

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

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Exponent of
Islam and
the Lahore
Ahmadiyya
Movement
for over
seventy-five
years
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Presents
Islam as:
PEACEFUL
TOLERANT
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احمدیہ انجمن اشاعت اسلام لاہور

◆ Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam Lahore Inc., U.S.A. ◆
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The Light was founded in 1921 as the organ of the AHMADIYYA ANJUMAN ISHA'AT ISLAM (Ahmadiyya Association for the propagation of Islam) of Lahore, Pakistan. *The Islamic Review* was published in England from 1913 for over 50 years, and in the U.S.A. from 1980 to 1991. The present periodical represents the beliefs of the world-wide branches of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam, Lahore.

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Articles, letters and all enquiries should be sent to:

'The Light', 1315 Kingsgate Road, Columbus, Ohio 43221–1504
U.S.A.

Phone: 614–457 8504 Fax: 614–457 4455

E-mail: info@muslim.org or aaiil@aol.com

WWW: <http://www.muslim.org>

Beliefs and aims

The main object of the A.A.I.I.L. is to present the true, original message of Islam to the whole world — Islam as it is found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, obscured today by grave misconceptions and wrong popular notions.

Islam seeks to attract *the hearts and minds* of people towards the truth, by means of reasoning, good moral example, and the natural beauty of its principles. It neither aspires to gain political power, nor allows the use of force in support of the faith.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908), our Founder, arose to remind the world that Islam is:

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

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

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

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

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

Non-sectarian: Every person professing Islam by the words *Lā ilāha ill-Allāh, Muḥammad-ur rasūl-ullāh* (There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) is a Muslim. A Muslim cannot be expelled from Islam by anyone.

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

About ourselves

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore has branches in the following countries:

U.S.A.	Australia
U.K.	Canada
Holland	Fiji
Indonesia	Germany
Suriname	India
Trinidad	South Africa
Guyana	

The Movement has members and supporters in many other countries as well. In Berlin, it has a large historical mosque constructed in the mid-1920s.

Achievements:

The Anjuman has produced extensive literature on Islam, originally in English and Urdu, including translations of the Holy Quran with commentaries. These books are being translated into other languages, such as French, German, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Dutch and Polish.

The Anjuman has run several Muslim missions around the world, including the first ever in Western Europe.

The Movement's unique contribution to Islamic thought is summed up on the left.

History:

1889: *Hazrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founded the Ahmadiyya Movement.

1901: Movement given name *Ahmadiyya* after Holy Prophet Muhammad's other famous name *Ahmad*.

1905: *Hazrat* Mirza appoints central body (Anjuman) to manage the Movement.

1908: Death of *Hazrat* Mirza. Succeeded by Maulana Nur-ud-Din as Head.

1914: Death of Maulana Nur-ud-Din. Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam founded at Lahore as continuation of the original Anjuman. Maulana Muhammad Ali elected as Head.

1951: Death of Maulana Muhammad Ali after fifty years of glorious service to the cause of Islam. Maulana Sadr-ud-Din (d. 1981) becomes Head.

1981–1996: Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan, an eminent medical doctor and religious scholar, led the Movement, at a time of intense persecution.

1996: Prof. Dr. Asghar Hameed, a distinguished retired University Professor of Mathematics, and learned Islamic scholar, elected Head.

Need of Imam of the age – 4

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*)

Look! I have fulfilled the command entrusted to me and I have already written these points many times in my books. But the incident that impelled me to write about these matters again is the error of opinion of a friend of mine. When I came to know of it, I wrote this booklet with a pained, heavy heart.

The details of this incident are as follows. These days, that is, in the month of September 1898 which corresponds to *Jamādi'-ul-Awwal*, 1316 A.H., a friend of mine whom I know to be a good man, righteous, God-fearing and abstinent, and of whom I have held a very favourable opinion from the very beginning — Allah is his Recokner — but whom I believe to be in error as regards some of his views, and am concerned about him because of the harm that this error may cause him, he undertook the rigours of a journey and came to me in Qadian accompanied by another dear friend of mine and related to me many revelations he had received. It brought great joy to my heart to know that God the Most High had honoured him with revelation. However, among his revelations, he also related to me a dream of his in which he had said about me: “Why should I enter into his pledge (*bai'at*), rather he should enter into my pledge”.

From this dream it appears that he does not accept me as the Promised Messiah and that he is also unaware of the concept of the true *Imamat*. Consequently, my compassion demanded that for his sake I should write this pamphlet in order to explain the true *Imamat* and to dilate on the nature of *bai'at*. So concerning the rightful Imam who has the right to take others into *bai'at*, I have written much in this booklet. As to the concept of *bai'at*, it is this, that the word *bai'at* is derived from *bai'*, which is applied to a mutually agreed transaction in which one thing is given in exchange for another. So the purpose of the *bai'at* is that the one entering into *bai'at* sells himself and all his faculties into the hands of a guide so that in return he may receive true spiritual knowledge and blessings to perfection which will lead to spiritual

insight, salvation and the pleasure of Allah the Most High. It is clear from this that by *bai'at* is not meant mere repentance, because a man can make such *taubah* (repentance) all by himself, but what is aimed at is that kind of spiritual knowledge, blessings and signs which draw a person to true repentance. The real objective of the *bai'at* is to give yourself in bondage to your guide and in return acquire from him knowledge, spiritual insights and blessings which strengthen faith and increase knowledge, and create a pure relationship with God the Most High. In this way, having gained deliverance from the hell of this world, salvation may be obtained from the hell of the next life, and that having been healed of spiritual blindness in this life, one may be in safety from the blindness of the next life. So if there exists someone who can bestow the fruits of this *bai'at*, it would be the worst type of perversity for one to turn away from him knowingly and deliberately.

Dear friend, I hunger and thirst so much for spiritual knowledge and deeper truths and Divine blessings that a whole ocean cannot satisfy my thirst. So if someone wishes to take me into his service then there is a very simple way: let him, bearing in mind the meaning and true concept of the *bai'at*, make the transaction with me. And if he should possess such truths and knowledge and heavenly graces that were not bestowed on me, or if such knowledge of the Quran was disclosed to him as was not given to me, then, beginning in the name of Allah, that venerable person should take my hand in his service and obedience, and may he bless me with that spiritual knowledge and those Quranic truths and heavenly graces. I do not wish to give too much trouble. Let my inspired friend give, at a gathering, an explanation of the deeper truths and insights contained in *Sūrat-ul-Ikh̄lās*, and if I fail to better them by a thousand times then I will be his disciple.

In any case, if those spiritual truths, insights and blessings are available with you which cast a miraculous influence, then not only I, but my entire Movement will enter into your *bai'at*, and it would be a man of the most evil nature who would not do so. But what can I say or write? I seek pardon for saying that when I listened to your written down revelations, there were grammatical and linguistic errors in them in many places. Please do not be offended, for it is merely in good faith and with humility, as religious good advice, that I have expressed this observation. Nevertheless, in my opinion, if the revelations of some uneducated or unlettered person contain errors of grammar and language, that does not provide an

objection against the essence of the revelation itself. This is a very subtle question which deserves a lengthy exposition, but this is not the place for it. If some formalistic *mulla*, upon hearing such errors, gets provoked then he also must be excused for he has no admittance into the avenue of spiritual philosophy. However, this kind of revelation is considered as of a low order which is not invested with the full manifestation of the light of God the Most High, for revelations come in three grades: lower, middle and higher.

At any rate, these errors caused me much embarrassment and I kept praying within my heart that my revered friend would not relate these revelations, which on the face of it are subject to objection, to any evil-minded, formalistic *mulla* as he would needlessly deride and ridicule them. Any revelation that is devoid of deep spiritual truths and knowledge, and also is full of errors, cannot benefit anyone whether friend or opponent, especially in this age. In fact, instead of benefit the fear is that it may cause harm. I swear with full conviction and truth that this is absolutely right.

My dear friend! make more progress in turning towards Allah¹ so that as the heart increases in purity, similarly will the revelations grow in purity of eloquence. This is the secret why the revelation of the Quran surpasses the revelation of all the other prophets not only in spiritual knowledge but in fluency and eloquence of diction as well, because our Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, was granted purity of heart more than anyone else. Therefore, in terms of its content that revelation consisted of spiritual knowledge, and in terms of its text it possessed clarity and eloquence.

My friend should also remember that, as I have explained, *bai'at* is a transaction of buying and selling. I say on oath that the truths and knowledge of the Holy Quran which our learned friend Maulvi Abdul Karim *sahib* expounds when he is preaching, I certainly do not expect that even a thousandth part of that could come from the mouth of my dear friend. The reason for it is exactly that the mode of revelation is as yet defective and the method of acquiring is entirely forsaken. I do not know if you have yet had the opportunity to listen to Quranic exposition from any scholar or not.² Please do not be offended for the

sake of God. So far, you have not fully grasped the nature of the *bai'at*, as to what is given in it and what is received. In my Movement, and among the servants of God who have entered into my *bai'at*, there is a man, an illustrious scholar, and he is Maulvi Hakim Hafiz Haji Nur-ud-Din *sahib*, who seems to possess all the commentaries of the Holy Quran in the world with him, and so does his heart contain a treasury of thousands of deep Quranic insights.

If in fact you have been blessed with the excellence of taking others into your *bai'at*, then teach him any one of the thirty parts of the Holy Quran along with its deep truths and spiritual knowledge. These people have not lost their senses that they have entered into my *bai'at*, leaving all the other inspired ones. If you had followed in the footsteps of the above-mentioned Hazrat Maulvi *sahib*, it would have been greatly to your benefit.

Just think, that this celebrated scholar who left his home to come and stay with me and to occupy such humble quarters under trying circumstances, is he willingly tolerating this privation without seeing any benefit?

My dear friend, who receives revelation, should remember that by entertaining such views he is deeply in error. If, before displaying his power of revelation, he shows the said Maulvi *sahib* a sample of his Quranic scholarship, and through the splendour of this miracle he takes into his *bai'at* a passionate lover of the Holy Quran like Nur-ud-din, then I and my whole Movement will devote ourselves to him. Can a few unrecognizable words of revelation, many of which are not even correct, bestow the status which makes a man consider himself to be the Imam of the Age? Dear friend, there are many conditions for the Imam of the Age to fulfil and only then can he stand against the opposition of the whole world.

My dear inspired friend should not remain under an illusion because he receives revelation frequently. I say truly, absolutely truly, that there are in my Movement so many recipients of revelation of this kind that the revelations of many of them can fill a book. Every week, Sayyid Amir Ali Shah sends me

are dominated by metaphorical and figurative language, but you have taken your dream literally. The Mujaddid *sahib* of Sirhind had seen in a vision that through him the Holy Prophet Muhammad had received the rank of friend of Allah. And more than that, Shah Waliullah *sahib* had seen a vision in which it appeared that the Holy Prophet had entered into *bai'at* at his hand. But because of their vast knowledge, they did not think what you have thought, but construed it differently.

¹ I am certain that if this noble friend should turn more deeply to Allah, then very soon his revelations will acquire a perfect form.

² I do not deny that the fountains of revealed knowledge may be opened to you. But that has not yet happened. Dreams and visions

one page of his revelations. And many women, too, who believe in my truth have received revelation in Arabic, even though they have not read a word of Arabic. I am very surprised, too, that compared to yours, his revelations contain fewer mistakes. On September 28, 1898, I received a few of his revelations through a letter from his blood brother Fateh Muhamamd Bazdar.

Likewise, there are several recipients of revelation existing in my Movement. One resides in Lahore itself. But can such revelations exempt a person from taking *bai'at* at the hands of the Imam of the Age? I do not excuse myself from entering into the *bai'at* of anyone, but the purpose of the *bai'at* is for increase in spiritual knowledge and strengthening of faith. So please tell us, in your *bai'at*, which knowledge you will teach and which Quranic truths you will expound? Come and show us the accomplishment of *Imamat* and we shall all take *bai'at* at your hands.

I am proclaiming loudly and publicly that whatever God has bestowed on me has all been intended as evidence of the position of Imam. If anyone can display this sign of *Imamat* and demonstrate that he surpasses me in spiritual graces, I am ready to give him my hand to pledge myself to him.

But the promises of God cannot be changed. No one can stand in confrontation with Him. Almost twenty years ago the following revelation was published in *Barāhin Ahmadiyya*:

“The Beneficent, He taught the Quran that you may warn a people whose forefathers were not warned, and the way of the guilty be made known. Say: Of this I am commanded, and I am the first of the believers.”

According to this revelation, God has bestowed upon me the knowledge of the Quran and given me the title “first of the believers”. He has filled me with deep knowledge and truths like an ocean, and He has revealed to me again and again that in this age no one can equal me in knowledge and love of Allah. So, by God, I am standing ready in the field of combat. Whoever does not accept me will soon be brought to shame after death, and has now been brought down by the argument of Allah.

Dear friend, no work, whether of the world or of religion, can be accomplished without capability. I remember that once a man of an established family was recommended to an English commissioner for the post of local tax-collector, and the man was entirely

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Scientific and spiritual truths about creation and evolution revealed in the Holy Quran – 6

Compiled and translated by
Dr. Mohammad Ahmad, Columbus, Ohio

from the writings of Maulana Muhammad Ali
and Mr. N.A. Faruqi

Summary

The analogy drawn by the Holy Quran may be analyzed as follows:

a) Like the green tree, man is rooted in the earth from which he originates and from which he draws the water of life.

b) Like the green tree again, man acquires his true stature by a combination of the water of earthly life as well as the heavenly light sent down by Allah in the form of revelation through prophets who have been compared to the sun. Says the Holy Quran:

“Blessed is He Who made the stars in the heavens and made therein a sun and a moon which is illuminated.” (25:61)

Now science has revealed that the stars are also really suns, but they look like stars because of their distance from the earth. Similarly, the prophets, before the Holy Prophet Muhammad have become distant from us because their revealed books are more or less lost and so are their true teachings. Their heavenly light has thus become dim for us. By Divine dispensation, the star (namely our sun) meant to give heavenly light to the earth for all time to come however shines in its full glory. Now, the Holy Prophet Muhammad has been compared to our luminous sun (“And as an inviter to Allah by His permission, and as a light-giving sun”, 33:64) in the spiritual world. And the Book revealed to him is preserved completely as admitted even by his critics. And the sayings and deeds of the Holy Prophet are fully preserved. So that his revealed Book and his example shine in full glory for the benefit of mankind for all time to come. (The moon referred to in the verse quoted above are the *Mujaddids* or reformers who will appear every 100 years and will reflect the Prophet’s light after he died, as the moon reflects the sun’s light after it has set. Like the moon because of

their elevation in the spiritual world, the *Mujaddids* catch the Holy Prophet's light and reflect it for the benefit of the world.)

c) Like the green tree, with the help of the heavenly light, the man who accepts that light and acts upon it gains moral and spiritual stature for himself and also serves Allah's creation as the green tree does. Remember, that with the help of the heavenly light, the green tree derives nourishment for its own growth and development, and it also purifies the atmosphere by absorbing and breaking its poisonous carbon-dioxide, and regenerating oxygen for the benefit of mankind and even the animals.

d) When the tree dies, it is cut off from the earth. So is man on his death.

e) When a spark is applied to the dead and dried up tree, it is transformed into another form, namely, that of fire. In that process the carbon within the tree combines with the oxygen once generated by the tree for the benefit of mankind and the animal world. Similarly, a dead human being's own goodness and the good he did to others combine to give him the new life. The activating cause, like the spark applied to the dead wood, is the Divine command, "Be, and it is" as already explained earlier. Like the sun's energy hidden in the tree which comes out in the form of fire when the wood is lit, the spiritual energy received by man from on High which lies hidden in his body, comes out of it in the form of a new creation as different from the first creation as fire is from the dead wood.

Human Form in the Hereafter

I have already quoted the Holy Quran's verse:

"Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like of them (human beings). Yes! And He is the Creator par excellence, the Knowledgeable." (36:81)

Man's re-creation for his life in the heavens will be *like* his worldly being but not the same body. Other places in the Holy Quran also throw light on the subject. To quote one of them:

"We have ordained death among you, and We are not to be overcome, that We may change your state and make you grow into what you know not." (56:60-61)

Maulana Muhammad Ali's commentary on it runs as follows:

"It is the Resurrection that is spoken of here. The present state will be changed, we are told,

and men will be made to grow into a new creation which they do not know (here). Clearly it is not the material body of this life, but a new body which grows out of the deeds of men." ■

The Concept of Heaven and Hell in Islam – 1

by Alah Yar, U.S.A.

Belief in Heaven and Hell forms part of the basic principles of Islam. In fact the Holy Quran accords faith in the future life an importance which is second only to the faith in Allah (SWT), as He declares:

"Whoever believes in Allah and the last day and does good, they have their reward with their Lord." (2:62)

Muslims in general wrongly believe that they are all going to Heaven, indeed the leader of an international Muslim community allots accommodation in Paradise to his followers when the death is near. The rest of the Muslims feel confident that on the Day of Judgement the Holy Prophet (PBUH) shall intercede in their behalf.

Hence it is with great satisfaction that they read in the Holy Quran about the beautiful gardens with rivers of milk, honey and wine that await them. They look forward to a beautiful world like the one they lived in, except that no one has to do any work because every thing is for free. The wife and the children would also be there. In the daytime, friends and relatives would join them to promenade on shaded paths under trees with beautiful flowers all around them. It will not be too warm or cold inside their palaces, just pleasant as it would be outside. They look forward to an everlasting bliss. In addition to the wife there shall be "hurs" to entertain them. Muslims feel doubly fortunate because non-believers shall go to Hell, crying for mercy that shall be denied them.

All this is wishful thinking. Hazrat Fatima, a devout, saintly Muslim and the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) daughter, was told by the Prophet (PBUH) not to expect intercession from him or from anyone else. Her own deeds shall ensure going into the Paradise. Allah (SWT) cautions:

“And We have made every man’s actions to cling to his neck, and We shall bring forth to him on the day of Resurrection a book which he will find wide open.” (17:13)

And He says:

“Read thy book. Thine own soul (*Nafsi-ka*) is sufficient as a reckoner against thee this day.” (17:14)

These verses clearly reveal the principle that every action produces an effect on the soul which is made to cling to a man and that this very effect will be met with on the day of Resurrection in the form of a wide, open book. This book is a complete manifestation of the effects of the deeds done in this life.

It is also evident that on Resurrection we shall be called upon to suffer or be rewarded for whatever we did in our life and the effect of all our deeds shall be clearly visible as if in a book. However He says, all the deeds of our entire life shall be visible at the same time. How will this be possible? The answer has been hinted upon in various places as in the verse that I have quoted, which mentions the word *Nafsi-ka*. What is this *Nafs*?

Allah (SWT) says:

“And certainly We create man of an extract of clay, then We make him a small life-germ in a firm resting place. Then We make the life-germ a clot, then We make the clot a lump of flesh, then We make (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothe the bones with flesh.” (23:12-14)

Fifteen hundred years ago Allah (SWT) revealed the mystery of conception of human life, step by step, to a person unable to read and write.

He goes on to say:

“Then He made him complete and breathed into him of His spirit.” (32:9)

(This probably happens when the fetus is about four months old.) In this verse the word *Ruh* has been used and translated into the word “spirit” and perhaps a couple of times more. Otherwise the Holy Quran calls the spirit by the name *Nafs* and not *Ruh*. Mr. N. A. Faruqi drew attention to this fact frequently in his *dars* that he used to deliver.

Please note that animal soul or “life” is common both to the humans and the animals, so the spirit mentioned in the said verse cannot be what gives life. Therefore it is this spirit or the *Nafs* that only humans

possess, which distinguishes them from all other life forms, making them unique, and elevating them over all others. It is the *Nafs* that distinguishes between right and wrong, no other living being has that quality.

Although the child is born innocent, its *Nafs* starts receiving impressions immediately at birth through its senses. The child remains innocent until it can distinguish between right and wrong. Hence, its *Nafs* starts to take shape after the child has passed this stage. Through its five senses and as interpreted by the brain, *Nafs* receives imprints depicting the actions of the body, doing good or acting evilly. Thus it grows till the body dies.

So Allah (SWT) says there is no escape:

“Every *Nafs* will taste of death.” (3:184)

On the death of the body, *Nafs* appears in the next world. Then it is given a palpable form vis-à-vis the environment in the next world. In the lifetime of a person *Nafs* can grow spiritually and go through three stages as the Holy Quran says:

“Surely (man’s) self is wont to command evil (*Ammarah*).” (12:53)

Thus the first stage is that of the animal, the *Ammarah*. It is in fact the lowest stage in the spiritual growth of man. It may be called his animal self; low desires and animal passions rule the mind of man and he is capable of doing evil without feeling any pangs at all.

The next stage is called the *Lawwamah*, referred to in 75:2 as the self-accusing spirit. It is the stage in which the *Nafs* asserts itself, when the person resorts to evil. It accuses him of choosing the wrong path. And so the “human” in man becomes stronger than the animal in him.

The third stage is called *Mutma’innah* (“at rest”) by the Holy Quran:

“O *Nafs* that art at rest.” (89:27)

refers to the highest stage of the spiritual development, the stage in which he rests contented with his Lord, and finds his quietude, his happiness and his delight in Allah (SWT). This is the heavenly life, the *Mutma’innah* rewarded by Allah (SWT), granting him a heaven on this earth.

We find from the Holy Quran that all his life an inner self of man is also growing, being given a shape by his deeds, and this *Nafs*, the inner self, forms the basis of the higher life — life in the “Hereafter”. The life story of a person is recorded in every detail on the *Nafs* and the Holy Quran mentions it as follows:

“... And surely there are keepers over you, honorable recorders, they know what you do.” (82:10-12)

“And We have made every man’s actions to cling to his neck, and We shall bring forth to him on the Day of Resurrection a book which he will find wide open.” (17:13)

“Read thy book. Thine own *Nafs* is sufficient as a reckoner against thee this day.” (17:14)

These verses clearly show that the *Nafs* is the “Book” on which angels record the deeds, and the *Nafs* is nothing but a complete manifestation of the effects of the deeds done in this life. Thus the *Nafs* is intangible in this life but physically manifest in the next.

All animals and humans have an animal soul which dies when the body dies. But humans also have the *Nafs* and Allah (SWT) takes it away for sometime, during sleep but returns it before the person wakes up. The *Nafs* is permanently taken away when the person dies (39:42).

In sleep while the *Nafs* is with Allah (SWT), all bodily functions continue to perform. The heart, brain, lungs, and everything work normally to keep the body alive, except the *Nafs* which is not there. As long as it is not in the body, it does not receive any imprint upon it, obviously because the body is not functioning and doing good or bad. It must however be noted that Allah (SWT) takes away the *Nafs* in sleep. We do not know what happens to it in the meanwhile.

One thing is clear that it is not the animal soul that is taken away in sleep, it is the soul that stands for human consciousness or the *Nafs*. In death both are taken away.

Hazrat Ibn Abbas said as translated below:

“There is the *Nafs* and the animal soul in human kind and between them is a connection which is likened to a ray of the sun.”

Perhaps he considers the connection most flimsy, a ray of sunlight can be shut out so easily?

Paradise Hereafter

Christians have a vague idea of the Hereafter, no details are presented, except that St. Peter is sitting at the gate of Heaven. He received the keys to the gate of Heaven from Jesus and would admit the souls of his choice, being the Christians. Inside there shall be clouds, on which these souls shall ride, some playing harps. God shall be sitting on a throne and angels standing at attention singing His praises.

Hindus take the cake: the Vedas are full of graphic details, but I am not going to present them here. Considerable liberty has been taken in describing relations between their gods and goddesses. Some details can be obtained from the Urdu translation, *Vaid-un ka Bihisht*, by Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi.

It is not an uncommon belief that somewhere in this universe Allah (SWT) has secreted the Heaven and the Hell, perhaps on an unknown planet where the souls are taken away to be dealt with as they deserve.

I heard a well-educated religious scholar talking on TV, describing Heaven in passing. He felt ill at ease saying so but he also subscribed to the Planet Theory.

A friend, who was an engineer, published an English translation and commentary of the Holy Quran in which he mathematically calculated the dimensions of God’s throne, from data obtained out of the Holy Quran. The sides measured in thousands of miles, you can imagine the rest.

The Holy Quran says:

“So no *Nafs* knows what refreshment of the eyes is hidden for them.” (32:17)

Allah (SWT) describes the heavenly blessings that the righteous shall enjoy in the next life as having been kept secret, not like anything in this world, no one can know aught about them. It is evident that the things of this world are not a secret to us; we not only know of grapes, pomegranate, milk, and honey but also often taste of them. Hence, these things could not be called secrets. The fruits of Paradise have, therefore, nothing in common with these except in name. These descriptions are therefore metaphorical; words cannot reveal the true nature of these blessings. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that Heaven and its blessings are things which “the eye has not seen, nor has the ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive of them”.

However, of the things of this world we cannot say that our eyes have not seen them, or that our ears have not heard of them, or that our minds have not conceived of them. The Holy Quran explains this situation further:

“And give good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that for them are gardens in which rivers flow. Whenever they are given a portion of the fruit thereof, they will say: This is what was given to us before; and they are given the like of it.” (2:25)

Before I go further into the metaphysics of the subject let us examine the next world with respect to our senses:

Allah (SWT) has bestowed five senses upon us essential for our survival. We also use them to do good or evil through them. Further, we are blessed with “instincts”, the most powerful being the urge to survive, to save the body from hurt and death. Next in the order of importance of instincts is sex. It is a powerful instinct necessarily so for the survival of the human race. Procreation depends on it.

What happens when a person dies? The body is buried in the ground and the *Nafs* leaves it, to appear in the next world. The sun and the earth are left behind in this world with the body.

About the next world, Allah (SWT) says:

“They will see therein neither sun nor intense cold.” (76:13)

You may be aware that a whole city functions underground on the Manhattan Island of New York. It has markets, cinemas, stores, and residential accommodation, tennis courts, various playing fields etc. Many people live there spending most of their lives without seeing the sun; nightfall becomes known only on looking at the clock. If the clocks and the aging process stop, the time would also stop for the people living down there.

Allah (SWT) says there will be no sun in Paradise and as there would not be any bodies, only souls, the element of time disappears in the after life.

Since there is no ground to walk on, remember, we left the body on the earth, so we have no use of the five senses necessary for survival on the earth. It is a life everlasting, therefore; procreation has no significance, that part of creation related to the world only.

The Holy Quran does not say that husband and wife shall have a conventional life to live as they did temporarily, sex has no part in the afterlife, nor will children be born.

Actually there shall be some children in Paradise but not as a result of birth. These children who died young would enter Paradise just as they were in the world. And they shall not grow old in the Paradise.

Time and space as we know do not exist in the afterlife but the entity that enters the next world, i.e. *Nafs*, must find a suitable environment. On earth it was fed impulses through the human body and the senses in order to grow. Now it is visible but has no anchor, hence some other body with a new set of

senses must be provided, as Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad sahib opines. Please remember that for him this world held no attractions; he said if you can find Allah (SWT) and in doing so you lose all you have in the world, your possessions, your family, even your life, it is worth the effort. His *Nafs* had progressed spiritually to a stage where the next world did not remain a total mystery. He stated, as I quote from a translation:

“The state after death is not altogether a new state; it is in fact a complete representation, a full image of our spiritual state in the present life. Here the good or bad conditions of the deeds or beliefs of a man are latent within him and their poison or panacea casts its influence upon him secretly, but in the life to come they shall become manifest and clear as daylight.”

Thus you see the vision that Hazrat Mirza possessed enabled him to view the next world far more clearly than we could ever hope to see. He saw that our physical senses disappear and the intangible *Nafs* manifests itself physically.

I want to retrace my steps and submit some basics, a comparison of the physical life with the spiritual changes taking place in the human being.

The development of the physical life of a person proceeds in three stages:

In the first stage the physical presence is undefined, at least to the human intellect, the body is lying dispersed in a micro-chemical existence, highly complex molecules spread out in the earth, in the dust. The next development process brings it to the mother’s womb and in the third stage it appears as a newborn baby. The Holy Quran describes these stages:

“And He began the creation of man from dust. Then He made his progeny of an extract of worthless water. Then He made him complete and breathed into him of His Spirit.” (32:7-9)

Further:

“And certainly We create man of an extract of clay, then We make him a small life germ in a firm resting place then We cause it to grow into another creation.” (23:12-14)

And finally:

“He knows you best when He brings you forth from the earth and when you are embryos in the wombs of your mothers.” (53:32)

Thus Allah (SWT) clearly explains that man is created from an extract of clay. He draws attention to the nourishment that man receives from millions of different complex molecules growing in the earth, from earth to leaves, shrubs and fruits and the food grain.

Likewise the spiritual development takes place again in three stages and the Holy Quran elucidates that the first stage occurs in the life on earth. Strangely the man is not aware of another entity residing in him receiving an imprint of whatever he does. He does not even think about it. He may conduct his life as a righteous person or as a sinner. The *Nafs* carries the imprint and grows accordingly. This is comparable to the dust stage that I mentioned. Then man dies and enters the second stage of his spiritual advancement, i.e. the *Barzakh*. *Barzakh* corresponds to the embryo stage during physical development.

After death the *Nafs* appears in *Barzakh* and it receives a temporary body. Even here some punishment or reward for its deeds starts to take effect. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is quite emphatic that the *Nafs* is accommodated in a new body. The body is not material, but it is a bright or a dark being made up of what the *Nafs* did in the world. He has written:

“I may state here that I have personal experience in this matter. Many a time when fully awake I have had visions in which I saw those who were dead. I have seen many an evil doer and a wicked person with a body quite dark and smoky. I have personal acquaintance with these matters and I assert it strongly that, as God has said, everyone is granted a body either transparent or dark.”

Hazrat Mirza Sahib describes the world of Resurrection being the third stage in spiritual development. The temporary body granted in *Barzakh*, he says, becomes the means of the reward for good or evil. Some sort of transitional metamorphosis takes place during the stay in *Barzakh* to prepare the *Nafs* and its new shape for Resurrection. The Holy Quran describes the wicked of this world as dead and lifeless and righteous are called living. The means of life for those who deny Allah (SWT), interested only in eating, drinking and indulging in their bestial passions, are cut off with death. Their deeds had no part in them of accumulating spiritual food. Hence, their resurrection will only be for their punishment. Allah (SWT) says:

“Whoso comes guilty to his Lord, for him is hell. He will neither die therein, nor live.” (20:74)

Obviously the righteous do not spiritually die with their physical death, for they carry with them spiritual sustenance.

The state of *Barzakh* is a state as it were of semi-consciousness. Hence it is that *Barzakh* is sometimes likened to a state of sleep in comparison to the great awakening of the Resurrection, for the unbelievers are made to say:

“O Woe to us! Who has raised us up from our sleeping place.” (36:52)

The state of *Barzakh*, as regards to those who have wasted their opportunities in this life, lasts according to the Holy Quran till the Day of Resurrection:

“And before them is *Barzakh* until the day when they are raised.” (23:100)

Condition upon entry into *Barzakh* is similar to the state of a fetus. There is not much that the fetus learns of the world outside although it does receive sound signals. It hears noises and musical sounds register on his mind. Psychologists claim that the mother’s mental condition also has some effect on the mind and on the physical development of the fetus. As I said, this physical state corresponds to the state in which the *Nafs* enters the *Barzakh*. One wonders, when the infant is born how much does it know of the world? Almost nothing. The *Nafs*, when it takes birth into *Barzakh*, is in the same situation. It is like the infant; it knows nothing of the world that it enters into. It has to learn, so that on the Day of Resurrection it can embark upon the nearly infinite ladder of spiritual evolution. Allah (SWT) says:

“But those who keep their duty to their Lord, for them are high places, above them higher places (still), built for them.” (39:20)

The *Nafs* starts to learn in this new life and effortlessly goes higher and higher. No one of this world can visualize what that learning will be. However, Allah’s (SWT) immense kindness shall help a person even then. He says:

“therein toil touches us not nor does fatigue afflict us therein.” (35:35)

I am sorry that I went a step ahead of the situation. What I was getting around to is the naïve *Nafs* and what it needs to know while in *Barzakh* before it enters the Resurrection. Perhaps an orientation of some sort shall take place while in *Barzakh* unless Allah (SWT) imparts a basic grounding to the *Nafs* without it becoming conscious of what is happening. In verse 42 of chapter 39 He says:

“Allah takes away the soul during the sleep and sends it back till an appointed term.”

Is it during each night that Allah imparts knowledge of after life without it being known to the person and his conscious mind but only to the *Nafs*? Alternately there are indications that the *Nafs* will be in a condition that may be likened to sleep in *Barzakh* as the inmates shall say:

“O woe to us! Who has raised us up from our sleeping place.” (36:52)

Perhaps in that condition a reorientation of the *Nafs* is effected.

The question of a longer duration of *Barzakh* for some and a shorter one for others, does not arise, as they do not have consciousness of the length of time, as the Holy Quran points out:

“And the day when the hour comes, the guilty will swear that they did not tarry but an hour. Thus are they ever turned away. And those who are given knowledge and faith will say: Certainly you tarried according to the ordinances of Allah till the Day of Resurrection.”

And Allah (SWT) says:

“So this is the Day of Resurrection but you did not know.” (30:55-56)

The consciousness in *Barzakh* of the righteous will undoubtedly be more vivid, and according to tradition the righteous shall make progress even in that state.

As I have said, the concept of time and space, as we understand, cannot be applicable to the next world. Mention is made of time in the Holy Quran as:

“The fire. They are brought before it (every) morning and evening, and on the day when the hour comes to pass.” (40:46)

Do the words “morning and evening” mean regularly at set intervals? Perhaps it is a figurative way of describing the situation because morning and evening are possible only with the sun and the earth unless *Barzakh* is intended to be halfway between what is in the “hereafter” and what they are familiar with in the world that they left behind. People have died and passed on to *Barzakh* from the day the human race appeared on the earth, the process will end with Resurrection. Temporally a different time interval takes place for each dead person. Can we assume that the reorientation of the *Nafs* in *Barzakh* takes place simultaneously for everybody? With each person feeling as if he was in *Barzakh* for the same

interval of time as others? If so, the souls would have to be so prepared that each is ready for Resurrection with others simultaneously.

Resurrection

A few words about Resurrection: It is proposed to discuss here the final Resurrection for the entire human race.

The most commonly used name in the Holy Quran is *yaum al-qiyamah* or the “Day of the Great Rising” which occurs seventy times in the Holy Quran. The names indicate the manner of the final outcome, for instance total destruction and rising to a new life; a sweeping of an old order and establishment of a new one. They are described in the Holy Quran as:

“He asks: When is the day of Resurrection? So when the sight is confused and the moon becomes dark, and the sun and the moon are brought together, man shall say on that day, whither to flee? No! There is no refuge! With thy Lord on that day is the place of rest. Man will that day be informed of what he sent before and what he put off. ... Nay, but you love the present life, and neglect the Hereafter. (Some) faces that day will be bright, looking to their Lord. And (other) faces that day will be gloomy, knowing that a great disaster will be made to befall them.” (75: 6–13, 20–25)

Allah (SWT) says:

“On the day when the earth shall be changed into a different earth and the heavens as well.” (14:48)

It is clear from these verses, and there are many more, that it will be a new creation altogether. Electrons and protons, the building blocks of the universe, shall be no more because the *Nafs* or the soul has no use for them. The Holy Quran has clearly said that it shall be a new body altogether. The human beings at Resurrection are called the “likes” of those at present:

“Do they not consider that Allah Who created the heavens and the earth is able to create their likes.” (17:99) ■

To be continued.

Freedom of Religion in Islam and Christianity

Speech at the Ahmadiyya Convention, Columbus, Ohio, August 2000

by Muhammad Sadiq (Barry Q. White)

Tonight I want to talk about religious freedom in Islam and Christianity. Today, in most cases, the followers of Christianity grant Muslims and followers of other religions religious freedom. There are, however, some glaring exceptions in places like Bosnia and Kosovo, where to be a Muslim was often a death sentence as the Christian orthodox Serbs waged their war of ethnic cleansing. This is reminiscent of another Christian onslaught against religious freedom — the singling out of Jews for slaughter during the German Nazi era.

Today, in this country, the U.S.A., *al-hamdu lillah*, we have religious freedom so that I, as a former Christian, can leave that religion of the majority, convert to Islam and stand in front of you and criticize Christianity. May Allah bless the Americans and others who have produced such an environment of tolerance, and may it continue in this land.

In the lands of Islam today, we also find freedom of religion for Christians and other non-Muslims, for the most part. Yet in stark contrast is the way many Muslim states treat the freedom of Ahmadi Muslims. In Pakistan, for instance, the government declared Ahmadi to be non-Muslims in 1974 and imposed an anti-Ahmadi ordinance in 1984. The Pakistan Penal Code prescribes imprisonment and fines for any Ahmadi who merely asserts that he is a Muslim. You will not find any Christian nation treating Christian minorities in this way in these modern times.

Nevertheless, throughout most of history, Muslims have respected the religious freedom of Muslim minority groups and other religious groups. When Muslim armies conquered non-Muslim lands, the inhabitants were allowed to retain their religious beliefs and practise their faith whether it was Jerusalem, the Persian empire, the Byzantine empire or the Baltic lands. In all these lands there are surviving communities today of religious groups of centuries ago. The existence of the Christian Copts in Egypt is an example. If the old propaganda, that

Muslims converted by the sword, had been true, how could these centuries-old communities have survived?

As a Psychology major, I must say that this myth of Islam or the sword was a projection of the Christians' own behaviour on to the Muslims. Projection involves an unconscious perception of someone else having a fault that you yourself have, often when the other person does *not* have the fault. The history of Christianity is full of the denial of religious freedom to other religious groups. Let me read to you what Funk and Wagnells New Encyclopedia (1983, p. 190) has under 'Religious Liberty':

"Soon after Christianity became established as the official religion of the Roman Empire in the 4th century, heresy and heterodoxy became equivalent to *treason*. After the Reformation this condemnation of atypical religious beliefs was *continued* by nations with established Reform churches, and those who disagreed with the established church were punished.

"The colonists immigrating to the New World brought with them the same doctrine of religious intolerance, and in many of the American colonies dissent from the established order of worship was regarded as *sedition*. The Charter of Rhode Island, granted in 1663, is notable for being the *first* to include a declaration of the right of religious liberty."

Thus, you see that from the beginning of Christianity's rise to power until many centuries later, Christianity did not respect religious freedom. The philosophy they had was that their own particular form of Christianity was the only true religion and that it was their religious duty to *force* people to accept their religious beliefs because it was for their own good. Christians wanted to save heretics and dissidents from the eternal fires of hell that they believed would be the fate of those who chose a religious path other than their own. They also greatly feared what they saw as the satanic influence heretics would exert on the believers. Thus the bodies and minds of heretics were tortured and they were killed to save their souls or protect the souls of others. It was this kind of mentality that led to the expulsion of the Muslims and Jews or their conversion in the 15th century Spain and to the notorious Spanish Inquisition. It is telling to note that there is no sizeable Muslim community that survived this period as did

the Christian Copts survive the Muslim conquest of Egypt.

A good comparison of the historical treatment of religious freedom by Christians and Muslims is the treatment of Jews. Dr. Mark R. Cohen, Professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University, has written an interesting book on this entitled *Under Crescent and Cross — The Jews in the Middle East*. In his book he writes:

“When all is said and done, however, the historical evidence indicates that the Jews of Islam, especially during the formative and classical centuries (up to the thirteenth century), experienced much less persecution than did the Jews of Christendom.” (p. xix)

In a note he adds that after the thirteenth century there was a decline in the Jewish fortunes in Islamic lands but that this was just part of the general decline in the fortunes of the Muslims of that period.

Turning to Christianity he writes:

“In Europe, the period beginning with the first Crusade witnessed recurrent acts of violence directed against Jews *per se*. Christians came to believe that Jews murdered Christian children and extracted their blood for ritual or magical purposes. The Jewish moneylenders became the object of intense Christian hatred. Jewish converts to Christianity were suspect; in Spain, especially, this led to the infamous Spanish inquisition. In addition, entire Jewish communities were expelled from medieval Christian states. None of these excesses, however, seem to have a counterpart in Islam.” (p. 4)

He points out that Jews often were subject to mass or collective punishment in Christian lands for the alleged or actual acts of individuals. Also there were “mob assaults” on entire Jewish communities because one Jew offended the Christians. Dr. Cohen declares that this type of persecution in Muslim lands was “extremely rare”.

He also writes that Christians sometimes forced Jewish children to convert to Christianity and that this practice was *unknown among Muslims*. He charges that Christians, at times, forced Jews to convert or exiled them and conducted mass burnings of the Torah. Again Dr. Cohen notes that Muslims were not guilty of such intolerant behaviour.

Muslims historically have respected freedom of religion *much more* than Christians have. Muslims

have not been perfect in this regard nor have Christians always been intolerant. One cannot expect perfection in any religious group because religions are composed of human beings who will rise and fall around the standards of their religion. Nevertheless, it is clear that *historically* Muslims have honored religious liberty *much more* than Christians. This fact leads us to ask *why* has there been this difference.

I would say that one of the major reasons for this difference is the influence of the Bible and the Quran on their followers.

What does the Bible say about religious freedom? *Nothing, absolutely nothing!* The Bible does not give any guidance as to how Christians should respect the rights of others to believe as they wish and to practise that belief. I checked a book entitled *Where to find it in the Bible* by Ken Anderson. It deals with “over 3,700 contemporary topics”, yet there is no reference cited in this book about religious freedom, as I have defined it.

The Bible *does* tell its followers to love their neighbors as themselves, but how is this love for one’s fellow neighbor expressed when he believes in a religion other than one’s own? Christians have often thought that to love one’s neighbor meant to force him to believe as they believed, even if it meant torturing or even killing him. They have interpreted this love as allowing them to hang and burn at the stake religious dissidents who they feared would contaminate the rest of society with their heresy. The failure of the Bible to deal specifically with religious freedom doomed Christians to make grievous errors in their treatment of religious differences.

The Quran, on the other hand, provided clear guidance on religious freedom and thus the Muslims were able, for most of their history, to avoid the errors and injustices committed by the Christians in this area.

First, the Quran often tells the reader to “think”, “reflect”, “ponder”, “understand”. The Quran makes Islam into a thinking person’s religion. We are *supposed* to think. We are told by the Quran not to follow “lords other than Allah” by blindly following religious scholars and priests. We are told that we should not follow what our fathers followed if they had “no sense”.

In chapter 2, verse 256, it is made very clear:

“There is no compulsion in religion.”

This has been a great guide for the Muslims regarding freedom of religion. Muslim could not say, Well, since Islam is true, it is our duty to force people to

accept Islam for their own good and protect society from those who disbelieve in Islam by isolating, exiling or punishing them. *No!* The Quran tells us that people must think for themselves and their religious convictions must be respected, and that Allah and not man will judge religious differences. How marvellous that a book in the 7th century C.E., surrounded by universal religious intolerance, should proclaim these progressive and enlightened principles! Just another sign of the Divine origin of the Holy Quran! *Praise be to Allah!*

“There is no compulsion in religion” proclaims the Quran. This means, among other things, that no one can be forced to accept a particular religion. It also means that if a Muslim decides to leave Islam, he is allowed to do so without punishment from Muslims. The Quran tells us to think for ourselves, not blindly follow any man in religion and that no one should force us to believe other than how we wish. The Quran respects our intellects and this is what Muslims should do also, when a man accepts Islam, Christianity or any other religion. He or she should be respected! When a Muslim comes to lose faith in Islam and leave his religion, this act of his intellect should be respected also, however painful it be to Muslims. It is inconsistent to honor a man’s judgment to accept Islam but not to deny it after accepting it. It also makes for hypocrites: people who don’t believe in Islam but stay in it to avoid punishment. Do we want such people in Islam? No!

That the commandment of the Quran that “there is no compulsion in religion” applies to Ahmadis, too, is shown by chapter 4, verse 94:

“O you who believe, when you go forth (to fight) in Allah’s way, make investigation, and say not to anyone who offers you salutation, ‘Thou art not a believer’.”

Where in the Quran can mainstream Muslims find any justification for taking Allah’s place and deciding who is a Muslim and who is not?

I will end this talk by noting another reference in the Quran that shows the extent of the Quran’s dedication to religious freedom. A Muslim brother asked me, What other religion tells us to protect the houses of worship of other religions? He was referring to chapter 2, verse 193:

“And fight them until there is no persecution and religion is only for Allah”

and chapter 22, verse 40:

“And if Allah did not repel some people by others, cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allah’s name is much remembered would have been pulled down.”

Thus, Muslims fought not only for their *own* religious freedom but for the freedom of Christians and Jews and *all* others. History tells us that the early Muslims, in their wars, respected all houses of worship, even monasteries and their inhabitants.

The different historical treatment of religious rights and freedom by Christians and Muslims was largely influenced, I believe, by the difference between the Bible and the Quran. Today’s Western tolerance of religion does not come from the Bible, but from other sources. The Bible just doesn’t address itself to religious freedom. The Quran does, as I hope I have demonstrated, and there are many other references in the Quran about this that I have not mentioned. May Allah bring the day when Muslims once again follow the Quran on religious freedom with Ahmadis, other Muslim groups and groups outside Islam! ■

Need of Imam of the age

Continued from page 5, Column 1:

(... and the man was entirely) illiterate, not even knowing Urdu. That English official said: ‘If I appoint him as tax-collector, who will decide the cases in his place? I cannot employ him except as an orderly for five rupees.’ In this connection Allah the Most High, too, has said: “Allah knows best where to place His message” [the Quran, 6:124].

Do you think that the man to whom thousands of friends and foes bring questions and objections, and on whom the mantle of vicegerency of prophethood is placed, his status only requires that he should possess a few words of revelation, and even those be without proof? Can his followers and his opponents be satisfied with just this?

I now wish to conclude this writing. If there is any harsh remark in it, then I seek forgiveness from every person and also from my inspired friend, for I have written these few lines with the purest of intentions. I love this beloved friend with my heart and soul and I pray that God may be with him. That is all. ■

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