, even if for the sake of argument it is supposed that a jihad for the propagation of religion was ever undertaken - that such was never undertaken by the Holy Prophet has been definitely stated in the first part - such jihad cannot be undertaken now, for it is said of the Promised Messiah that he will put down (religious) wars *yaz' al-harb*, as plainly stated in the Bukhari. What is aimed at is really this, that a jihad contrary to the teachings of the Holy Quran and to the practice of the Holy Prophet, if ever there was one, was undoubtedly the result of some misconception, and, according to the hadith quoted above, the Promised Messiah will remove that misconception and thus put an end to such wars.

Conditions of Jihad

This position is made still more clear in an Arabic letter, addressed to the Muslims of the world, and forming a supplement to his book, *Tuhfa Golarwiyya*. In this letter he says:

"There is not the least doubt that the conditions laid down for jihad [in the Holy Quran] are not to be met with at the present time and in this country; so it is illegal for the Muslims to fight for [the propagation of] religion and to kill anyone who rejects the Sacred Law, for God has made clear the illegality of jihad when there is peace and security." (*Tuhfa Golarwiyya*, Supplement, p. 30)

It is here made clear that jihad with the sword is allowed by Islam only under certain conditions, and, as those conditions are not met with at the present time in the country in which the writer lives, therefore jihad with the sword is illegal here at the present time. This argument leads to the definite conclusion that jihad may be legal in another country in which exist the necessary conditions laid down in the Holy Quran, or even here when the conditions have changed. These conditions are expressly stated in the Holy Book: "And fight in the way of God against those who fight against you, and be not aggressive, for God does not love the aggressors" (2:191).

ISLAM AND A CIVILIZED SOCIETY

The truly religious don't hurt other people's feelings by their words

*By Dr. Basharat Ahmad
Translated By The Editor*

A Muslim's civilized behaviour

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, has given a definition of a 'Muslim' and that is that a Muslim is he from whose tongue and hands other Muslims are safe. In this age, which is considered an era of education and civilized society, there could be no better definition of civilization. Does not a civilized society mean that when one person has to deal with another, he should not hurt or harm the other by his tongue or by an action? This is the requirement of a civilized society. Islamic culture has not made any rule which is impossible to act upon. It has made it obligatory that not only should you refrain from hurting the feelings of another but you should not cause them any kind of harm, so that civilized behaviour is complete in both aspects, in the physical sense as well as the moral sense. Thus, according to the definition given by the Holy Prophet a Muslim is a perfect embodiment of civilized behaviour, not harming anyone either by his word or by his action.

So-called Islamic straight-forwardness

Unfortunately, just as the Muslims have suffered a decline in all other spheres of life, their civilization has also deteriorated. I am not speaking of the coarse and crude sections of society, but the decent and respectable people. I exclude even those whose humour and frankness borders on obscenity and shamelessness. I take only those people who are of a serious mind and cultured. They too, in their conversations, speak in such a manner or behave in such a way as to hurt the feelings of others. This is termed by them as 'Islamic simplicity and frankness'. I am greatly pained by this, because they are using the name of Islam to shield their own weakness and thereby degrade the Islamic concept of civilization. The definition of a Muslim is one from whose words and actions other Muslims are safe. So when the heart of another Muslim is made to feel hurt, it means that the standards of Islamic civilization have been breached.

I am deeply saddened when I see that cold and unfriendly treatment is given the name of Islamic

simplicity, religious behaviour and purity. It is considered that a sign that a person is religious and Godfearing is that when he meets someone he is curt, irritable, bad-tempered and blunt-speaking, caring not in the least for the self-respect of others.

The Holy Prophet's example

Was this the example set by our Holy Prophet Muhammad? Did he not behave as a most civilized and a most informal friend? Was it not his practice that he would mix freely with his friends, working with them, eating with them, laughing and talking with them? In any gathering he would be mixed in with the people, talking and smiling, so much so that you could not distinguish him from other people and could not pick him out as the one who was the messenger of God.

Present day religious scholars and spiritual leaders

When I was a child and lacked knowledge, as one does in childhood, and I kept on seeing the grave and serious faces of our religious and spiritual leaders, and observed their fiery temperaments and displays of superiority, it became fixed in my mind that this was what being 'religious' meant. A religious person does not care for anyone's feelings, he tells you exactly what he thinks, no matter how insulting this may be to you. He can scold you in a humiliating way because he is a man of God and does not fear anyone else. Because he is not bothered by anything of this world, he can treat the people of this world as rudely as he likes. He can sneer at respectable people, call them bad names and scold them. To sum up, the concept which formed in my mind was that ill-tempered and rude behaviour was part and parcel of being religious. So whenever I heard that a certain man was a saint or a very religious person, I used to be terrified of him in case the saint attacked me or cursed me and I got punished for no good reason. This was the mental image of godly and holy men in my mind. If I came across any well-known religious personality, and I was fortunate enough to return unscathed and unharmed from my encounter with him, I would thank God that I had not displeased that maulvi or saint and had escaped being cursed by him.

Dr. Iqbal and his Christian teacher

I was a student in the Scotch Mission High School in Sialkot. The Reverend Mr. Youngson, who was Scottish, used to teach us the Gospels. Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal was a fellow student in my class. One day Iqbal was arguing with the reverend teacher about the superb and incomparable eloquence

of the language of the Holy Quran, and claimed that the Arabic of the Quran was so unique that he could tell, given any sentence of Arabic, whether it was from the Quran or not. But this claim was beyond his capability as he was a youngster like me and had only a superficial knowledge of Arabic. The reverend read out the words: *Idh qal-allah, Ya 'Isa inni mutawafika wa rafi'uka illaya*, and quoted the translation given by the Maulvis which was: "When Allah said, O Jesus, I will take you and will lift you to heaven toward Myself", and he asked: Is this in the Quran or not? Now these words, as translated, proved so clearly that Jesus was sitting bodily in heaven besides God, and thus they showed his divinity, that Dr Iqbal became rattled and denied that these words could be in the Quran. The reverend laughed aloud and showed him the words in the Quran. All of us were acutely embarrassed. I was deeply pained as to why God caused us Muslims to be humiliated by raising Jesus alive to heaven. If anyone should have been kept alive and raised to heaven, it should have been our Holy Prophet, the Last Prophet who came with the perfect religion for all nations. However, God made him die and be buried in the earth, but He raised Jesus, a prophet of a particular nation for a particular time, to heaven in his living body. What could be the purpose behind this, except that Jesus has a special relationship with God?

Meeting the Promised Messiah

A year passed. In 1891 a family elder showed me the book *Fath-i Islam* by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Thank God, when the same verse came before me in this book and I saw that *mutawafika* meant "I will cause you to die" and *rafi'uka illaya* meant raising in honour, not bodily, I jumped with joy and cried out: this man is true, he has saved the honour of Islam, and made Islam triumph over Christianity! My elders were greatly displeased at my unbounded happiness and I was warned.

However, only a few days later Hazrat Mirza sahib came to Sialkot, and I ran to see him. But I had that same fear in my heart, that if he is a saint and a Mujaddid he might find something wrong with me and curse me and attack me. However, an irresistible attraction took me there. When I caught a glimpse of him for the first time in the Hakim Hissam-ud-Din street, it was like seeing a bright flash of light which came and passed away. After the asr prayer he sat in the mosque of the Hakim sahib. People asked him questions and he answered them. Watching him, my fear departed. Seeing his excellent etiquette and his simplicity I was overjoyed. I was

thankful that he was not the kind of narrow-minded saint, as was the image of religious men in my mind. He was a human like us, but an embodiment of spiritual radiance and exalted morals.

The high qualities of the Promised Messiah

Ten years passed. What transpired in that period I do not mention all that here. I come to the time when I started going to meet Hazrat Mirza sahib in Qadian. There was a force of attraction that pulled me towards Qadian again and again. Any leave that I had, or any joining time between transfers in my job, I would always go to Qadian for the privilege of meeting him. In the early days I was absolutely astonished that Hazrat Mirza sahib met me just as one man meets another, as a very courteous, loving friend meets you. My conception was that he would be sitting in a haughty manner, with his eyes closed. Then he would cast a critical look on my behaviour, my appearance, my clothes, and find every kind of fault with me and thoroughly castigate me. But what I saw was that he arrived smiling cheerfully and made me sit besides him. He would ask how I was doing, how was my family, how my medical job was going, what was the news about the plague epidemic. While talking he would be laughing, he would call for tea and offer it to me with great affection. The first time this happened, I did not partake of the tea due to respect, and it became cold. Maulana Nur-ud-Din said to me, Why aren't you drinking your tea, do take it, you won't be doing anything wrong. Hazrat Mirza sahib noticed that the tea was cold and he called his servant to bring hot tea for me. The servant started to take my cup away but Hazrat Mirza sahib stopped him and said: Bring the hot tea first and then take this cup away. To sum up, he was talking to me freely like a friend, being happy with me, encouraging me in every way. He would not initiate any preaching or religious talk unless someone asked a question and broached a religious topic.

A painful observation

The gist of it is that the Promised Messiah would meet all people with such courtesy and hospitality that it was absolutely astonishing. A beautiful picture of Islamic civilization was seen in his morals and manners which was so pleasing to the mind; far be it that he would hurt someone. But when I see certain people among the followers of this righteous man, whether they are at a meeting or a social occasion, not caring that what they are saying or doing is hurting another brother's feelings, I am deeply pained by this. This cannot be called a requirement of religious behaviour. They say: "We

speak bluntly, we are like bare swords”, so that they are entitled to speak to anyone in whatever way they want to. Even in preaching it is not necessary to use hurtful language. If saying the truth is going to injure someone’s heart, what is the need to say it? If it is necessary to say it, it can be put in such a way that you make your point without causing offence. Of course, it is a different matter if you have to speak to correct false religious beliefs or refute un-Islamic ideas or expose hypocrisy.

A society cannot be called civilized and cannot remain united until its members follow the principle that everyone of them should be safe from being injured by the hands or tongue of another member. Humour, levity and the making of jokes is good only as long as it makes people jovial and cheerful. But when humour hurts someone or is directed at exposing a fault or weakness in them, then it does not remain humour and entertainment but falls in the category of bad behaviour. Joking of this kind leads to resentment and discord. To make sarcastic comments to hurt someone is not the way of a civilized society. Similarly, to disregard and to reject with contempt the opinion of a lowly and ordinary person cannot be called Islamic manners. To look down upon a person scornfully because of some flaw in him, is what constitutes the spiritual illness known as arrogance, which cannot be tolerated by Islamic civilized values.

Jewels from history of Islam

In the history of Islam there are such lofty examples of superb Islamic manners that it completely astonishes and overwhelms the mind, and the present day civilization collapses into dust in comparison with those examples. Nasir-ud-Din Shah was a king in India who took no pay from the treasury but made his living by writing copies of the Quran. Once a man came to see him and, looking through his manuscripts, told him that there was a word which was copied inaccurately and needed correction. The king made the correction just as the man indicated. When the man left, the king changed the word back to what it had been before. Someone asked why he had done that. The king said: what I had written was right and the correction which the man pointed out was wrong, but I did not want to embarrass him by telling him that he was wrong, so I made the correction that he wanted and changed it back as soon as he left!

In the time of the caliphate of Hazrat Umar, once when he was leading the prayers a person broke wind. But Hazrat Umar considered it impolite and

bad manners that he should say: The man whose wuzu has been voided should go and perform his wuzu again. Instead, Hazrat Umar said: Let us all perform wuzu again. These good manners and shielding someone from being exposed and singled out are so wonderful. He bore some trouble for himself but saved a man from embarrassment.

We saw the Promised Messiah, that when he would be going for a walk accompanied by people they would follow him very closely, and sometimes a man from behind would trip and push him so that his stick would fall out of his hand and roll forwards. But the Promised Messiah would never turn around and look to see who pushed him, so that the man who did it would not be embarrassed.

There are hundreds of such examples. How many can we keep on giving? Until we show the deepest concern for the feelings and the temperament of our brother, and for hiding his faults, we cannot be called civilized, or in other words, we cannot be called Muslims because according to the definition given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad Islam and civilization are exactly the same thing, and not opposite things.

RECLAIMING ISLAM

Exposing the Untruths of Extremist Propaganda

By Fazeel S. Khan, Esq.

[This article is based on a presentation given at the Faculty Club of the Ohio State University as part of the Torch Club lecture series. The Torch Club is a national civic organization in which professionals from the community – university professors, attorneys, judges, etc. – meet in fellowship once a month for the purpose of learning from one another. In the presentation, the Editor addresses the reality of Islam being perceived in the West as a violent and intolerant faith, far from a religion of peace. He explains this view is primarily the result of the violent acts and widespread propaganda by extremists, who claim that Islam is the source of their beliefs and agendas. The Editor proves the invalidity of these claims using the extremists’ views on jihad, apostasy and democracy as illustrations.]

Introduction

The title of my presentation this evening is “Reclaiming Islam: Exposing the Untruths of Extremist Propaganda”. The word “Islam” is derived from the Arabic word “silm”, meaning “peace”. It is neither

named after the religion's founder nor the place from which it originated as is the case with other faiths, but rather is titled after the objective to which it aspires. The attainment of peace – within the individual, amongst people, and between man and God – is the lofty goal Islam prescribes as the very purpose of life. Today, however, far from a religion of peace, Islam is perceived in the West as a violent and intolerant faith that is incompatible with the civil, democratic ideals accepted by the modern world. A *Washington Post / ABC News* poll conducted in March 2006 found that a full third of Americans - 33% - believe mainstream Islam encourages violence against non-Muslims.¹ There is no doubt, this view is primarily sustained due to the violent acts and widespread propaganda of extremists who profess that it is a strict adherence to the principles of Islam that justifies their beliefs and agendas.

Is there any legitimacy to the extremists' rationale? Can the primary sources of Islam be reasonably interpreted in a manner supporting their violent acts and crude convictions? Are the so-called "moderate" Muslims of today the real distorters of the Islamic faith, having strayed from the religion taught by the Prophet Muhammad and practiced by the early Muslims? Answering these questions does more than merely distinguish between good Muslims and bad Muslims. In fact, affirmatively resolving this issue can offer the most vital ammunition in the global war on terror by defeating extremists at their very core.

And what do I mean by this? Recently the National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism identified ideology as the "center of gravity" of Islamic extremist groups, like Al Qaeda.² Commenting on this noteworthy finding, Dale Eikmeier of the US Army War College's Center for Strategic Leadership states:

The identification of an ideology [by the NMSP-WOT] as the center of gravity rather than an individual or group is a significant shift from a "capture and kill" philosophy to a strategy focused on defeating the root cause of terrorism. Accordingly, the plan's principal focus is on attacking and countering an ideology that fuels Islamic terrorism.³

Thus, it is recognized that defeating terrorism entails attacking the ideology upon which terrorists' base their causes. Unfortunately, the plan neither identifies the ideology, other than simply labeling it "extremist", nor does it provide any guidance as to how the ideology is to be combated. My objective

this evening is to fill this void. I'll identify three common extremist views and prove their illegitimacy from the most authoritative sources of Islam.

What is Islam?

In order to appreciate how erroneous the views of extremists' are, a basic understanding of what the religion of Islam actually entails is required. So I'd like to spend the first few minutes providing a brief sketch, a crash course if you will, on what Islam is. Islam is a **monotheistic faith** in the purest sense of the term. It teaches there is only One God, Who has no associate or companion. The Quran, the Holy Scripture of Islam, acknowledges Abraham as the archetype of this monotheistic faith. Abraham is repeatedly pointed out as comprehending that the True, Supreme, All-Powerful, Perfect God is One, and that it is to this One God that man is to submit himself completely. And it is this Abrahamic model of faith that Islam endeavors to reestablish:

God speaks the truth; so follow the religion of Abraham, the upright one. And he (Abraham) was not one of the polytheists (3:95).

And who is better in religion than he who submits himself entirely to God while doing good (to others) and follows the faith of Abraham, the upright one? And God took Abraham for a friend (4:125).

As for me, my Lord has guided me to the right path - a right religion, the faith of Abraham, the upright one, and he (Abraham) was not of the polytheists (6:161).

In Islam, God is also understood as that "Being possessing all the perfect attributes". In the first Chapter of the Quran, titled "The Opening", the chief attributes of God are introduced. We are told that He is "Rabb", which means He is not only the Creator, but also the Provider and Nourisher for all. We are told that He is "Rahman", which means He is All-Beneficent in that He has so much love for His creation that He provides his blessings to all, no matter how unmerited or undeserved. We are told that He is "Raheem", which means He is All-Merciful in that He rewards the doing of good abundantly, manifold times over. And we are told He is "Malik", which means He is the True Master of Judgment in that His punishment is always for reformation of the individual and never on account of anger for wrongdoing.

Muhammad, on the other hand, is regarded as only

one of the prophets of God, a mortal and in no way himself divine. In fact, a Muslim must not only believe in the prophethood of Muhammad, but in all the prophets and messengers of God:

We believe in God and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them ... (2:136)

The only difference between Muhammad and the other prophets is that Muhammad is uniquely referred to in the Quran as “khatam-an nabiyyin”, meaning the “seal of the prophets”:

Muhamad is not the father of any of your men (i.e. he has no sons to be his heir), but he is the Messenger of God and the Seal of the Prophets...(33:40).

What this title refers to is the “scope” of Prophet Muhammad’s mission. According to Islam, the prophets and messengers before him were each given teachings for their respective nations and for the specific conditions the people of those nations faced at the time. Muhammad, Muslims believe, is the last of the prophets, who was revealed the final and complete message from God, a message for all nations and all times:

Say (Muhammad): O Mankind, surely I am the Messenger of God to you all (7:158)
And We have not sent thee (Muhammad) but as a bearer of good news and as a warner to all mankind (34:28).

As I have already mentioned, Islam is derived from the Arabic word “silm”, meaning “peace”, and the attainment of peace is the defining characteristic of the faith:

O you who believe, enter into complete peace. (2:208)

And God invites to the abode of peace. (10:25)

And how is this peace to be achieved? Well, the Quran states that the human “soul” is the “spirit of God” breathed into man:

Then He (God) made him complete and breathed into him of His spirit, and gave you ears and eyes

and hearts. (32:9)

The spirit of God within man is indicative of the divine attributes existing within the individual. And it is through the doing of good works only that these attributes may be developed. Thus, in Islam, religion is not treated as a dogma which man must accept to escape punishment in the hereafter. Rather, the primary concern is with this life, not the next; that man, through a righteous life here on earth, may attain closeness to God:

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East or the West, but righteous is the one who believes in God, and the Day of Reckoning, and the angels and the scriptures and the prophets, and gives away wealth out of love for Him (God) to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask and to set slaves free, and keeps up prayer and pays the poor-rate; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in the time of conflict. These are they who are truthful, and these are they who keep their duty. (2:177)

This is salvation in Islam! Heaven is a spiritual state in which one attains closeness to God by developing the divine attributes within him through the doing of good works. The Holy Quran refers to the person who has achieved this state of total peace and contentment as the “soul at rest”:

O soul that art at rest,
Return to your Lord, well pleased,
well pleasing,
So enter among My servants,
And enter My Garden. (89:27-30)

Extremists’ views

What I have just presented before you are the fundamentals of Islam. Despite these fundamentals, extremists would have us believe that Islam, the faith founded on the principles of peace, spirituality, and the doing of good to others, advocates violence, intolerance, and domination of others. Common sense alone dictates the rejection of such a supposition.

Islam is certainly not the *raison d’etre* for extremists’ beliefs and agendas. Take for example the Palestinian groups. Certainly the struggle against Israeli occupation is their paramount concern, clearly a more nationalistic than religious motivation. With Egyptian groups, the focus is primarily on internal

governance of the country. For Pakistani groups, the motivation is overwhelmingly based on a desire to control Kashmir. For Chechan groups, independence from Russia is the basis of their conflict. Clearly, Islam is a mere pretext for the extremists' geopolitical grievances and ambitions.⁴ And this point is made even clearer when we assess the merits of specific extremist views. So, let's take a look at them.

Extremist view #1 – Re: Jihad

Extremists believe that Jihad is a religious duty that involves engaging in a "holy war" with non-Muslims for the purpose of spreading Islam throughout the world. In order to judge the validity of this view, the definition of "Jihad" must first be understood.

The Arabic word "jihad" means "striving hard". It implies an exertion on one's part to the best of his or her ability for the purpose of improving something. Accordingly, a laborer working hard to support his or her family is a "jihad". A father or mother working hard to raise their children properly is a "jihad". A student working hard to earn a degree for the purpose of contributing to society in a positive way is a "jihad".

The Quran mentions 4 ways specifically that a Muslim should "strive hard":

It recognizes the need to strive hard to attain nearness to God by leading a righteous life: "Those who strive hard towards Us, We certainly guide them in Our ways. And God is surely with the doers of good". (29:69)

It recognizes the need to strive hard to remain true to Islam under difficult and trying circumstances, such as when being persecuted because of one's faith: "To those who flee after they are persecuted, then strive hard and are patient, surely your Lord after that is Protecting, Merciful". (16:110)

It recognizes the need to strive hard to present the truths, the evidences and the beauty of the Quran to those unaware or disproving of it: "Strive hard against them (non-Muslims) a mighty striving with it (Quran)". (25:52) In Islam, Muslims are not to shy away from engaging in discourse about their faith and debating the merits of their beliefs. But this is to be done in the most civil manner possible: "Call to the path of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation and debate with people in the best manner". (16:125)

It is quite apparent that these first three forms of "jihad" stipulated in the Quran reveal that the term is used to connote being aligned with the truth: that is, being true to one's self, by improving one's moral condition, being true to God by not denying His message under pressure and presenting the truth to others by way of civil discourse. It is in this general sense of the term that Prophet Muhammad declared: "The most excellent jihad is to say a word of truth before an unjust ruler".⁵

Now, there is a fourth way in which the Quran states Muslims should "strive". It recognizes the need to strive hard with property and lives to defend the Muslim community at times of war: "Go forth, light and heavy, and strive hard in God's way with your wealth and your lives" (9:41).

Obviously, it is this fourth form of jihad that extremists exploit for their political purposes. What is the context in which this verse is to be interpreted? Surely, one would expect it to bear some affinity to the general manner in which the other forms of jihad are used; that is, to stand for the truth by exerting one's efforts to improve a condition. And that is exactly how it was applied by Prophet Muhammad and the early Muslims.

Every student of Islamic history knows Prophet Muhammad and his companions were subjected to the severest forms of persecution in Mecca from the faith's inception. But they bore it all with patience, a form of jihad as mentioned earlier. Over a hundred of them had to flee for their lives to Abyssinia, but persecution persisted. Ultimately, the entire Muslim population left their homes in Mecca and took refuge in Medina. Even this did not stop the hostilities against them; the Meccans were intent on exterminating this new religion that sought to empower the weaker members of society – the poor, the orphans, women and the elderly – which was an obvious threat to their hegemony. It was at this juncture only, in defense of the existence of their faith, the Quran permitted the Muslims to fight back:

Permission (to fight) is given to those on whom war is made, because they are oppressed. (22:39)

It is axiomatic that taking up arms was the last available option. It was out of sheer necessity, only in the case of defending themselves from "oppression" that it was permitted for Muslims to fight.

Now, extremists may claim that there are examples

of Muslims being oppressed around the world and this warrants engaging in war. The Muslims in Palestine under Israeli occupation is routinely pointed out as an example. However, the very verse after the one quoted above goes on to explain what exactly is meant by “oppression”. It further clarifies:

Those who are driven from their homes without a just cause except that they say: Our Lord is God. And if God did not repel some people by others, cloisters, and churches, and synagogues, and mosques in which God’s name is much remembered, would have been pulled down. (22:40)

Thus, the permission to fight is conditioned upon facing “oppression” in terms of one’s religious rights being denied. It is to safeguard religious freedom for all, to protect churches, synagogues and mosques, that warrants fighting in Islam. There is not the slightest basis for the view that fighting may be engaged in to compel anyone to accept to Islam or to expand the territory of the Islamic nation. The Holy Quran is explicit about the “defensive nature” of war:

And fight in the way of God against those who fight against you, but be not aggressive. Surely God does not love the aggressors. (2:190)

Moreover, if aggression ceases and the enemy offers peace, it is obligatory upon Muslims to accept it and halt all warfare:

And if they incline to peace, you must also incline to it, and trust in God...(8:61)

The concept of a “just war”, a concept unanimously understood, accepted and applied in the modern, civilized world, has never so clearly been defined in any religious scripture. The unconditional, aggressive view of war for the purpose of advancement of the Muslim territory, clearly, has no basis whatsoever in Islamic sources.

Extremist view #2 – Re: Apostasy

Just as in the case with the extremist view on jihad, the extremist view on apostasy is completely without merit. It is held by extremists that an apostate, one who rejects Islam after having accepted it, is subject to the death penalty. Unfortunately, this view is widely propagated, so much so that the issue has been raised in western media as of late, regarding how the Muslim world would receive Barack Obama should he become President since he may have been a Muslim in his early childhood but is

now a self-professed Christian and, therefore, may be considered an apostate and be subject to the death penalty. This particular extremist view flies in the face of one of the greatest contributions Islam has made to the world; that is, establishing the basis for complete religious freedom. The Quran, a book revealed in the 6th century, laid down the magna charta of religious liberty by declaring:

There is no compulsion in religion. (2:256)

Religion is stated to be a personal matter, not something that can be forced upon anyone. The Quran explains this further by stating:

The Truth is from your Lord; so let him who please believe and let him who please disbelieve. (18:29)

In fact, the Quran explains that God has provided man with “free will”, and accordingly, it is only natural that not everyone will believe, and suggests that “forcing” one to believe is going against God’s law:

And if your Lord had pleased, all those who are in the earth would have believed, all of them. Will you then force them till they are believers? (10:99)

So from where did the belief that apostates must be put to death arise? Extremists exploit the fact that there are records of some persons who left the Muslim community and who happened to be killed at a later time. But the question is: were any of these individuals killed simply because they were apostates? Nowhere in the Quran is it mentioned that an apostate is to be put the death. Actually, it sanctions no punishment at all in this life as it states such persons will be held to account in the hereafter only. It is inconceivable that these particular persons were killed simply because they were apostates, as the Quran, some of the verses of which I relayed earlier, advocates complete freedom in matters of faith.

Extremists, however, overlook the fact that when an apostate happened to be killed it was always when such person joined enemy forces at times of war. Thus, when an apostate happened to be killed it was not because he left Islam, but because he was an “enemy combatant”. In fact, the Quran expressly states that those who leave Islam and are peaceful towards the Muslims, no harm should be brought against them:

So if they withdraw from you and do not fight you, and offer you peace, then God allows you know way against them ... (4:90)

Clearly, it was the “treasonous” acts of certain apostates that led to their deaths, not the fact that they chose to leave Islam. The intolerant, hostile view that apostates are to be put to death, has not basis whatsoever in Islamic sources.

Extremist view #3 – Democracy

As in the case with the extremists’ view on jihad and apostasy, the extremist view that Islam and democracy are incompatible is wholly unfounded. Far from it, a study of the Quran and an examination of the practices of the early Muslims reveal that not only are the principles of governance in Islam compatible with “democratic” values, Islam is the very religion of democracy. In fact, it is clearly a departure from the Islamic principles of governance that is the primary cause of the creation of autocratic regimes in the Muslim world.

A general consensus may be reached in defining democracy, in simple terms, as a system of governance wherein:

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

Majority Rule

For instance, the essence of “majority rule” is openly declared in the Quran in the following verse:

And those who respond to their Lord and keep up prayer, and whose affairs are decided by counsel among themselves...(42:38)

In this verse we find the foundation for a government by counsel, or a parliamentary government. Clearly, in Islam, the people are not to be ruled by the whim of one person, but rather are to be consulted, or have their representatives consulted, as to how the affairs of public life are to be conducted. This principle was put into practice by no other than Muhammad himself. Recorded history bears witness to him not only engaging in consultative processes with regard to administrative matters and state affairs, but also accepting the majority view despite his personal opinion at times being to the contrary. In fact, Muhammad was expressly commanded to “consult them in important matters” (3:158).

Furthermore, the Quran encourages the “majority rule” style government by laying the foundation for

a “participatory system”. It states:

God changes not the condition of a people, until they change their own condition. (13:11)

And follow not that of which you have no knowledge. (17:36)

Clearly, the Quran explains that the rules and conventions of a society are not to be blindly followed, but rather active participation is required by the people to bring about change and improvement of the populace’s interest. Moreover, the Quran expressly states that an important function of this participatory system of government is the “election” of the people’s representatives:

Surely God commands you (the people) to make over positions of trust (in government and state affairs) to those worthy of them. (4:58)

Thus, it is the people, the general public, who possess the authority to make someone their representative. And this principle was practically demonstrated in the early history of Islam by the Muslims “electing” the first four Caliphs (i.e. heads of state after Muhammad) either by agreement of all parties, by nomination after consultation with leading representatives of the community, or by appointment by an elective council. Furthermore, the chosen representative is accountable to the people, being in a position of “trust”. Thus, governance in Islam is a “contract” between the people and their representatives; the people hand over authority to their representatives and the representatives administer control in the best interest of the people within the limits of their mandate. As Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, stated in his first public address after being elected successor to Muhammad:

You have elected me Khalifa (head of state), but I claim no superiority over you...Help me if I act rightly and correct me if I take a wrong course...Obey me so long as I obey the laws and regulations. In case I disobey the laws and regulations, I have no right to obedience from you.

Thus, the concepts of a “social contract” between the people and the government and the “rule of law” where leaders are accountable to the people for their actions, are entrenched principles in Islam.

Individual Rights

Similarly, the fundamental elements of the notion of “individual rights” are unequivocally upheld in

Islam. First, the Quran champions the equality of mankind:

All men are a single nation. (2:213)

It then defines various rights individuals are guaranteed. As already mentioned, Islam calls for complete religious freedom: "There is no compulsion in matters of religion" (2:256). Similarly, it condemns blind following and stresses the importance of "freedom of knowledge and conscience". It repeatedly instructs man to "reflect" and "ponder" so that an "understanding" of the issues may be achieved that satisfies one's conscience:

Thus does God make clear to you the messages that you may ponder. (2:219)

There is surely a sign in this for a people who ponder. (16:67)

Are the blind and the seeing alike? Do you not then reflect? (6:50)

So relate the narrative that they may reflect (7:176)

And whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good. (2:269)

And "free thought" was not only protected, the right to express that thought was guaranteed. As an example, Umar, the second Caliph, announced in a public address that he intended to place a restriction on the amount of dowry that grooms gave to their brides so as to prevent extravagance and unnecessary competition within the community. A woman from amongst the crowd of citizens openly spoke out against him by stating that he could not place a limit on God had not limited and quoted the Quran in support of her view. Umar considered what she said and seeing the correctness of her view replied: "The women of Medina have more knowledge than I." Though a simple incident, it delineates a very important precept: an average citizen was free to form an opinion and express it freely to the leader of the community; in return, the leader calmly considered the input and seeing that it was true, accepted it.

Equality amongst the sexes is also a constant theme throughout the Quran. The Quran repeatedly expressly mentions "women" along with "men" so as to leave no doubt as to their equal status, spiritually as well as materially:

Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women, and the humble men and the humble women, and the charitable men and the charitable women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their chastity and the women who guard, and the men who remember God much and women who remember - God has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward. (33:35)

Even the economic independence of the sexes is advanced:

For men is the benefit of what they earn. And for women the benefit of what they earn. (4:32).

In addition, women were granted the right to inheritance, the right to property ownership and every other individual right granted to man. Keep in mind, this was all in the 6th century.

Major Obstacle: Forgetting "Ijtihad"

Clearly, the foundational components underlying a democratic form of government share many commonalities with entrenched Islamic principles governing statehood. So why the bitter opposition from extremists? Extremists argue that "democracy" is a system of governance in which laws are based on human whim, whereas Islam is transcendental and its principles cannot be undermined by the will of the people. This view is unwarranted for it neglects that *ijtihad* (the exercise of judgment) is a fundamental source of law in Islam. Islam does recognize the Quran and the Sunnah (the practices of the Prophet Muhammad) as higher sources of authority, but at the same time expects the exercise of judgment to be used to apply these basic, broad principles. This is in fact comparable to the authority granted to the legislature in a "constitutional democracy": the legislature uses its best judgment in creating laws but the laws validity is conditional upon its consistency with the broader principles contained in the supreme law of the land, the constitution.

The four great jurists of Islam, Imams Abu Hanifah, Malik, Shafi and Ahmad, have defined various methods of exercising judgment in creating laws.

- There is "qiyas", or using analogical reasoning to form a decision.
- There is "istihsan", or adopting a rule that is

in consonance with the broader rules of justice.

- There is “*istislah*”, or creating a rule conducive to the general societal goals.
- There is also “*istidlal*”, or applying inferences from customs and usages.

These four methods of exercising judgment lay the basis for the creation of laws by a legislative body. And the prime example of the use of legislative authority is the formation of the “*Constitution of Medina*”. This compact, created in 622 C.E., was the first written constitution of a state ever promulgated by a sovereign in human history! It created a city-state in Medina. It acknowledged various parties bound by the treaty. It granted equal rights to the participating parties. And it outlined societal rules of conduct that would ensure the social welfare of the community. Most significant is the fact that it was an agreement catered to satisfy the needs of all participating parties in the community (namely, the immigrant Muslims from Mecca, the indigenous Muslims from Medina, and the Arab Jews of Medina). The rights, conditions and role of leadership stipulated therein were all consented to by the party signatories. Consensual, participatory governance was central to this historic, democratic document. Clearly, the extremist view that Islam does not permit man to use the exercise of his judgment to create systems of governance wherein the basic concepts of majority rule and individual rights are established is without any merit.

Conclusion

Now, I ask you in all fairness, does the faith I presented before you seem inherently incompatible with the values accepted by the modern, civilized world? Can the current day conflicts really be characterized as a “*clash of civilizations*” between the secular West and Islam? When we look to the fundamentals of Islam, common sense dictates “*No!*” When analyzing specific extremist views, we see Islam is:

- a faith that encourages mediation of disputes

and places strict limitations and conditions on engaging in conflicts;

- a faith establishing freedom of religion and equality for all;
- and a faith advocating a “*majority rule*” type of government in which leaders are chosen by the people and are held to account for their actions;

Certainly there is no inconsistency there. My friends, Islam is not the problem. Rather, a correct understanding of Islam can be the solution to combating extremism in the Muslim world. Extremists need to be stripped of the “*garb of Islam*” they have been wearing to address their political grievances. As Professor David Forte of Cleveland Marshal School of Law states: “*We must not fail ... to distinguish between the homicidal revolutionaries like bin Laden and mainstream Muslim believers*”.⁶ Using terms like “*Islamic Fundamentalism*” or “*Islamofacism*” when referring to the extremists’ views only legitimate their cause.

And certainly Muslims have the primary responsibility in refuting the ideologies of extremists. And this is what the Islamic organization I belong to has been doing, not since 9-11, but for the past 100 years. We produce a translation and commentary of the Quran that specifically addresses the illegitimacy of the extremist views. This work is of such scholarship and quality that all of the largest retail outlets including Borders and Barnes & Noble carry them and several universities use them as text books in Islamic studies classes. But we also direct our focus on having this work and others translated in various languages of the world and distributed for free in foreign countries so that the ordinary people may have the opportunity to learn about their religion for themselves in their own language and not rely on some politically motivated Imam telling them what the Arabic sources of Islam state. Recently, we distributed over 50,000 copies of our Russian translation and commentary of the Quran in Russia and other Central Asian countries

1. Washington Post – ABC News Poll, The Washington Post, March 6, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/ includes/post-poll_iraqwar_030606.htm.
2. Strange, Joe, *Center of Gravity: Primary Sources of Moral or Physical Strength, Power, and Resistance*, Centers of Gravity & Critical Vulnerabilities (Quantico, Va.: Marine Corps Univ. Foundation, 1996), p. ix.
3. Eikmeier, Dale, *Qutbism: An Ideology of Islamic-Fascism*, Parameters, Spring 2007, p.85-98, at 85.
4. In *Dying to Win: the strategic logic of suicide terrorism*, Robert A. Pape creates the first comprehensive database of every suicide terrorist attacks in the world from 1980 until today. His work shows “*Suicide terrorism is not primarily a product of Islamic fundamentalism*”, and “*Every suicide terrorist campaign has had a clear goal that is secular and political: to compel a modern democracy to withdraw military forces from the territory that the terrorists view as their homeland*”. Pape, Robert A., *Dying to Win: the Strategic logic of suicide terrorism*, New York: Random House.
5. Tirmidhi, *Abwab-ul-Fitan*.
6. Forte, David, Religion is not the Enemy: Don’t look at Bin Laden and See Islam, National Review Online, October 19, 2001, <http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=ZmRmYzJjNDkwNTgxMjA1OWMzY2UwNTcyOWQ2MmJmYTk=>.

where we believe there may be a danger of extremist views spreading due to a lack of correct information about Islam. And we have also directed our attention to the Middle East. We have had most of our literature translated into Arabic and certified by Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, which is widely recognized as the most authoritative institution in the Islamic world. Al-Azhar's certification gives our literature a stamp of authenticity and, thus, helps facilitate our goal of proving to the uninformed that the extremists' views are un-Islamic. We also are in the process of creating learning centers in various

foreign countries, including Kyrgyzstan, Philippines and Albania. These centers – containing libraries, multimedia, lecture halls, etc. – will provide local populations with a place where religion sans politics may be studied and discussed.

Certainly, a lot more needs to be done. It is our earnest prayer that these efforts to “Reclaim Islam” will result in the eradication of extremist ideologies amongst Muslims and help facilitate peace in the world.

RACISM AND ISLAM

**Speech at Convention in Columbus
July 1999**

By Aliyah Khan, New York

“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colors. Surely there are signs in this for the learned.” - The Holy Quran, 30:22.

Most people know what it is, have heard it discussed countless times, may have even had personal experience with it. There is no need to define what racism is. It is something that is almost worthless as a scientific classification, because the genes which determine skin color account for a mere fraction of a percent of the overall human genetic makeup. But of course, no one can argue that the concept of race is so ingrained in the way people think that it's nearly impossible to get away from it. What's one of the first things that one person notices about another? What's one of the first physical characteristics listed when describing the appearance of a person? It is usually the color of his or her skin.

Throughout the world fair skin is equated with beauty, and even goodness. This may be partially blamed on Western colonialism, which has had a great impact even on the Muslim world. This Muslim world itself is a collection of artificial boundaries drawn on a map to create countries. This has led to the new phenomenon of nationalism, which may further intensify discrimination on the basis of skin color. There is the extreme example of the not so old South Africa and its system of institutionalized racism, or apartheid.

There is also the example of Guyana, where rac-

ism has destroyed the country to a point where it is nearly impossible to see how it can continue, since logic would dictate that if racial differences cause a country to become poverty-stricken and its people to flee in droves, then people would recognize what they're doing and cease. Yet it continues, and is even escalating to the point of violence.

In Western countries like this the United States, what can be observed is the more subtle discrimination experienced by blacks and non-whites in places where it is legally prohibited. America itself has not had a stellar record where race relations are concerned. Even at its very founding, the infamous three-fifths clause, which counted a black person as three-fifths of a legal person, was written into the Constitution.

Now, legally speaking, there is “equal opportunity” in America, but the attitudes of people, bred by long history of racism, is a different thing entirely. Incidents like the Rodney King riots, the so-called New York cop killings (like that of young African immigrant Amadou Diallo) only serve to illustrate this idea. It is said that in the U.S. the worse thing one can be is a young black man. People make cynical references to things like DWB, or Driving while Black. Obviously, Western society still has quite a ways to go before it can become truly colorblind.

A law is a rule that the government says to obey for the good of society. Therefore, one person cannot kill another for racist reasons and expect no punishment from society. But there is nothing stopping that same person from thinking what he or she likes about others, or even, as in many instances, verbally airing those views in public.

But if one lives according to Islam, it is not possible to follow the letter of the law in public while believing something else in the privacy of one's

own mind. Islam is a way of life. Islamic doctrine, or Aqeedah, addresses the same issues that its legal texts does. In other words, whatever personal belief the Holy Quran guides someone to, will be in accordance with how he or she must lawfully behave in society.

In addition, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), unlike other prophets, did not come to one people or tribe or nation. The Quran is addressed to all people, and while it notes that there are indeed physical differences among individuals, it also stresses that all human beings share a common ancestry.

In Ch. 35 Verses 27-28 it is said:

“Seest thou not that Allah sends down water from the clouds, then We bring forth therewith fruits of various hues? And in the mountains are streaks, white and red, of various hues and (others) intensely black. And of men and beasts and cattle there are various colors likewise.”

But Ch. 4 Verse 1 reads:

“O people, keep your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind), and spread from these two many men and women.”

This single ayat effectively negates the whole idea of racism by reminding us of our shared human heritage.

Islam has historically been a great unifying force because it does not determine the value of a person based on such an irrelevant thing as the way he or she looks. Rather, it focuses on right living and piety to determine the value of an individual.

But in the time of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), the tribes of Arabia used lineage to determine social standing. Partly as a result, black people were regarded as inferior and not fit for much else besides slavery. Slavery was one of the many institutions in pre-Islamic Arabia that was abhorrent to Islam. In one of the very earliest Quranic revelations, Al Balad (The City), it is said:

“And what will make thee comprehend what the uphill road is? It is to free a slave.” (90:12-13)

In his Quranic commentaries, Maulana Muhammad Ali says: “[Islam] is the only religion which enjoins the duty of granting freedom to slaves, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the only founder of a religion who showed the noble example of freeing all

the slaves that he ever had and helping in the freedom of others.” Regarding Ch. 9 of the Holy Quran (Al Bara’at: The Immunity), Verse 60, Maulana Ali continues: “the State itself must spend a part of the public funds in purchasing freedom for slaves.”

It may be argued that, black or not, those slaves who converted to Islam did so because anything, and certainly Islam, which after all provided for the eventual freedom of all slaves, was preferable to slavery. But this does not explain the conduct of Hazrat Bilal, a black slave who was freed after conversion to Islam. Bilal, the black man, stood firm in his devotion to Islam when many of the earliest converts, under torture, did not. It is reported that “in the depth of his anguish the persecutors could force from him but one expression, ‘Ahad! Ahad!’ (One! One! God).”

Nevertheless, believers and unbelievers alike continued to believe in the inferiority of darkerskinned people. Such was the feeling of disdain for them that after the conquest of Mecca, when the Prophet gave the honor of climbing onto the Kaabah and calling out the Adhaan for the first time to Bilal, it is reported that one Harith bin Hisham said: “Could not Muhammad find anybody else besides this black crow to call out the Adhaan?”

The Prophet soon after this received a revelation:

“O mankind, surely We have created you from a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other. Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful of you.” (49:13)

Before revealing this to the people, the Prophet addressed them, saying:

“O people! Allah has abolished all forms of discrimination based on lineage or creed. There are only two classes of men. A pious and God-fearing individual is honored in the sight of Allah while a disobedient and sinful individual is debased in the sight of Allah.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad then recited what had been revealed to him, illustrating that the only thing which distinguishes one person from another in the sight of Allah is his or her individual behavior and adherence to Islamic teachings.

The Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha’at Islam Lahore is perhaps by nature uniquely qualified to spread the

message of tolerance. Members of the movement are all very familiar with the fact that it is prohibited to denounce as kafir anyone who recites La ilaha il-lallah, Muhammad-ur Rasul-allah. Islam is also the only religion which protects the rights of non-Muslim citizens in a Muslim state. Similar to these protections, according to the Quran and Prophet Muhammad, a Muslim may not discriminate against another Muslim or non-Muslim simply on the basis of physical appearance.

It is senseless to harbor such prejudices. Does the color and makeup of human blood vary with skin color? Is it skin color that stops one human being

from donating his or her blood or organs to another person of a different color and sustaining that individual's life? Certainly not.

Islam teaches unity and brotherhood. True individual worth is, in the end, determined by Allah, Who will judge according to what He has revealed in the Holy Quran:

“O you who believe, be upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice; and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably. Be just; that is nearer to observance of duty.” (5:8)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SALAT-UN-NABI OR DAROOD

**Id-ul-Adha Khutba at Darus Salaam,
London, 16 March 2000**

By Dr. Zahid Aziz

“And when his Lord tried Abraham with certain commands he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I will make you a leader of mankind. Abraham said: And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the wrongdoers, said He.” — The Holy Quran, 2:124

“And when Abraham said: My Lord, make this city secure, and save me and my sons from worshipping idols. My Lord, surely they have led many people astray. So whoever follows me, he is surely of me; and whoever disobeys me, Thou surely art Forgiving, Merciful.” — The Holy Quran, 14:36

I will return shortly to an explanation of the verses quoted just now. Before that, let me read the well-known prayer taught to Muslims known in Urdu and Persian as the Darood (درود) and in Arabic as Salatun-Nabi (صلاة النبي):

“O Allah, exalt Muhammad and the true followers of Muhammad as Thou didst exalt Abraham and the true followers of Abraham, Thou art the Praised, the Magnified. O Allah, bless Muhammad and the true followers of Muhammad as Thou didst bless Abraham and the true followers of Abraham, Thou art the Praised, the Magnified.”

The words of this prayer in Arabic are recited by Muslims, both within the set daily prayers and at other times, and are believed to be a source of blessing. But unfortunately, Muslims generally are either unaware of what the Arabic words of the

prayer mean, or if they do know the meaning they are unaware of what is the “exaltation” and “blessing” that they are asking to be bestowed upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his followers, which were also granted to Abraham and his followers.

The Bible mentions the promises of exaltation and blessing given from God to Abraham and his progeny as follows. God said to Abraham:

“I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you... and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves.” — Genesis, 12:2–3.

“You shall be the father of a multitude of nations...I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you.” — Genesis, 17:4, 6.

“I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore...and by your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves.” - Genesis, 22:17– 18.

Unfortunately the followers of the Bible, that is to say the Jews and the Christians — the first group being the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, and the second group having arisen out of the Jews - considered this promise to be unconditional. Their belief was that no matter how they behaved, well or badly, they would still be great and blessed nations because of being Abraham's descendants. But the Holy Quran puts this promise in a different way, as in the verse quoted at the beginning of this khutba. When Abraham asked God about his progeny, God said: My promise does not include and extend to the wrongdoers.

Also according to another verse in the Holy Quran as quoted above, Abraham prayed to God as follows:

“So whoever follows me, he is surely of me; and whoever disobeys me, Thou surely art Forgiving, Merciful.” - The Holy Quran, 14:36

Two points are made here:

1. It is whoever follows the path of Abraham who is “of him” or his progeny, offspring or issue. The same applies to any other spiritual leader. It is not by mere physical descent but by following in their path that you become their real descendants. This is a great and deep principle revealed by Islam, and if we bear it in mind it can save us from going wrong many a time.
2. As to those who disobey or do not follow Abraham, he prays for their forgiveness. This teaches us to constantly pray to Allah to show forgiveness and mercy to the rejecters of truth by bringing them into the fold of truth.

After Abraham, in the long course of time, two main religions developed among the followers of the Bible: the Jewish and the Christian religions. But both deviated from, and in fact, went contrary to Abraham’s path, while considering themselves to be the blessed nations springing from him.

The Jewish religion became a religion of rites and rituals only, so that the priests and the masses stuck to the letter of the religious teachings but lost the true spirit. They lost the spirit of sacrifice of one’s desires that Abraham demonstrated, and indeed what he is famous for. So they became a morally corrupt people while sticking most rigidly to the letter of the religion.

The Christian religion invented wrong beliefs about God, making a mortal Jesus into a part of God, going against the Oneness of God which was so dear to Abraham and which he preached so fervently, and coining the doctrine that your sins are forgiven if you believe that Jesus died for your sins. Abraham’s belief was that to have your sins forgiven the only way is to lead a righteous life with belief in One God.

So how could these nations be the blessed heirs of Abraham when they go against his teachings?

That is why God then raised the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, from the descendants of Abraham through Ishmael, in order to revive the beliefs taught by Abraham. That is, belief in One God, sacrificing your lower desires in order to reach God, and leading a righteous life.

Apart from reviving Abraham’s beliefs, in the physical and material sense too Islam arose in a place, Makka, whose foundations were laid by Abraham, and Islam made as its religious centre the Ka’ba which had been rebuilt by Abraham from a state of ruin. Further, Islam instituted a remembrance of the incident of Abraham’s act of sacrifice to be done at the Hajj, and by all Muslims throughout the world.

This shows that it is the Muslim nation which is the heir to Abraham, and it is through this nation that the promise of God given to Abraham is fulfilled that “I will make a great nation out of you and will bless those who bless you, and by your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves”.

The significance of the Darood prayer, or Salatunabi, is that we pray that the promise of the blessings of God coming to Abraham and his followers be fulfilled through the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his followers.

But we must beware that merely by copying Abraham’s example of sacrifice in a symbolic way, or by just going to the Hajj to the place that Abraham is associated with and performing the outward rites, we do not become his heirs and heirs to the promised blessings. This is just like the fact that the Jewish and Christian religions, while arising among Abraham’s descendants, are not his spiritual heirs because they have gone against his teachings.

To be Abraham’s real heirs, so as to be worthy of inheriting the promised blessings, we have to make sacrifices of our own desires, just as Abraham did, which needs to be done in order to attain a higher goal.

This is why our Darood is couched in the form of a prayer: “O Allah, exalt...O Allah, bless...”, so that we realize that it is a goal for which we have to work and pray. Muslims are not taught to refer to these blessings as something which is guaranteed to them by God, regardless of their behaviour, even though it is true that the followers of the Prophet Muhammad have been destined to inherit those blessings.

Abraham was promised, in the words of the Holy

Quran, that he would be made “a leader of mankind”. What does that mean? The word for “leader” is imam, which means one who sets an example. He was selected by God as an example because of his willingness to sacrifice what he loved most in the path of God. Similarly, if his heirs are to become leaders of all mankind, they have to set the same example of self-sacrifice. A leader, according to Islam, is not someone who just has power and gives orders. A leader is one who sets the greatest example himself of what he wants and requires others to do, and then people follow his example. That is the kind of leader that the Holy Prophet Muhammad was, one who has left behind his own actions and life as an example. That is the kind of leadership of the nations that Islam wants Muslims to have.

Also, the promise contains mention of making a “great” nation from Abraham. What is a great nation? According to the Quran, it is not one which rules over the most lands, has the biggest empire, possesses the most wealth and resources, or is the most powerful in weapons and armaments, but the greatest nation is the one which upholds truth, goodness and justice more than anyone else.

Note: The khutba ends above, but in this written version I deal with a question related to the Darood which was once asked by a friend. He asked: Since the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the greatest of all prophets in rank and status, why do we Muslims pray that Allah may bestow those blessings on him, and on his followers, which had already been bestowed upon Abraham and his followers? Are we saying that Abraham held a higher rank than the Holy Prophet Muhammad and we are praying for the Holy Prophet to reach that same rank and status?

The answer is that the words of the Darood, “as Thou didst exalt Abraham and the true followers of Abraham” and “as Thou didst bless Abraham and the true followers of Abraham”, do not refer to any

exaltation or blessings that had actually been attained in full measure by Abraham and his followers prior to the time of the Holy Prophet, so that we could be said to be praying for the same now to be given to the Holy Prophet and his followers. Rather, this was a promise made by God to Abraham relating to the future. That promise had been fulfilled only very partially through the Israelite prophets and kings of the Bible who came after Abraham, and by the time the Holy Prophet Muhammad arose the followers of the Bible had lost all those blessings as a result of deviating completely from Abraham’s teachings. Therefore the promise to Abraham and to his followers was destined to come true through the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his followers: that there would be great nations in the whole of the world following Abraham’s message, blessing him, and through whom his name would be made great. So the Darood is the prayer to say that may the promises of God made with Abraham come to fulfilment in the fullest and most complete manner through the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his followers.

Darood and the propagation work of our Movement

On a second point, since we pray in the Darood for the Holy Prophet Muhammad to be exalted and blessed, it means that we must also work towards this goal. For the Holy Prophet to be exalted in the world it is absolutely essential to strive hard to present a true picture of his noble life and character, particularly to counteract the false image found in hostile Western writings as well as in certain Muslim books written by foolish friends. Only then will the image of the Holy Prophet, and along with him that of his followers, be raised high or exalted in the world. Only then will people realize what a great blessing for the world he was, and they will send their blessings on him. Just repeating the Darood in words, without any action to bring about the exaltation and blessing which is being prayed for, cannot achieve anything.

NEED OF IMAM OF THE AGE - 1

From the book *Darūrat-ul-Imām*
ضرورت الامام

By *Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad*
Translated By *Kalamazad Mohammad*
(With Some Revision By The Editor *The Light*)

Let it be clearly understood that, in accordance with

an authentic hadith, that person who does not recognize the Imam of his time, dies in a state of ignorance. This hadith is sufficient to inspire the heart of a muttaqī (one who fears Allah) to search for the Imam of his Age, because the death in the state of ignorance comprises such a comprehensive collection of ills that no evil or misfortune is excluded from it. So, as a result of this testament from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, it has become necessary for every seeker after truth to be on the constant look-

out for the real Imam.

It is not true that the name Imam of the Age can be attributed to every person who has received a true dream or for whom the door of *ilhām* (revelation) has been opened. Instead, the true nature of the Imam is a comprehensive affair and relates to a perfect and complete condition and that is why his name is Imam in Heaven. And this, too, is quite evident, that a person cannot be called Imam merely on account of his *taqwā* (righteousness) and self-purification. Allah, the Most High, has said (in 25:74 of the Holy Quran):

Waj'alnā lil muttaqīna imāma

- "...and make us Imams for those who guard against evil".

Thus, if every *muttaqī* is Imam, then all righteous believers will become Imams too, and this is contrary to the intent of the verse. And so, according to the clear verses of the Holy Quran, every recipient of revelation and true visions cannot be given the title of Imam for, in the Holy Quran, the following glad tiding is given to all believers:

La-humul bushrā fil hayātid-dunyā (10:64),

i.e., in this life, believers will be granted the favour of receiving true dreams and true revelations. And, in another place, the Holy Quran states:

Innal-ladhīna qālū Rabbunallāhu thummas-taqāmū tatanazzalu alaihimul-malā'ikatu alla takhafū wa la tahzanū (41:30)

i.e., "Those who say, our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them saying: Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the Garden which you were promised". And thus it was that consolation by means of revelation was given to the mother of Prophet Moses. But the Holy Quran makes it clear that this kind of revelations or true dreams are bestowed as a spiritual grace on all believers, whether male or female, but those who receive these revelations are not qualified for the designation Imam of the Age; and many such revelations refer only to their personal affairs and bring nothing to the fields of knowledge nor are they worthy of any extraordinary notice. Many, too, are unreliable; in fact, on many occasions they can cause the recipient to stumble. And unless the agency of the Imam brings the grace of knowledge, one can never be safe from dangers.

Testimony to the truth of this matter is found in the heart of Islam itself. There was a man who was a scribe of the Holy Quran, and sometimes, because of his proximity to the light of spirituality, he would receive in revelation Quranic verses just at the time when the Imam, that is, the Holy Prophet, wanted those same verses to be recorded in writing. One day, the fancy came to him that there was no difference between himself and the Prophet, for he, too, was receiving revelation. This led to his (spiritual) destruction. It is written that his grave, too, threw out his body, just as Bal'am was destroyed (in the time of Moses). On the other hand, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, used to receive revelation, but he entertained no pretensions about himself and he never wished to consider himself a partner in the heavenly Imamate which Allah had established on earth. In fact, he looked upon himself as a lowly servant and slave. Consequently, through Allah's grace, he was made a successor to the righteous Imamate.

Awais Qarni, too, used to receive revelation, but he made himself so humble that he thought it an act of impropriety to enter into the presence of the Imam, the Sun of Prophethood. Our Chief and Master, Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, would often turn his face towards Yemen and say, *Ajidu rīhar-Rahmāni min qablil-Yaman* i.e., "I smell the perfume of Allah coming from Yemen". This was an indication that the light of Allah had descended on Awais. But it is sad that, in this age, most people do not think that there is a necessity for a genuine Imam, and just because they receive a true dream or a few fragments of inspiration, they think that they have no need for an Imam of the age. "Are we any the less?" they ask, and they do not realize that such a thought is an outright sin. For our Holy Prophet has established the necessity for an Imam of the age in every century and has plainly stated that if a person comes to Allah in such a condition in which he has not recognized the Imam of his time, then he will remain blind and will die the death of ignorance. In this hadith, the Holy Prophet did not exempt any recipient of revelation or true dreams. So, it is obvious from this that whether a person is a recipient of revelation or true dreams, if he does not join the Movement of the Imam of the Age, then his end is imperiled, for it is evident that in this hadith all believers and all Muslims are addressed. Among them, there have been, in every age, thousands who received revelation and true dreams. Indeed, the truth is that in the Ummah of the Holy Prophet there must have been millions of devotees who received revelation. Then besides

that, it is established from the Holy Quran and the Hadith that if anyone, in the time of the Imam of the Age, receives a true dream or a revelation, then that, in reality, was only a reflection of the true Imam's light which falls on the heart of every fit and deserving person. The fact is that when an Imam of the Age appears, he brings with him thousands of lights and a kind of happiness is created in heaven and through this diffusion of spirituality and light, people of pure temperament awaken. Thus, whoever has a latent capacity for revelation begins to receive revelation. And he who has the capacity to understand religion through profound thought and reflection, he finds that his insight and power for deep thinking are augmented. And he who has a love for worship is blessed with more pleasure in his service and worship. And he who is engaged in religious debates with non-Muslims is given the power of incontrovertible arguments and complete proofs.

All these matters are, in fact, the result of this spiritual diffusion which comes from heaven with the Imam of the Age and descends on every person worthy of it. And it is a general law and the way of Allah which is made known to us through the guidance of the Holy Quran and the authentic Hadith, and personal experience has also testified to this effect. However, in the time of the Promised Messiah, there is, over and above this, a similar quality which is recorded in the Books of the former Prophets and their reports, and that is that when the Promised Messiah appears, this spiritual diffusion will be so widespread that even women will receive revelation and minors will prophecy and ordinary people will speak under the influence of the Holy Spirit. And all that will be a result of the Imam's spiritual reflection. For example, if the rays of the sun fall on a wall, the wall becomes brighter and if it is white-washed it becomes even more refulgent so that if a mirror is placed in a position to reflect its brightness, then its brilliance becomes so great that one's eyes are not able to withstand it. But the wall cannot take personal credit for all that because, after the sun sets, no vestige of that brightness remains. So, too, every spiritual light is a reflection of the Imam's light, and unless there is a bad turn of fortune or a trial from Allah, a man of good nature can easily understand this subtle point. And if, God forbid, a person does not perceive this Divine secret, and having heard the news of the appearance of the Imam of the Age, does not form a bond with him, then initially such a person makes it manifest that he is above the need of an Imam. After this feeling of self-sufficiency, he becomes estranged,

and after estrangement evil thoughts begin to increase, then after evil thoughts, enmity is born, and after enmity, we seek refuge in Allah, he reaches the point where his faith is snatched away.

And so it happened that at the time of the Holy Prophet's appearance, there were thousands of ascetics who used to receive revelation and see visions, and who were always relating the good news of the imminent coming of the Prophet of the Last Age. But when they rejected the Imam of the Age, who was the Last of the Prophets, then the thunderbolt of Allah's wrath destroyed them and all their relationship with Allah was completely severed. There is no need to recount all that has been written in the Holy Quran about them. It is to them that the Holy Quran truly referred when it said: *wa kānū min qablu yastafihūna* (2:89). The meaning of this verse is that those people used to beseech Allah for the triumph of religion and they used to receive revelation and visions although those Jews who were disobedient to Prophet Jesus had fallen from Allah's grace. However, when the Christian religion died because of the worship of Allah's creation, and it became bereft of truth and spirituality, the Jews were then delivered of the sin of not becoming Christians and spirituality once more entered into them. Many began to arise from among them who were recipients of revelation and visions and their priests were men of high moral calibre and they continuously received revelation telling them that the Prophet of the Last Age and the Imam of the Time would soon be born and for this reason many learned doctors of law kept coming to the land of Arabia. Even their little children knew that soon a new movement from heaven would be established.

This is the meaning of the verse: *ya'rifūnahu kamā ya'rifūna abnā'ahum* (2:146). That is, they recognized this Prophet just as distinctly as they recognized their own sons. But when that Promised Prophet received the message of God, then pride and prejudice destroyed many priests and their hearts became black. However, many fortunate ones became Muslims and their submission was sincere. Thus, this is an occasion for fear; indeed, a time for great fear, that Allah does not allow any believer to suffer an evil fate like that of Ba'lam. O Allah! protect this ummah from troubles and keep them far from being the likes of the Jews. Amen, again Amen.

At this point, it must also be remembered that just as God the Most High created tribes and nations with the intention of establishing one structure for

this physical civilization, so that with the establishment of physical ties and bonds between them they may show compassion towards one another and be helpers one of another, for the same reason He has established the institution of prophethood and imamat so that in the Ummah of Prophet Muhammad spiritual bonds may be created and that some may be intercessors for others.

Now one very important question is: Who is known as Imam of the Time, what are his characteristics, and wherein lies his superiority over others who receive revelation, dreams and visions? The answer to this question is that the title of Imam of the Age is given to that person for whose spiritual upbringing Allah, the Most High, is the Trustee, Who reposes in his nature such a brilliant flame of leadership that he can debate with all the intellectuals and philosophers in every field and still defeat them. Receiving power from Allah, he answers all kinds of the most subtle of objections in such an excellent manner that finally one has to confess that he has come into this transitory abode with all the necessary requirements for the reformation of the world. Therefore, he cannot be embarrassed in the presence of any enemy.

In a spiritual sense, he is Commander-in-Chief of the army of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and it is the will of Allah that, by his hand, the victory of religion will once more be achieved. All those who come under his banner are also bestowed extraordinary powers, and he is granted all the necessary preconditions for reformation and the whole range of knowledge necessary for repelling objections and for explaining the virtues of Islam.

In addition to this, because Allah the Most High knows that he will have to confront the disrespectful and foul-mouthed people of the world, therefore He bestows upon him a high degree of moral fortitude and in his heart there is genuine compassion for mankind. By moral power is not meant being weak willy-nilly on all occasions, for this is contrary to the basis of moral wisdom. Rather, the meaning is that when a harassed man is stung and burns with rage at the words of an enemy or a crude person, so that his disposition quickly changes and on his face there appear, in an abhorrent form, the signs of that grievous punishment called anger, and words of fury, rage and passion burst from his lips in an uncontrollable and out of place fashion. This is never the case with people of high morals. It is true that, according to the needs of time and place, they sometimes use strong language as a remedy; how-

ever, at the time of such use, their hearts do not burn with rage nor do they experience any kind of fury within them, nor do they foam and froth at the mouth. It is true, too, that sometimes they manifest a contrived anger in order to instill fear, but their heart never loses the state of peace, joy and happiness.

For this reason, although the Prophet Jesus did use many severe words against his audience, words such as swine, dog, faithless, adulterous etc., yet we cannot say, we seek refuge in Allah, that he was bereft of distinguished morals; for he himself taught good manners to others, and laid emphasis on gentleness. In fact, those words which issued from his mouth were not uttered in the heat of anger nor in frenzied rage, but were applied in the right place very calmly and dispassionately.

In short, it is obligatory on Imams to display perfect morals. And if a word is not spoken in burning rage or uncontrollable anger, but is said in the right place and is necessary, then that is not contrary to a good moral state.

It is worthy of note that the capacity of Imamat is engrained in the very nature of the person who is made Imam by the hand of Allah. Just as the Divine Wisdom, by virtue of the verse of the Quran, *a'ta kulla shai'in khalqahu* (20:50), has placed beforehand in every beast and bird that potential which Allah, in His Omniscience, knew that it would need, in the same way the spiritual powers required for the office of Imam were reposed beforehand in those souls who, in Allah's eternal knowledge, were destined for the task of Imamat. And all those abilities which would be required in the future were already sown in his pure and unsullied nature.

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

Lahore Section

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

Qadian Section

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