

“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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The Light

& Islamic Review

July – August 2001

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*Presents
Islam as:*
**PEACEFUL
TOLERANT
RATIONAL
INSPIRING**
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Speeches at the Ahmadiyya Islamic Convention, Columbus, Ohio, August 2001

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احمدیہ انجمن اشاعت اسلام لاہور

◆ *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore Inc., U.S.A.* ◆
1315 Kingsgate Road, Columbus, Ohio, 43221–1504, U.S.A.

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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Editor: Dr. Zahid Aziz. *Format and Design:* The Editor.

Circulation: Mrs. Samina Malik.

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: light@muslim.org or aaiil@aol.com

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

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 and the natural beauty of its principles.

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

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

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

Tolerant: Gives full freedom to everyone to hold and 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.

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 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.

Speech at Islamic Convention, Columbus, August 2001

Human behavior in Islam

by Dr K. Ghafoerkhan, M.D., Suriname

Allah says:

“Whoever does good, whether male or female, and is a believer, We shall certainly make him live a good life, and We shall certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did.” (The Quran, 16:97)

And the Holy Prophet Muhammad says:

“The most perfect of all believers in faith are the best of them in moral excellences and the best of you are the kindest to their wives.”

It is said that man is a social animal. To form individuals into a society requires mutual responsibilities, which may be regulated by the Divine Revelations or mere reason and common sense. The code of behavior among the individuals in a certain society is manifested in social manners, which is different from one society to another.

Islam lays great stress on the social and ethical order of the society. The position of Islam in this respect is not capable of being mistaken or misunderstood. It teaches us, firstly, that the permanent worship of God in all the diversity and variety of actions of human life, is the very meaning of life; and, secondly, that the division of life into two parts, the spiritual and the material, must be bound together, in our consciousness and our action, into **one harmonious entity**.

The conception of “worship” in Islam is different from that in any other religion. In Islam it is not restricted to the purely devotional practices, for example, prayers, fasting, pilgrimage etc., but extends over the whole of man’s practical life as well. If the object of our life as a whole is to be the worship of God, we necessarily must regard this life in the totality of all its aspects, as **one complex moral responsibility**. All our actions, even the ones of seemingly little importance, must be performed as acts of worship; it has to be performed consciously for it constitutes a part of God’s universal plan.

Allah says:

“Surely We created man in the best structure”

followed by:

“and afterwards We reduced him to the lowest of low, with the exception of those who have faith and do good works.” (The Quran, 95:4,5)

In this verse is expressed the doctrine that man is originally good and pure: and furthermore, that disbelief in God and lack of good actions may destroy his original perfection. The Quran tells us that although man has been created in the best of molds and his nature is higher than that of angels, but in order to reach this potential he must submit to God’s guidance and strive to his utmost.

The function of Islamic teachings, therefore, is to work with man’s extremely complex, multi-faceted nature, with its components of body, mind and soul and bring it under **one jurisdiction**, so to speak. Instead of either denying the animal part of man or suppressing it all together, or alternatively allowing it unlimited freedom, Islam directs and channels such needs and desires, so that they can be expressed in a manner which is constructive and beneficial, rather than in a random, uncontrolled manner, which can destroy man and his society. For example, Islam does not condemn or deny man’s sexual need but insists that expressions of human sexuality be limited to a particular use under specified conditions: that is, only in the marital state as part of a total relationship of mutual commitment and responsibility. Again, it takes another basic element of human nature, the desire for gain and material possessions, establishing such limits and directions that will keep the Muslim from losing his perspective and becoming greedy, miserly, self-indulgent or preoccupied with material things. Islam insists, in short, that the human being be truly human, not an animal or a devil, who has lost all sense of perspectives in the pursuit of his uncontrolled, undirected aims and desires. Man may retain or regain that original individual perfection if he consciously realizes God’s Oneness and submits to His laws. Thus, according to Islam, evil is never essential or even original; it is an acquisition of man’s later life, and is due to a misuse of the inborn, positive qualities with which God has endowed every human being. Those qualities are different in every individual, but always potentially perfect in themselves; and their full development is possible

within the period of man's individual life on earth. In this earthly life also, the Islamic teachings definitely asserts we — everyone of us — may reach a full measure of perfection, by developing the positive, already existing, distinguishing qualities, of which our individualities are composed. What the Islamic teachings actually accomplish is to make man into an integrated, unified being, giving his life the form and direction which its Creator wants it to have.

Let us now take a brief look at the qualities and characteristics which Islam enjoins and which it considers essential in an Islamic personality.

First of all a Muslim should be conscious and have fear of God (*taqwa*) to govern all his behavior through acts of worship.

A Muslim should say what he means, refrain from saying what he does not mean, and should say whatever needs to be said to the other's face, rather than behind his back.

His relations with others are not to be superficial, casual or careless, and he is expected to interact with everyone responsibly, sincerely and in a meaningful fashion.

His first task is to fulfill his own obligations to God and to other people, regardless of what others may do, and there if needed, try to change whatever he sees that is wrong and evil, as far as is in his power. He is responsible not only for his own attitudes and actions but for anything else over which he has control or influence in the society and the world around him as well.

Allah says:

“O you who believe, be conscious of God and be with the truthful.” (The Quran, 9:119)

Truthfulness, reliability and honesty, both in character and in behavior, and the keeping of promises, commitments and trusts, are required.

The Islamic society is required to adhere very strictly to justice in all affairs.

All human life is sacred to Muslims, and upholding its sanctity is an Islamic obligation. Killing, except in self-defense in a righteous war, is one of the greatest sins. Life may be taken by the State only after due process of law.

Every Muslim is supposed to resist injustice, tyranny and oppression, both of himself and others, by every means, with his hands, with his tongue, and within his heart, for tyranny and oppression are grave sins and are totally prohibited.

Forgiveness for personal injuries inflicted by others is enjoined. If the injured person chooses not to forgive however, right to retaliation. But care has to be taken that the retaliation does not exceed the injury done and is to be upon the guilty person himself.

Respect for the property and possessions of others, as for one's own is required.

Marriage is very much encouraged, as it provides a permissible and sanctioned outlet for sexual needs. Any form of physical contact outside marriage is prohibited. Adultery, prostitution, homosexuality and homo-marriages are not just personal sins, but also very damaging to the society as a whole.

There must be unity between husband and wife and their relation must be harmonious and perfect. Proper care, maintenance and education of children are strongly stressed.

Obedience, respect and kind treatment of parents, and kindly, responsible relations with relatives, are of the greatest importance. Breaking ties of relationship with kin is disliked.

Helpfulness and kindness in all spheres of life and to all people are enjoined.

Gossiping, backbiting, prying into others' affairs, suspicion, violating others' privacy, are all prohibited.

Kindness to animals and taking care of the environment are prescribed.

The slaughtering of animals must be done swiftly and in a merciful manner.

All kinds of constructive effort for work are encouraged.

To own property, do business and to earn money are all permissible. Money is to be in circulation through useful investment or spending.

Gaining wealth by interest, bribery or gambling is prohibited.

Spending in a reasonable manner on oneself or one's family is permissible.

Generosity and hospitality are strongly enjoined.

Excessive love of wealth or possessions, hoarding, spending for unreasonable luxuries and wastefulness are all prohibited.

Material things are not to become a pre-occupation or one's goal in life.

The right of the poor and distressed on one's wealth is to be remembered.

Enjoyment, in moderation, of God's wholesome gifts of food and drink is permissible. The use of alcohol, intoxicating drugs and pork is prohibited.

Cooperation for doing good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, are obligations.

Muslims of all walks of life must feel a sense of responsibility for the state of their society and its affairs.

A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim: he does him no injustice, nor does he leave him to suffer the injustice of another. And whoever does the needful for his brother, Allah does the needful for him. And whoever removes the distress of a Muslim, Allah removes from him a distress out of the distresses of the Day of Judgment. And whoever covers the fault of a Muslim, Allah covers his faults on the Day of Resurrection.

We should not perform acts of worship as mere rituals but we must try to perform them from the core of our hearts, out of love for our Creator. For we can only benefit from performing these acts of worship when we use it to change and improve our character and our behavior in our daily life. We all know that a person who prays and fasts but does not change his bad behavior nor does he help anyone, his prayers and fasting will not be that successful.

So these are some basic qualities of good Islamic behavior. If we do our best to try to live up to these basic qualities in our daily life I am convinced that we will reach our goal and ultimately, *inshallah*, we will have a community of Muslims living according to human behavior in Islam.

At the end I like to say: Live together, do not turn against one another, make things easy for each other and do not put obstacles in each other's way.

May Allah guide us to the best acts, deeds and best sayings and may He accept our striving to His right path and may He reward and bless all our efforts. *Ameen*. ■

Speech at Islamic Convention, Columbus, August 2001

Why I am a Muslim

by Ibrahim Mohammad, South Africa

Mr. Chairman, hosts, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, allow me first to express my thanks for the privilege and honour that have been conferred upon me. The time at my disposal will permit me to put before you only briefly the reasons: ***Why I am a Muslim!***

If you look with an observant eye in the Universe around you, you will find everything on its move to progress. Everything in its first stage of evolution seems to possess some inherent qualities within it, which it awaits time and opportunity to bring to fruition. It has a prescribed course before it, which being implicitly followed, brings its latent faculties to actuality. A distinct Rule of Law and Obedience thus seem to prevail all around us, and is strictly observed by every atom in Nature. All these various manifestations of Nature depend on the strict observance of the **Law** for their Creation, continued Existence and Fructification. This is **Islam**. In these very terms the Holy Quran defines it:

“Seek they then other than Allah's religion? And to Him submits whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him they will be returned.” — 3:82

“Surely the (true) religion with Allah is Islam...” — 3:18

Man, being part and parcel of the same Nature, every organ of his body follows the Rule of Law and Obedience for their very existence. In other words, they perform their respective functions in complete submission to certain Laws. The very minute they fail to do so brings serious illness or death. Religion, therefore, which will suit man, must be after his own Nature, and so the Quran says:

“So set thy face for Religion, being upright, the nature made by Allah in which He has created men. There is no altering Allah's creation. That is the right religion, but most people know not.” — 30:30

Like everything in Nature, we also have various latent faculties in us. If a mighty oak is concealed in

a little thing like an acorn, then it is well to remember that there are thousands of things concealed in the human frame. If a clot of blood became evolved into a beautiful human frame on the physical plane, it also possesses things of rare beauty to be developed on mental, moral and spiritual planes. If physical growth, out of the genital seed, came only through observance of certain unchangeable laws, mental, moral and spiritual growth also awaits its manifestations when human faculties work under similar laws. To give such laws is the function of the Holy Quran. If to work out hidden faculties of the human mind is the object of religion, then it should enlighten us on the following things:

1) *Human capabilities and capacities.* 2) *The way to work them out.* 3) *Relations between God and man for the accomplishment of the said object.* 4) *Relationship between man and the Nature around him.* 5) *The life after death.*

Islam enlightens us on these subjects and gives rules and regulations required. I can only briefly refer to some of them here.

Human capabilities

The Holy Quran says:

“Certainly We created man in the best of make, then We rendered him of the lowest of the low.”

Man has been given the best of fabric. He can soar to the highest of the high, but he is capable of descending to the lowest degradation. While everything in Nature, beside man, has been given a limited scope of progress man’s area of progress knows no limit.

Philosophy and religion before Islam have done great injustice to humanity. Everywhere man was taken as a personification of every low desire and passion; and the various notions about humanity, obtaining in different climes and times, brought in all kinds of sacrifices, atonement and intermediaries in different religions. The Quran claims that man has been given the best make physically, mentally, morally and spiritually — he is born with a pure nature and is capable of observing all Divine Laws and able to make every possible progress. He, however, has a dark side as well. He is capable of going to “the lowest of the low” if he does not obey the **Law** and do right things.

How to acquire what our birthright gives us, and

avoid the degradation which our error in judgment or wrong discretion creates in us, has been clearly laid down in the verse next to the one I have just quoted. It says: *Those who believe in Divine Laws and act upon them will see a reward which will never be cut off, i.e. everlasting and constantly progressing.* The true Religion, for me, should lay down before us such rules and regulations, which, when acted upon, must bring our hidden faculties to fruition.

The way to work out these capabilities

The true knowledge of our capabilities lies with our Lord, the Creator of Nature, and to Him we should look for our guidance. In this respect the Holy Quran says: “*On Him lies the guidance of the right path*”. If such is our Nature — a repository of innumerable beautiful faculties, a simple belief in this or that dogma will not work out our hidden power. My mere belief in the skill of a physician cannot cure even my headache. The only remedy lies in a good prescription from the doctor and nothing but acting on the prescription will restore my health. Likewise therefore, complete submission to Divine Laws, given to us for our upliftment, is the key of all success. In order to create in us an aptitude to observe the Law strictly, man is in need of certain lessons and exercises of discipline. He must learn how to avoid sin or going against the Law. The best way to create in us that nature is to create in us the habit of giving instead of taking. If I have learnt the habit of parting with my own possessions and giving it to others in charity, I am not likely to rob others of their possessions. Similarly, eatables, drinks and sensual instincts, or in one word, our various appetites, move our activities. And if we move in a wrong direction and gratify our desires with things which do not belong to us, or which we have got no right to use, we commit wrong. But if a person knows how to abstain from the use of even his own things when his appetites are excited, it is less likely that he will then go after the things of others. This self-discipline we achieve through the exercises which were given to us in the form of what are called the “Five Pillars of Islam”, i.e.

1. *The Declaration of our Faith in the Most High Allah and the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH).*
2. *Prayer.*
3. *Fasting.*
4. *Alms giving.*
5. *Pilgrimage.*

Relation between God and man

Our knowledge or conception of God has much to do in the moulding of our character. We know very little of the Divine Being and yet we feel that there is some Great Mysterious Power at work behind the Universe — a Power unimaginable, inconceivable — and yet its existence is proved by the unchangeable Laws with which it rules every atom in the universe, and the penalties it inflicts on any breaching of those Laws. What little we know of this Great Power, comes from our knowledge of those Laws which bring everything in Nature into subjection. And if we tried to clothe this Unseen Power with distinct attributes, it would be through our knowledge of those Laws. For example, we find laws working through various minor laws of specialization and collocation in every stage of evolution from ethereal complexity up to the human organism. Things created are sustained and brought to their final perfection, being looked after in every intermediary stage of evolution under a perfect system of Laws and Regulations. They could be summed up under three names, that is to say: *The Law of Creation, the Law of Sustenance and the Law of Evolution.*

Now if the Unseen Power I am speaking of is accepted as the Active Entity responsible for these Laws I would give this Unseen Power the attributes of **Creator, Sustainer** and **Evolver** of the various worlds around us. And if we want one word to convey these three ideas, then the Arabic word *Rabb-ul-'Alameen* in the first chapter of the Quran, supplies us with it. We therefore have every right to call the Great Mysterious Power *Rabb-ul-'Alameen* because we derive the name from the Laws and forces of Nature we observe so clearly around us. In the Holy Quran *Rabb* means One Who Creates, Nourishes, Maintains and Who, Creating in us various capacities, supplies us with the necessary wherewithal to bring them up to development. The word in the last sense means Evolver, Who not only works out our hidden powers, but also arranges to meet the needs of all the stages up to perfection. But for this we do need many things which should exist before we come into existence, as their existence is necessary for our existence on this earth. We do need the light and heat of the sun and the moon, the air, the rain and many other things; and He Who is *Rabb-ul-'Alameen* comes to provide all our needs before such needs come into existence. We therefore are informed of the Divine the attributes of *Ar-*

Rahman, The Beneficent; *Ar-Raheem*, The Merciful; and *Maliki-yaum-id-deen*, The Master of the Day of Requital. *Rahman* refers to the Beneficent Lord, whose bounties are unlimited which come to us without any desert or merit on our part. *Rahman*, in short, is that merciful God who shows His Mercy to us without compensation. *Raheem* is the One who gives a hundred or thousand fold of reward to one good action on our part. The attributes of *Rahman* and *Raheem* refer to two different kinds of mercy; one shown out of grace and not in consideration or reward of anything; while the Mercy of *Raheem* finds its exhibition in reward of human actions. We have been assured under this third Attribute that our actions will not be fruitless. But at the same time, to make man energetic in life, the same attribute goes to warn him against an inactive life.

Then comes the fourth Attribute, *Maliki-yaum-id-deen*, the Owner of the Day of Judgment, and the Master of the Day of Requital. To keep us within proper limits, we have been reminded of this fourth Attribute. The God of Islam calls Himself Master of the Day of Judgment and not the Judge; because the Judge is bound to administer justice in strict observance of the Law. But one who is Master of the Day of Judgment as well as of creatures to be brought under judgment, cannot be compelled to adopt harsher measures to satisfy the ends of Justice. This fourth attribute suggests the relation of the Owned and the Owner between God and man. An owner cannot afford to punish His belongings unless for correction or rectification in case of error. Therefore, the fourth attribute conveys the idea of love and punishment together. In summing up these four Divine Attributes, it will be found that the God of Islam is All-Mercy, All-Compassion, All-Beneficent, ready to do everything for free, coming to reward a thousand fold for one good action, and only on rare occasions to use His discretion of punishment when it is necessary for our rectification. The relation therefore between God and man is that men must try to imbue themselves with Divine Attributes. If we had no revealed Book and had to find our own God from nature around us, you will find the God of nature to be the same God of Islam.

Life after death

Belief in life after death is an essential article of faith in every religion. It has a most wholesome effect in moulding human character and providing a good check on wickedness even in cases where there is

the least chance of detection. On the other hand, disbelief in accountability for his actions after his death will naturally weaken a man's sense of responsibility. Morality, in the absence of such a belief, will become only a method of securing happiness in life, and merely a matter of expediency. There will be no incentive to the practice of virtue for the sake of virtue, and no person will ever shrink from committing wrong, if it serves his purpose, providing he can avoid public censure. It is the belief in the continuity of the individual personality of every man removed from this world to the next that arouses skepticism. But if birth, death and resurrection may be taken to be nothing more than terms for combination and recombination of various elements and atoms that go to create different organisms, the whole thing becomes clear as it unfolds itself under our daily observation, each year, in the vegetable kingdom.

Death overtakes the tree each autumn, while spring comes to give it new life. Every tree has all its distinctive features restored at this spring resurrection. In winter we find trees stripped of all foliage, flowers and fruits. All their constituent elements become disintegrated, mixing confusedly with the rest of the elemental and atomic world in the Universe. The dry and dead trunks, though still enveloped by the same mass of matter that nourished them in the past spring, can no longer assimilate it since the vivifying principle has gone from them. Then comes the spring, with its showers, and the water from the heavens brings new life to every member of the vegetable kingdom.

A thing once come to life, never meets destruction, as long as the Universe exists. It contains in it inherent qualities that must come to perfection through one or more shapes or stages. Death is but the name of its passing from one stage to another, as is witnessed in the birth of a butterfly from the dead body of the caterpillar. If consciousness, which evolved out of animated matter in the animal kingdom, has evolved into passion in man, it yet has to evolve into high morals, philosophy and spirituality. Materials which are beneficial or deleterious to their growth, surround all created things but there is something that instinctively urges them to assimilate the beneficial and reject that which is injurious. Physically, our body does the same, but mentally we have no such guiding knowledge.

We find that the evolution of consciousness is not dependent on that intelligent constructive ability which we find working so unerringly in the physical building of organism. On the rise of consciousness its existence there, is conspicuous by its absence. We do not possess that instinct by nature, which should now also automatically discriminate between right and wrong ethics, as is witnessed on the physical plane! We do not instinctively nauseate at wrong philosophy as our stomachs nauseate at a fly or some other poisonous matter! We do not by instinct spurn things injurious to our intellect, as our eyes instinctively shut themselves against anything injurious to our sight. Nay, the sublimation of our consciousness into high morality, philosophy and spirituality, badly needs guidance from without. Such guidance I find in the last revealed Word of God, the Holy Quran. It gives us a code wherewith we may work out our self-unfoldment and bring to full fruition all the hidden faculties within ourselves. And because I willingly and consciously submit to this Divine Code, *I am called a Muslim.* ■

Speech at Islamic Convention, Columbus, August 2001

Translation of *Mujaddid-e Azam*

by Akram Ahmad, U.S.A.

*In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.*

I have recited this particular Quranic verse because this is a moment of great thankfulness for me. It is my pleasure and honor to tell you that the English translation of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's biography is well on its way to completion. My intent this morning is to take a few minutes of your time and give you some background into this remarkable biographical work. I would like to provide you with an overview of some of the essential features and qualities of this biography, as well as to share some insights and personal perspectives on the process of translating this work into English.

First of all, as several of you will be aware, this biography is titled *Mujaddid-e-Azam* and it is the

work of the late Dr. Bashaarat Ahmad. Dr. Bashaarat Ahmad had tremendous love for the Holy Quran, and he used to inspire other people with this love by teaching the Holy Quran. He had learned to love and understand the Holy Quran from Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. It greatly distressed him to see that Hazrat Mirza sahib and his views were so grossly misrepresented by opponents and detractors, as well as by the faction that had split off and initiated the institution of *khilafat*. Therefore he resolved to do his best to set right this state of affairs by writing a truly accurate and comprehensive biography of his teacher, Hazrat Mirza sahib. However, Dr. Bashaarat Ahmad had grown old and physically infirm. Despite the odds that were against him, he put forth an extraordinary effort. It was quite evident that God was granting him strength to accomplish this task. Hence Dr. Bashaarat Ahmad composed the biography which contains a total of one thousand seven hundred and fifty one pages! Once the third and final volume had been completed, Allah summoned him to Himself, to give this devoted servant a great reward. Hence Dr. Bashaarat Ahmad passed away the same year that this biographical work was completed by him.

The title of this biography, *Mujaddid-e-Azam*, literally means "The Great Reformer". *Mujaddid-e-Azam* was written in the Urdu language, and it is comprised of three volumes.

The first volume contains 736 pages, and covers Hazrat Mirza sahib's life from his birth to the year 1900. Each chapter of this volume roughly corresponds to a major event in his life. This volume is currently being translated by Dr. Hamid Rahman.

The second volume contains 655 pages, and covers Hazrat Mirza sahib's life from the year 1900 to the end of his life. Like the first volume, each chapter of this volume also corresponds, approximately, to a major event in his life. In addition, out of the eighty chapters in this volume, ten are devoted to providing the reader with insights into the moral qualities of Hazrat Mirza sahib. It has been my singular honor to have worked on translating this volume. This work was completed in December of the year 2000 and, since then, I have been reviewing and proofreading that translation. The work of revision is about 90 percent complete.

The third volume contains 360 pages. This volume presents a detailed summary and review of the achievements and religious services rendered by

Hazrat Mirza sahib, over the span of his life. This volume was translated by Mrs. Zainib Ahmad and Sister Sarah Ahmad. This work is complete, and it is currently being reviewed and proofread. Let me also mention that this volume is also being made available at our Ahmadiyya website that is maintained by Dr. Zahid Aziz.

Having given you an overview of this biographical work, *Mujaddid-e-Azam*, I will now turn to some of its salient features.

One remark that I have heard from several people who have read *Mujaddid-e-Azam* is that it transports the reader to the era of Hazrat Mirza sahib. In part, this is no doubt tied to the fact that the biographer (Dr. Bashaarat Ahmad) was a close disciple of Hazrat Mirza sahib. Hence, this biography is a first-hand account of the life and times of Hazrat Mirza sahib.

Another quality of the original Urdu biography is that it is highly readable and accessible. Far from being a dry recitation of facts, *Mujaddid-e-Azam* has been written in a very engaging and conversational style. Like my colleague translators, I have tried hard to capture this readable style in the translation process. The readers of these translations shall *Insha'Allah* be the best judges to decide if we have succeeded in our goal.

Going hand in hand with the quality of being very readable is the quality of *Mujaddid-e-Azam* that it is a very powerful and compelling narrative. Hence a sentiment that is shared by many who have read *Mujaddid-e-Azam* is that learning about the life and work of Hazrat Mirza sahib, from the pages of this biography, led them to embrace the ideals of the Ahmadiyya Movement.

Another feature of *Mujaddid-e-Azam* is that, in addition to being packed with anecdotes from the life of Hazrat Mirza sahib, it contains an abundance of excerpts from scores of his religious works. This is a quality that I personally find very appealing, because it gives the reader an excellent flavor of all the various religious works of Hazrat Mirza sahib, in a consolidated form.

Yet another quality of *Mujaddid-e-Azam* is that exaggerations are absent from this work. In other words, the entire narrative is founded in historical facts, and thus there is no revisionism that is sometimes unfortunately attendant on works of history and biography. The very great religious saint

and reformer that Hazrat Mirza sahib undoubtedly was, there is not any needless glorification to be found in this biography. Instead, one of the goals of *Mujaddid-e-Azam* is to provide the reader with glimpses into his life, set amid the backdrop of historical events.

Finally, I would like to share with you some insights and personal perspectives on the process of translating this work into the English language.

In 1993, my brother-in-law, Dr. Hamid Rahman, brought my attention to the fact that the second volume of *Mujaddid-e-Azam* needed to be translated into English. As such, I am extremely grateful to him. Hence I began the work of translating the second volume of *Mujaddid-e-Azam*, back in the year 1993. Since that time when I embarked upon this task, I have received encouragement from many people. After about seven years, Allah gave me the strength to complete this translation in December of the year 2000. Over a period of one-half year, since December of 2000, I have been reviewing and proofreading the translation. As I mentioned earlier, *Alhamdulillah*, this work of revision is about 90 percent complete.

Somebody once asked me if I found this work interesting and engaging. I gave them a perfunctory answer, saying “Oh yes, of course, it’s very interesting work”. Since that incident, I have reflected on this and can candidly tell you that this work is easily the most creative endeavor that I have ever undertaken in my life.

Let me add that the Ahmadi children who are growing up here now will most likely be able to read only those books that are written in the English language. As such, these English translations of *Mujaddid-e-Azam* will *Insha’Allah* serve as valuable reading material for the children of our community. The next generation of Ahmadiis will thereby be able to find accurate information regarding the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, as well as learn about the philosophy and true objectives of the Ahmadiyya Movement. It is my wish, it is my earnest wish, that each one of you will hopefully get the opportunity to read each of the three volumes which comprise *Mujaddid-e-Azam*, either in the original Urdu format, or via their translations into English.

As you all know, English is the most widely used language in the world. As such, it is my earnest wish that many in the world will *Insha’Allah* get the chance to read the biography of Hazrat Mirza sahib,

and perhaps thereby be attracted to the message which Hazrat Mirza sahib continued to propagate till the last breath of his life. His message, of course, being the true teachings of Islam, as practised by his and our master, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him).

As many of you are aware, the teachings and life events of Hazrat Mirza sahib have been egregiously misrepresented to the unaware public, over the years, by detractors and opponents of Hazrat Mirza sahib. Since this biography presents the life of Hazrat Mirza sahib, as well as his religious works in a nutshell, it can therefore be reasonably hoped that this biography will *Insha’Allah* contribute towards clearing up the false charges and allegations against him. May Allah cause this work to serve as an instrument in this regard!

I would like to leave you by reading before you an excerpt which I selected from the English translation of this biographical work, *Mujaddid-e-Azam*. Hazrat Mirza sahib published a proclamation in September of 1903 regarding the publication of the magazine called *The Review of Religions*. Part of that excerpt is as follows:

“Therefore you should rely on God completely and exert yourselves with great dedication, determination, and valor. This is the time to serve God. There comes a time when a mountain of gold spent in His way cannot match a penny that is spent in these times. ... It is clear that you cannot love two things at the same time, and it is impossible for you to love wealth and God at the same time. You can love only one of these two. Hence, fortunate is the person who harbors love for God. ... Do not think that you are doing any favor to God or to His appointed servant by sacrificing a part of your wealth, or by rendering a service in His way. Rather, this is a blessing from Him that He calls you to render this service. I say this unequivocally that even if all of you abandon me and do not participate in assisting me, God shall raise a nation that shall serve Allah and His cause. You should truly believe that this affair is from the heavens, and that the services that you render are in fact for your own good. I dread the prospect that arrogance may enter your hearts, and that negligence from duty might find a place in

your minds. I say to you again and again that God does not stand in need of your services. Instead, it is His favor to you that He has given you the opportunity to serve Him.” ■

The Onward March of Ahmadiyya Teachings

By Reza Ghafoerkhan, Holland/Suriname

Wa qul jā'a-l-haqqu wa zahaqa-l-bâtil. Inna-l-bâtila kâna zahûqâ.

Al-hamdu li-llâh. All praise is due to Allah, Who granted me the opportunity to be present here with you today. We pray He will shower His blessings on this auspicious occasion and make this convention a resounding success. *In-shâ'a-llâh.*

I've just recited a verse from the Holy Qur'ân, of which the translation reads: “And say: The Truth has come and falsehood vanished. Surely falsehood is ever bound to vanish.”

In this verse Allâh has laid down His law, that falsehood is a thing, which has to disappear eventually. The reason for this we can understand from the way in which Allâh has created this universe. When Allâh creates a thing, He will nourish and guide it from a lower or imperfect state towards a higher or perfect state. If we consider falsehood to be an imperfect state and truth to be a perfect state, then this attribute of Allâh of nourishing to perfection will also apply to this. This means that falsehood in one way or another has to vanish and the truth has to be established.

In order to establish the truth of Islam, Allâh has raised at times some of those perfect ones in the Muslim community, who were charged with this particular task, and Allâh will keep on doing this. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was one of those chosen men, and his Movement, i.e. the Ahmadiyya Movement, has been for more than a hundred years engaged in this work of spreading the true teachings of Islam and correcting falsehoods. One may ask how can you be so sure that the teachings that the Ahmadiyya Movement is spreading in the world are in fact correct, because every group claims to be the possessor of the truth. For the answer to this I can

refer to the above-mentioned verse, which says that Allâh in some way will make the truth prevail, because besides the raising of reformers in Islam, Allâh also makes use of other means to bring about the truth. One of these means is that the human mind is never satisfied with uncleared and unclarified questions and doubts, and man is from nature always searching and investigating to find out the truth. Due to this fact we can see now some new discoveries and changes of views in the world, which confirms the Ahmadiyya thoughts and beliefs. I will give some examples.

From an article of a Dutch newspaper, of May this year, I will cite some extracts:

“While the Christian Churches are commemorating Jesus' ascension tomorrow, pilgrims in the Indian state of Kashmir are paying a visit to his tomb. The Jesus who didn't die on the cross, traveled according to the survival theory together with his mother to India. Two footprints are engraved in a stone next to the tomb, with stigma [signs of wounds]. ... In search for an answer it appears that besides Islam, also Hinduism and Buddhism know the story of Jesus in India. Even Christian (apocryphal) scriptures mention his abiding in Central Asia. ...”

The article further provides other historical evidences of Jesus' living in India. So we see that the theory of Jesus' journey to India is taken more and more seriously and this confirms the view of the Ahmadiyya Movement, which has been proclaiming this theory from the very beginning of its existence.

Now another example. On the World Wide Web we can find a site named 'Ask the Imam'. On this site one can ask an Islamic scholar various questions on Islamic subjects. A certain person asked a question about the celebration of the birthday of the Holy Prophet. As we all know, some Muslims are celebrating this birthday very big, so much so that a certain clergy declared on Dutch television that this feast “is the most important feast for the Muslims”. I will give some extracts of the answer of this scholar of the Web site 'Ask the Imam', a certain mufti Ebrahim Desai. He says:

“The establishment of ceremonial gatherings under the banner of *Éid-un-Nabee* is prohibited according to the Shariâh.

Attaching importance and significance to such functions is purely *Bid'áh* and an innovation in Deen, because neither did *Rasulullah* himself indulge in it, nor did the illustrious *Khulafaa-e-Raashideen* organise such functions. ... By innovating such practices, one is indirectly suggesting that *Rasulullah* concealed from the *Ummah*, aspects of *Deen* that were of immense benefit to it. How can this be possible when Allah *Ta'ala* himself categorically declares that He perfected this religion for us and completed His favour upon us, which means that *Rasulullah* conveyed every single aspect of *Deen* to the *Ummah*. ... If a careful and proper dissection of this *Éid-e-Meelad-un-Nabee* is made, it will be found that, apart from it being a manifestation of *Bid'áh*, it also encompasses other evils ... The most abhorring and shocking evils in these functions are the acts of *shirk* that take place. With hollow claims of *Hubbe-Rasul* (love for *Rasulullah*) entreaties and supplications are made to beings other than Allah, namely to *Ambiyaa* and *Auliaa-e-Kiraam*. The exponents of *Éid-e-Meelad-un-Nabee* also blindly acknowledge and believe that *Rasulullah* comes to this function and due to this belief, they stand up in respect and veneration to welcome him. This belief is a blatant fabrication and a sign of compound ignorance. The true and down to earth fact is that *Rasulullah* does not arrive at any *Éid-e-Meelad-un-Nabee* function and that he is in his *Rawdha-e-Mubarak* (grave) at *Madinah Munawwarah* and will emerge from it at the onset of *Yawmul-Qiyaamah*.”

This view is very much in accordance with Ahmadi views. This mufti also expresses opinions on other questions, which we can agree which. For instance, about the belief that our Prophet is omnipresent, he says:

“*Haazir* (Omnipresent) and *Naazir* (Omni-seeing) are the sole attributes of Allah. No human being including our *Nabiy* can be *Haazir* and *Naazir*. Our beloved *Rasul* is resting in *Madinah Munawwarah*. He informed us that when anyone sends *Salaams* to him, the angels convey the *Salaam* to him there.”

And about the ceremonies relating to the death of a person, the mufti states that there are no ceremonies consisting of ten days or forty days, but only of three days. So, although almost all of the ideas of this mufti are very, what we call, Sunni-like, yet we can detect in these a trace of Ahmadi thoughts.

I will give now another example. There is a book titled *The Prophet's Manner of Performing Prayers*. This book has been published by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Da'wah and Guidance of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and so this book is indeed a very official work. It is very surprising to see that the form of the Muslim prayer as described in this book, is almost the same as the way in which an Ahmadi performs his prayers. For instance, this book rejects the *niyyat* (intention) in spoken words before the prayer, the number of *sunnat rak'ahs* or non-obligatory *rak'ahs* is exactly the same, namely twelve *rak'ahs*, and the book mentions no *du'a* at all when the prayer has finished, but instead only *zikr*. Of course, these details are of no importance, but there are even Muslims who tend to criticize other Muslims on the basis of these futile details.

I will give now a last example. On the World Wide Web we can find a site named 'religious tolerance.org', and it contains an article titled *The Virgin Birth of Jesus: Fact or Fable*. This comprehensive article raises serious doubts about the virgin conception of the prophet Jesus. I will cite some passages:

“Religious liberals tend to approach passages in the Bible differently than do conservatives. Liberals do not view the Bible as inerrant; rather they consider the Christian Scriptures (New Testament) to be written by creative authors, often promoting the specific beliefs of their branch of the Christian movement. Liberals study verses in the light of non-Biblical Jewish and Christian writings, the culture of the time, the beliefs of surrounding Pagan societies, the evolving beliefs of the various Jesus movements, etc. Most liberals do not believe in the doctrine of the virgin birth. This is not a recent development, as evidenced by the quote by Thomas Jefferson at the top of this essay. ...”

And further on it concludes:

“In conclusion the most likely scenario, as interpreted by many liberal Christians is:

The writer(s) of the Gospel of Q, circa 50 CE, seem to have been unaware of the virgin birth. Paul (who was executed about 64 CE) was similarly unaware. The writer of the Gospel of Mark, circa 70 CE, hadn't heard of it either. If any of the above writers knew of a virgin birth, they would almost certainly have realized that it was a miraculous event and would have incorporated it into their writings. Sometime between 70 and 90 CE, a myth of the virgin birth was invented, probably to strengthen the authority of Jesus' teachings by claiming that his birth was miraculous. ... By the 90's, the belief was widespread. The authors of Luke and Matthew incorporated it into their Gospels. The writer(s) of the Gospel of John likely knew of the story, but rejected it as being a false teaching that was not believed by his faith group within Christianity.”

So far the quotation. It is noteworthy that many of the arguments and conclusions in this article can also be found in the book *Jesus in Heaven on Earth* written by Khwaja Nazir Ahmad.

So the above raised question of how one can be sure that the Ahmadiyya beliefs are in fact correct has been answered. Different people come independently on the basis of their own research and investigation, their own reason and common sense to the same conclusions. One cannot assume that these people are all influenced by Ahmadiyya literature, but on the other hand one cannot say with absolute certainty that they are not influenced. This fact makes it very clear how important the work of the Ahmadiyya Movement is. We also see that despite the fact that the Movement has already done a tremendous amount of work, the results are still very thin and changes are brought about only very laboriously and slowly. One can compare this for example with the production of perfume. It really takes an enormous amount of flowers to produce just one single drop of perfume. Similarly we have to write, translate and publish a copious amount of books, magazines, articles etc. to cause just a small change in the world. But as I have shown from the above-mentioned examples, these changes really do occur in the world and although these changes are very small, they are indeed visible and undeniable.

And the fact that we are seeing these changes with our own eyes really does encourage and inspire us to carry on with this very important task of the propagation of Islam. This also makes us understand that if we don't dedicate all of our time and property for this cause, nothing can be achieved, because if a lot of work only yields a small result, then how can small efforts be of any use?

As I have some time left, I will tell something about reformation. Reformation, of which the meaning is 'to cause a positive and permanent change', in my opinion takes place at three levels. The first level of reformation is the reformation of the individual. This means that a person should always be liable of accepting the fact that he is following wrong beliefs, traditions and customs, and that he is willing to reform himself by adopting better and improved beliefs and customs. The second level of reformation is the reformation of a people, a nation or a community. This means that the leading and influential figures of a community should convey to their people new ideas and thoughts, and should accordingly show broad-mindedness and tolerance towards the thoughts and ideas of other individuals. The third level of reformation is the reformation of the world. For this goal a certain community tries to spread new, better and improved ideas and thoughts in the world by means of peaceful preaching and missionary work and convincing them by means of logical and reasonable arguments intertwined with true spiritualism.

It is important to state that these levels are interrelated, i.e. one level cannot be attained without attaining the previous. If we really want to cause a change in the world, we ourselves should be able to reform ourselves both as individuals as well as a group. It is a fact that if a person wants to convey the message of Islam to other people, that he should act upon the matters which he is preaching. The Holy Qur'ân refers to this when it says: “O you who believe, why say you that which you do not? It is most hateful in the sight of Allâh that you say that which you do not” (61:2,3). For example, a miser cannot preach charity; a dirty and filthy person is not able to preach purity; a haughty person is not capable of teaching us humility and it is impossible that a troublemaker proclaims peace and reconciliation. Similarly, a narrow-minded and intolerant person, who is reluctant to reform himself, leaving wrong ideas and traditions, is not capable of performing the great task of the reformation of the world.

Reformation of ourselves means also that we must continue exploring new fields, study and examine the new questions and demands of the modern time and showing while doing this a great deal of open-mindedness and tolerance. The Ahmadiyya Movement has had numerous renowned scholars who have done very valuable work. But man has been granted only a short life, and despite a lifetime dedication, at a certain point they were called up by their Creator, and so we have to go further from where these men have stopped. This reminds me of certain words of the world famous physicist James Isaac Newton. I don't know the exact words, but he said something like: "The reason why I was able to look so far, is because I was standing on the shoulders of giants." When we think of 'giants' in our Movement, the first names which cross our minds are the names of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Maulana Muhammad Ali and Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din. They have laid down the foundation of our Movement and we should climb on the shoulders of these 'giants' and look into the future with a broad-minded and tolerant attitude, which excessively characterized the life of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (may Allāh reward this great soul of Islam richly).

Now I would like to give you some information about the activities of Stichting Ahmadiyya Isha'at-i-Islam situated in the Netherlands.

The main objective of Stichting Ahmadiyya Isha'at-i-Islam is to publish the literature of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement into the Dutch language for the benefit of the Dutch speaking people in the Netherlands, Belgium, Surinam, the Netherland Antilles in the Carribean, and elsewhere. The literature in Dutch language, we have understood from Mr. Ibrahim, President of the South Africa Jama'at, will be of their benefit also, because people in South Africa who are conversant of Afrikaans, the second major language of South Africa, can understand the language or maybe the Dutch publications can be used to produce literature in Afrikaans easily.

So far the Stichting has been able to produce some books. Forthcoming are *Anecdotes from the life of the Holy Prophet* (by M.A. Faruqi), *The Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement — a Survey* (by Dr. Zahid Aziz), *Testimony of the Holy Qur'an* (by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad) and *Table Talk* (by

Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din). After these some major books in Dutch language will be published, such as *The Religion of Islam, A Manual of Hadith* and *Muhammad the Prophet*. In fact, about 25 titles have been translated into Dutch already, which will be checked and printed in the coming years. I am very happy that the Stichting in its search for capable persons has involved me in the translating and printing projects of the valuable literature of our Jama'at.

To keep the publication work going on independently from the donations of our people, which varies very much every year, the Stichting was able to buy the building next to our center in the Hague. Four apartments of this building are rented to others. *Insha Allah*, after some years this will generate enough financial means to do the translating and publication work well planned and continuously and independently from other contributions. The organization could acquire the building with the financial help of our people and a few other organizations.

The ground floor of the building will be our new mosque in the future. Some time in the future or at some occasions like *Eid*, the space on the ground floors of both adjacent buildings will accommodate about 600 persons to perform *salat*.

On the ground floor you will find the Maulana Muhammad Ali Library. Most of the books were donated by Mr. Yahya Keeskamp. Mr. Keeskamp is a Dutch convert to Islam, who became Muslim at the age of 11 years. He is 87 years now and has been a staunch Ahmadi since he went to Indonesia at a young age and met Ahmadi Indonesian stalwarts like Soedewo, the translator of the Holy Quran into Dutch, Djogosogito (Senior) and others.

As for propagation work, the Stichting has got a website in the Dutch language, moslim.org, which is very much attended by students in Holland, Belgium and Surinam. A lot of the information on the moslim.org website of the USA Jama'at is being translated for publication on the Dutch website.

Every week the Stichting is broadcasting 3 hours per week on radio, in Urdu as well in the Dutch language.

So, I have come to the end of my speech. Thank you all for your attention. ■

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