

“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*  
•

# *The Light*

## *& Islamic Review*

**November – December 2001**

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*Presents  
Islam as:*  
**PEACEFUL  
TOLERANT  
RATIONAL  
INSPIRING**  
•

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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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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.

## Crescent over Cross

### *Why I chose Islam over Christianity*

by Hussain Wilson, England

*(The writer of the article below, Mr Hussain Dean Wilson, a university student in England, embraced Islam earlier this year in 2001 at the U.K. Centre of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore in Wembley, London.)*

In my years of searching for an understanding of what God requires of me and what He requires in “true” worship, I have encountered many varied beliefs and doctrines. I have spent many years searching for “the truth” of what is true devotion to God, and the true religion of God. It is not an easy task, as many various religious doctrines all purport themselves to be the “true religion of God”. Many such doctrines produce their own evidence to back their claims up.

I spent a time as a Buddhist. This is after I lost faith in the mainstream Christian religious ideal. I could not understand the doctrine of God’s son and the fact that salvation was only available through God’s Son. This did not make much sense to me.

I was attending a local church called the King’s Church, populated with many “Born Again Christians”. The religious ideal they followed was one that Jesus, the Son of God, was the only one through whom salvation can be attained. All prayer must be thus addressed through “Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ”.

I fell out of favour with that brand of Christianity and spent a time believing nothing, which I did not particularly enjoy. It was at this time that I was reading about Buddhism and a lot of the central doctrines appealed to me. Right Speech, Right Thought, not harming living creatures. For a while I followed Buddhism, and even entertained the notion of going “on retreat” where you join a monastery for a time. But there was one nagging doubt about Buddhism and me. I could understand the principles of reincarnation and cessation of self, but I could not wholly understand the principle of no supreme creator God. Only a God spirit that was in essence nothingness. Complete emptiness. I stopped being a Buddhist and picked up the threads of Christianity I had been living with since birth.

A Christian friend of mine pointed out to me a passage in the Christian Bible about searching for God as if you were searching for gold and that if you keep up your search, all the time, you will find it. I think that has been the most profound and true statement I have encountered anywhere on the search for a religious ideal.

I was brought up by my mother’s belief in God, and that He was everywhere and not necessarily in a church. I grew up in Italy, where God, Jesus, and Mary (Mother of God) play a very important part in all daily affairs and consciousness. My father did not have much of an influence religion wise, so I had the Catholic view and my mother’s view. Two contrasting and sometimes alien to each other’s points on the doctrine of God and the “Celestial Holy Family”. I attended a Catholic primary school and religion was introduced as part of the curriculum as well in infants and junior school. It was taught, on and off, by various visiting monks and priests, depending on the government of the day and its view of religion in school. It was taught as well, unofficially by friends, neighbours and what you hear in the street.

Catholicism appealed to a certain point and it is from this that I formulated the idea that perhaps Jesus was not the *Son* of God, but God himself. Perhaps not to frighten the people of the time God descended from heaven and took on the visage of a man. ... This theory, of course, has holes in it!

My mother’s doctrine of God and religion is that God exists, He had a son, and that you reach God by praying to him. She is a firm believer that you do not need a church to be close to God, as you can find God in anything. The woods, a stream, quietly or even in a crowd. God is everywhere and in every thing.

The Jehovah’s Witnesses came to my door, both during the period that I was a Buddhist and also more recently when I stopped being a Buddhist and was ‘looking into’ Christianity. We engaged in long, and interesting, conversations about God, the universe and all things religious. I was still struggling with the notion of God, Son, Mother and father of both Catholicism and my own mismatched beliefs.

I even contacted the Mormons, The Church of the Later Day Saints. Their doctrine, based upon the Prophet Joseph Smith made some sense to me. They have this religious belief that they are a lost tribe of Israel, who left Israel and sailed across the oceans with God’s help in the manner of both an Angelic

presence and a compass given them by God himself. They found America and set up a colony. Joseph Smith was given a Divine revelation by the Angel of God to find the stone tablets relating their journey across the ocean, as well as the device that acted as a compass. After digging these items up, he led the converts across America to Salt Lake City in Utah, where the Mormon Church was founded.

I did not attend any meetings with the Mormons, but accepted some Bible study, learnt about the church, its beliefs and history but felt that as a branch of Christianity it was not exactly the branch for me.

I have looked at Baptists and understand the basic tenets of their beliefs in baptism as a way to redeem and to be accepted as one of God's flock, but have a lack of total faith in that idea. It is the same with Methodism. I understand the why of not accepting drink, and also how they could have interpreted it from the Bible. There are so many Christian sects, doctrines and variations all based upon the same set of scriptures, finding a 'True Christian Doctrine' is increasingly difficult. I could accept this part of this faith, but not the whole thing. I could accept this from Methodism, this from Baptism. I could accept the dissatisfaction with church structure as expounded by the Presbyterian, Reform and Calvinist (Anabaptist) and Jehovah's Witnesses churches, whereby they advocate a return to the simpler methods of 'church' organisation and worship and an elected council and body of elders from within the congregation — having no official clerics, monks, clergy, priests or hierarchy. I could understand Lutheranism and why it evolved, also orthodox (both Eastern, Russian and Greek). I could understand Evangelism and the need to go forth and spread the word of God, especially as Jesus (peace be upon him) said to go forth and make disciples and to preach the good news of the Kingdom of Heaven.

What I could never accept is that there must be about a thousand different Christian groups all under the banner of 'Protestant', as well as several churches under the heading 'Orthodox' and just one under 'Catholic'.

Catholicism is viewed as the closest church to what Jesus (peace be upon him) was actually trying to communicate to us mortals. Unfortunately that may have been true at the beginning, but so much has been added and altered within the Christian New Testament that the original message has been lost.

Added to that is the church's fascination with making money and rules. I discounted Catholicism as the 'True Church' and continued to search.

The message as God intended it, was given to Moses (pboh), then later it was given to Jesus (pboh). Jesus' message was to a limited amount of people, the sick, the infirm, the needy and was at a time that a strengthening of the message and commandments from God was needed. Therefore, it stands to reason there must be another messenger after Jesus. In Judaism the Messiah is still anxiously awaited, in fact, most Jews have given up with the notion of a Divine messiah and put their faith and trust into the Nation of Israel as the only hope for Salvation and redemption of their people. In Christianity the return of Jesus, the 'Second Coming' is eagerly anticipated. What does this leave? A hope for the return of the Martyred son of God, or the eagerly anticipated arrival of another saviour? But what about the Prophet Muhammad (pboh)?

Whilst I was entertaining the various Christian factions and trying to work out which one was the right one I returned to looking at Islam. I had looked at Islam before, but never in a serious manner. I was always fascinated with the history of Muhammad (pboh), the call to Prophethood as well as the beautiful revelation in the Holy Quran. I had read the Quran before and liked the way that the passages have the ability to sing and to touch one's heart as one is reading — an ability I am sad to say the Christian Bible lacked with me.

When I started to study Islam seriously I discovered that the message of the Quran, unlike the Bible, had never been altered. In all of its years, translations and copies, the same message appeared, with nothing added, altered or removed. This is one indication that the message in the Quran was an important one. Another indicator is that despite many attempts to stamp out the Quran, it has survived. The same can be said for the Christian Bible, but that has been, fundamentally, altered over the passage of 2,000 years. Not so for the Quran.

Is the Quran a message from God? Undoubtedly it must surely be. I strongly believed for a while, and still strongly believe, that God in all His wisdom sent a message to every nation and tribe upon the earth, in their own language, to fit within their own cultures. Unfortunately the message may have got corrupted over time. Some may even have been forgotten, others have died out along with the race or

tribe. Other messages have survived in some form or another, perhaps not the original form, but the message is there. The Annalects of Confucius, the Dharmaphada, Rig Veda, Pali Canon, and of course the Christian Bible and Jewish Torah. Each religion of the world has a fundamental thread running through it, this thread must surely be God inspired!

I thought I was alone in this belief in many prophets for many nations. I thought I was alone in the understanding for the need for a message to the individual nations at the appropriate times. I was amazed to discover that Islam also has these beliefs! Beliefs I thought I was unique in believing! I was also rather amazed to discover that Islam only used the Quran. There are no necessary additional and supplementary writings. Just the plain message of the Quran. I was also amazed to further learn that the Quran of the Algerians is identical to the Quran of the Ethiopians and all of them are identical to that of the Saudi Arabians and Iraqis! I was further amazed to find that, despite politics, there is no difference between a Sunni and a Shia Muslim and that in Islam there is no fractions of the 'Church'. Islam is Islam, the same, world over! Here is a religion that has perfected what Jesus had said. The message of God shall be preached in the Four Corners of the world. A World religion, as often fantasized about, and a world wide message of peace, do not have to be waited for, or anticipated or even a mere fantasy. It is here and has always been here, it is a message revealed in Arabia and collected together into one volume: The Holy Quran.

Islam is not a difficult thing. There are no difficult rules or laws to obey. The rules and laws are the same basic rules that run through every religion of the world and are mostly common sense. There are no priests or bishops giving their own interpretation to the Holy Quran, there is a plain message for all to read and all to understand. The only 'difficulty' is the obligatory prayers and even that is not difficult. It may be used as an excuse by many (even a friend of mine said that he would simply not have the time to pray 5 times a day). Everything in Islam is designed not to bring hardship upon the believer and all it asks for is the total submission to God's will. It has many characteristics of both Catholicism (originally, Catholicism was the submission to the Divine will and plan), same with Judaism (what God wills, shall be) and Christianity. It is a religion of peace and mercy,

compassion and love and one of the few that actually practise the principles it preaches.

One could say, if it is so wonderful, why are we not all Muslims? One could also reason, that if Islam is so peaceable, why is the Middle East so violent? Unfortunately the answer there does not lie in Islam as the cause, but politics like most quarrels and squabbles. As to answer why are we not all Muslims? Perhaps that is because the message is not reaching the people fast enough. For when it does reach the people and they know in their hearts that it is a good and true message, then they instantly become Muslims. Islam is an emerging and fast growing religion in the West. It is the fastest growing religion in America and the second fastest in Europe. People are flocking to Islam and its clear message.

I always had a difficult time accepting Christianity's message. I always had doubts and questions. It preaches a nice message, but that message is buried under the incomprehensibility of the dogma, tradition and practice of each church. There were always things I needed clarification upon and if I got clarification, it would not be upheld by others' view. Islam I found to be clear, concise and without the attached clutter. Not involving politics, it is an easy message to accept and to understand and since converting and accepting Islam I have found I have had no headaches or doctrinal quandaries and queries as to what, how, when and who to believe.

It was with suddenness that I realised I was a Muslim. I had been searching for a long time for a clear, understandable and true religious practice to follow as I was dissatisfied with the melting pot of beliefs and ideas that I had accrued searching. I wanted a label to attach to my religious beliefs, so that I could 'fit in'. I made arrangements through the Muslim Book Depot to study Islam, as at the same time it was, coincidentally, part of my Open University course. It was whilst attending the Mosque at 15 Stanley Avenue (Wembley) that I suddenly realised, talking with Mahmud Shaukat, that the principle beliefs of Islam were the same basic beliefs I also believed in. I remember he said to me that it was not his, or anyone else's opinion that mattered, "no one could rightly say that you, or him, are a Muslim". I remember questioning him further on what a Muslim was, what made a Muslim. After being told I said quite clearly, "so! I'm a Muslim!" I left Stanley Avenue after making

arrangements to spend a week there in May. I thought long and hard about what a Muslim is, Islam and the message of Allah in the Holy Quran. I also thought long and hard about my position in the world and about religion and God in general.

I have been an Evangelical Baptist; a Buddhist; Atheist; Communist (Marxism is now an accepted religious belief in “alternative religion”), primal religions (mainly North American Indian). I have even tried Haitian/Creole Voodoo (Santorica as it is now being called). Mennonite and Calvinist Anabaptist (briefly), non-denominational Christian, and finally a practising Jehovah’s Witness. I have tried most things and there are several I know just were not me. For instance, Judaism, Catholicism (although some aspects of it really attracted me), Hindu and any Chinese religion.

Islam I did not see as an end-of-the-road religion, as there are still aplenty more to choose from if that is the case. What I thought long and hard about was the fact I had finally found a religion that I was 98% comfortable with! I was always a 60% Buddhist, 50% non-denominational Christian and about 80% Jehovah’s Witness. I made a lousy Communist and an even lousier Voodoo practitioner. Islam rests easy with me and I am incredibly comfortable with it. As I travelled home I realised that the extremely long search for a religion was over — I had come home.

What amazed me the most was that in all the time of searching I was already believing, just not practising, what I am now: a Muslim. I have always been a Muslim! I just did not realise it! It has always been the Crescent over the Cross. I always found excuses and holes with the Cross, so far and with Allah’s help, I shall never find fault with the Crescent. ■

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#### Footnotes to the right-hand column →

1. ‘Hazrat’ is a title commonly used in India and Pakistan when referring to a holy personage. People use ‘Hazrat’ when referring to prophets mentioned in the Holy Quran, or the Companions of the Holy Prophet, or the saints of Islam.

2. Died 1111 C.E., he was a master theologian and philosopher, whose writings influenced theology and philosophy in Christian Europe.

3. ‘Sahib’, which means ‘Friend’, is used as an ordinary respectful title in India and Pakistan.

## Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

### *A preliminary introduction*

by Selim Ahmed, England

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born in Qadian, India in 1835 and died in 1908.<sup>1</sup> A saint of Islam is known as a *wali-Ullah*, or ‘Friend of Allah’, and the plural of *wali-Ullah* is *auliya-Allah*. These terms are also abbreviated simply to *wali* and *auliya*.

The phrase *auliya-Allah* occurs in the Holy Quran in 10:62. Throughout history, the saints of Islam have been opposed and sometimes imprisoned or put to death. The books of Imam Al-Ghazzali,<sup>2</sup> for example, were burned by people who regarded themselves as authorities during his lifetime, but after his death they came to see that the faith of Muslims in Islam had been in danger and that he had saved their faith for them by his work. In the same way, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad faced fierce opposition during his lifetime, and the same opposition continues to this day, nearly a century after his death!

There are a number of respects in which Hazrat Mirza Sahib<sup>3</sup> is different from previous saints of Islam, but these differences relate only to his particular spiritual mission. In every essential matter, he resembles previous Muslim saints.

According to the Holy Quran and Hadith (compilations of the sayings and deeds of the Holy Prophet), the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*) was the Last of the Prophets, and it is necessary to understand the fundamental importance of this doctrine and to understand the difference in Islam between a prophet and a saint. In Islamic theology the words *nabi* (‘prophet’) and *rasul* (‘messenger’) have a technical meaning. This *technical* meaning is not the same as their *literal* meanings. The Prophet Muhammad (*sas*) was the Last of the Prophets according to the technical meaning of prophethood in Islamic theology, so that after Muhammad (*sas*) no one can truthfully claim to be a prophet in his own right and no one can bring a new sacred law or bring a new revealed holy scripture.

The problem that arises in the case of the saints of Islam is twofold. Firstly, although they are followers of the Holy Prophet, and are not given any

new sacred law or any new scripture, Allah communicates with them. Some people think that after the Holy Prophet, Allah cannot communicate anything at all to anyone, but it stands proven from the Holy Quran and Hadith that Allah has communicated, and will continue to communicate with non-prophets. Revelation to non-prophets is mentioned in the Holy Quran in 28:7, where Allah conveys a message to the mother of Moses; in 5:111, where revelation is given to the disciples of Jesus (*pbuh*); in 42:51, which refers to Divine communication 'from behind a veil'; and in 12:43, which refers to a true dream granted to Pharaoh. In 10:62-64, the *auliya*-Allah are promised *bushra*, or 'good news' and, according to Hadith, the Holy Prophet explained this verse by saying, "Nothing remains of prophethood except communications of good news" adding that 'communications of good news' (*mubashshirat*) signifies 'True dreams' (*Bukhari*, Book of Interpretation of Dreams, *Mubashshirat*, 91:5). 'Non-prophetic' revelation to saints of Islam is known as *wahy-wilayah* ('revelation to a saint'), or *ilham* ('inspiration') or *muhaddathiyah* ('communication with Allah').

In view of the fact that the Arabic words *nabi* ('prophet') and *rasul* ('messenger') can be understood in a strictly literal way as 'someone who receives Divine communication and uses it to remove un-Islamic concepts which may have crept into Muslim thinking' and 'someone commissioned by Allah', these terms might be applicable to the *auliya* in their literal sense only, but it would certainly be wrong to suggest that they are prophets in the *technical* sense according to Islamic theology. The revelation of a prophet contains the Book and the Law and it is not subordinate to any other revelation. The revelation of a saint does not consist of a Book or a Law and it is subordinate to the Law of Islam. For example, one year, at the end of the month of Ramadan, Hazrat Mirza Sahib received a revelation that the 'Id was on the following day. However, he forbade his followers from declaring that Ramadan had ended until, in accordance with Islamic Law, news was received that the new moon had been sighted.

Secondly, because a Muslim saint attains to a high degree of nobility and similarity to the prophets, and becomes close in spirit to them, one can say that the saint is 'the living image of a prophet', and this has sometimes been expressed by calling them 'prophets' in a metaphorical sense. It is

important to realise that the literal and the metaphorical uses of the words *nabi* and *rasul* do not occur outside certain specific contexts, namely Divine communications to saints of Islam, metaphorical verse and technical discussions. To use them outside these limited contexts is to risk confusing their meanings with the proper use of the words *nabi* and *rasul* in Islam. According to the proper usage of these words, it is not permitted to say that there can be any prophets after Muhammad (*sas*), who was the Last of the Prophets. Hazrat Mirza Sahib explained that in Divine communications he had been named a 'prophet' and a 'messenger' in the strictly literal or metaphorical sense. At the same time, **he repeatedly and emphatically stated** till the end of his life **that this did not make him a prophet**, and that nothing altered the fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*) was the Last of the Prophets according to the principles of Islam.

When people accused him of claiming to be a prophet, he affirmed his belief that no prophet, old or new, could come after Muhammad (*sas*) and explained that his words had been misunderstood. He also pointed out that many other saints before him had used for themselves the words *nabi* and *rasul* in the literal or metaphorical sense without becoming prophets, and also that the Holy Quran itself uses words such as *rasul* and even *rabb* ('lord') for non-prophets. It is therefore not open to anyone to assert truthfully either that Hazrat Mirza Sahib was a prophet or that he claimed prophethood, since his own repeated statements to this effect are definitive.

Hazrat Mirza Sahib wrote:

My heart and soul be an offering to the beauty of Muhammad,  
My earthly being be a sacrifice to the path of love of the (true) followers of Muhammad.

I saw with my mind's eye and listened with the ears of the intellect;  
There comes from every place the sound of the glory of Muhammad.

This flowing fountain that I offer to mankind,  
Is just a drop from the sea of the excellence of Muhammad.

This, my fire, is the fire of the love of Muhammad,  
And this water is the sweet and clear water of (the fountain of) Muhammad.

In another poem he wrote:

There is extraordinary light in the person of  
Muhammad! There is such a precious ruby in the  
mine of Muhammad!

The heart is cleansed of all impurities,  
When it becomes one of the friends of Muhammad!

I do not know anyone in the two worlds,  
Who possesses the splendour and dignity of  
Muhammad!

If you wish that God should praise you,  
Then glorify Muhammad from the core of your heart.

If you need a proof (of his truthfulness), become his  
lover; (Because) Muhammad himself is the proof of  
Muhammad.

My head lies at the dust of the feet of Ahmad!  
My heart is at every moment an offering in the way  
of Muhammad!

You have illuminated my life with love!  
May my soul be a sacrifice to you, O soul of  
Muhammad!

The name 'Ahmad' in this poem refers to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*). According to Hadith, the Holy Prophet was named 'Muhammad' and 'Ahmad'. When Hazrat Mirza Sahib named his followers 'Ahmadiyyah' or 'Ahmadis', he was not naming them after himself. The name 'Ghulam Ahmad' means 'Servant of Muhammad (*sas*)' in Arabic.

Another poem by Hazrat Mirza Sahib says:

We are Muslims by God's grace  
And Muhammad Mustafa is our guide and leader.

He is the best of all the messengers and the best of all  
mankind.

Every (line of) prophethood has come to an end with  
him.

That Divine Book, called the Quran —  
The nectar of our spiritual knowledge comes entirely  
from that cup.

One step away from that lustrous Book,  
Is heresy, destruction and dissolution according to  
me.

The light of the Quran draws one towards God  
And God's face can be seen with this light!

In short, the Quran is the foundation of our Religion.  
It is the comforter of our forlorn heart!

There is a Hadith that states that at the beginning of every new century Allah will raise up someone who

will revive the faith of Muslims. A saint who fulfils this prediction is known as a *mujaddid* or 'renewer', and there has been at least one *mujaddid* in each century of the Muslim Era. The *mujaddid* of the 1st century in Islam was the Caliph 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz ('Umar II). The *mujaddid* of the 5th century was Imam Al-Ghazzali. The *mujaddid* of the 11th century was Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind. The *mujaddid* of the 13th century was Sayyid Ahmad Barailwi, who is held in high esteem by many Muslims in India and Pakistan. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad clearly stated that he was the *mujaddid* of the 14th century, and like other *mujaddids* before him, he faced opposition and persecution during his lifetime. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, for example, who was one of two *mujaddids* during the second century, was flogged for refusing to agree with the government of the day. Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind spent many years in jail for the same reason. As mentioned previously, Muslim religious leaders burned the books of Imam Al-Ghazzali.

What is most distinctive about Hazrat Mirza Sahib is perhaps also the most difficult to understand. It is necessary to know that various collections of Hadith speak about the coming of someone called the *Mahdi*, or 'rightly guided one'. The Hadith also speak about the time when a person named 'Jesus, son of Mary' will revive the faith of Muslims. In the past, important thinkers in Islam have interpreted these Hadith in various ways. What most ordinary Muslims belonging to the Sunni branch of Muslims have been taught to believe is that the *Mahdi* and the 'Jesus, son of Mary' mentioned in Hadith are two different persons. They have also been taught to believe that 'Jesus, son of Mary' in these cases means, literally, the Prophet Jesus (Hazrat 'Isa). Certainly 'Jesus, son of Mary' in the Holy Quran refers to the Prophet Jesus (*pbuh*), but this is not necessarily always true in Hadith.

What many Muslims expect, then, in accordance with their way of understanding the Hadith, is that the Prophet Jesus (*pbuh*) is literally going to come down in the flesh from the sky and land on a certain famous minaret in Damascus, that he, with the *Mahdi*, is then going to wage war on all non-believers, capture Jerusalem, and then force the whole world to embrace Islam! Quite apart from any other considerations, the Holy Quran tells us that 'there is no compulsion in religion' (2:256), and further evidence can be given from the Holy Quran

and Hadith to show that no one can be compelled to embrace Islam, and that wars of aggression are not permitted.

Hazrat Mirza Sahib explained that these interpretations of the Hadith concerning the Mahdi and concerning the expected future leader named 'Jesus, son of Mary' had never been accepted by all Muslim authorities and that **if the name 'Jesus, son of Mary' in Hadith is taken literally, then that would mean that Muhammad (sas) was not the Last of the Prophets after all** and that there would still be another prophet to come, namely Hazrat 'Isa. Because Muhammad (sas) was, in fact, the Last of the Prophets it is not possible for any new prophet to come or for any former prophet to come back a second time. The Hadith cannot, therefore, be referring to the Prophet Jesus when they speak of a future leader of the Muslims named 'Jesus, son of Mary'.

He pointed to the Hadith that says that the Mahdi and 'Jesus, son of Mary' are one and the same person, and that this person could only be a *mujaddid* charged with a special responsibility to revive the faith of Muslims during an age of spiritual darkness and materialism. He acknowledged that every previous *mujaddid* was a *mahdi* or 'rightly guided one' in his spiritual nature, and showed that a *wali-Ullah* who was spiritually similar to the Prophet Jesus (*pbuh*) could be given the metaphorical title 'Jesus'; but he claimed that the prophecies in the Hadith had now found their most complete fulfillment in himself as he had been charged with a mission to revive Islam and to spread Islam to the West at a time when great material progress had been made in the world and traditional beliefs were being questioned everywhere. This is what is meant by calling him the 'Promised Messiah and Mahdi'. It must be stressed that the term 'Promised Messiah and Mahdi' does not imply that Hazrat Mirza Sahib was a prophet, or that he claimed to be a prophet. He did not claim to be a prophet and should not be described as a prophet for the reasons already explained.

His activities during his lifetime included defending Islam against the attacks of Hindu and Christian missionaries. The Christian missionaries were mostly Protestants, from England and Scotland, who used the most vicious propaganda against the beliefs of Muslims and who were determined to wipe Islam off the face of the earth, reducing most of the planet to one big, subservient

Christian colony of Great Britain. The Hindu missionaries believed that if you were of Indian descent, then you had to be a Hindu. Because the Muslims were the most significant minority, but were also vulnerable, the Hindu missionaries, who belonged to a movement called the Arya Samaj, concentrated their efforts on the Muslims. **If it had not been for Hazrat Mirza Sahib, who ably defended Islam by his speeches and writings, the Arya Samaj and the Christian missionaries would have come close to succeeding in destroying Islam in India.** No other Muslim leader could have done what he did. He also educated his closest followers such Hakim Nur-ud-Din, Maulana Muhammad Ali and Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din to follow in his footsteps. Hazrat Mirza Sahib also pointed to the Hadith that says: "The sun will rise in the West". He explained that this did not mean any change in the behaviour of the solar system, but that it had a metaphorical meaning, namely that the light of Islam would dawn on the nations of the western hemisphere, and that the spirit of Islam would be revived throughout the rest of the world through its propagation in the West.

Before he died in 1908, Hazrat Mirza Sahib wrote a will stating that he was to be succeeded by a democratic organisation, which would represent him collectively after his death. This organisation was named Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya. It started to function during the lifetime of Hazrat Mirza Sahib. After Hazrat Mirza Sahib passed away Maulana Nur-ud-Din headed the movement until 1914 and the Sadr Anjuman continued to function as instructed by Hazrat Mirza Sahib. Unfortunately, not all of his followers had fully understood his teachings. As a result, after Maulana Nur-ud-Din passed away, a son of Hazrat Mirza Sahib named Mirza Mahmood Ahmad was able to take over the movement and claimed that his father was a prophet and that he was his *khalifa* (successor). Maulana Muhammad Ali was appalled at this development. Together with some other leading associates of Hazrat Mirza Sahib, he was eventually forced to re-establish the organisation, based on the true teachings of Hazrat Mirza Sahib and his written will. The members of the community founded by Mirza Mahmood Ahmad call themselves 'The Ahmadiyya Movement' and other people call them 'Qadianis'. Mirza Mahmood Ahmad abolished the existing democratic constitution of the Movement. The democratic society re-established by Maulana Muhammad Ali in

accordance with the Founder's published *Wasiyyat* or will is called the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i-Islam ('The Ahmadiyya Association for the Propagation of Islam'), also known as 'The Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement'.

Mirza Mahmood Ahmad also preached that all Muslims who did not formally join the Ahmadiyya organisation were *kafirs* (unbelievers) and could not be called Muslims. It has already been explained above that Hazrat Mirza Sahib did not claim to be a prophet. As regards the question 'Who is a Muslim', Hazrat Mirza Sahib said that no one has the right to say that another person is a non-Muslim as long as the other person professes faith in Islam, and he proved this teaching from the Holy Quran and Hadith. The doctrines put forward by Mirza Mahmood Ahmad were, therefore, in complete contradiction to the teachings of his father.

In India, people opposed Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad during his lifetime. After his death, the newly invented doctrines of Mirza Mahmood Ahmad gave them every excuse to continue to condemn him. "If his son says that he claimed to be a prophet, then he must have claimed to be a prophet, and if his son says that anyone who does not accept him is not a Muslim then he must have said this himself", they thought or at least implied, when this was demonstrably not true. Maulana Muhammad Ali led the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement from its foundation in 1914 till his death in 1951. He organised its missionary activities in India and abroad and published many books and treatises in English and Urdu of a high scholarly standard, which have continued to be invaluable down to the present day. These include his famous English Translation of the Holy Quran with Commentary, which has never been surpassed by any other writer. Khwaja Kamalud-Din, another disciple of Hazrat Mirza Sahib, was a founder member of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement. It was he who founded the Working Muslim Mission in England in 1912.

Members of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam of Lahore are confident that in time to come, the vision of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad that the sun of Islam will rise in the west will be clearly seen to have come to pass, and that not only will his distinctive arguments in defence of Islam be shown to have been correct, but that he will also take his rightful place on the roll of universally recognised saints of Islam. ■

Speech at Islamic Convention, Columbus, August 2001

## Islamic Behaviour: The Golden Mean

by Fazeel Sahukhan

The word "*behaviour*" is defined as: "the actions or reactions of persons or things *under specified circumstances*" (American Heritage Dictionary). The very definition of this word implies that behaviour is something that is not constant, but rather takes on different forms depending upon surrounding conditions. Naturally, a *guide* to prescribed behaviour should then be one that is based on a contextual approach recognizing variations of acts due to differing state of events. The Holy Quran, which has been revealed as a *Guide for all humanity*, faithfully adheres to this principle; unlike other holy scriptures, it acknowledges the existence of competing interests, and the struggle in weighing and balancing these interests, it is revealed, is what determines correct behaviour.

### Limitations upon Prescribed Behaviour

Prescribed behaviour, in the Holy Quran, consists of *injunctions* as well as *specific performances*. A recurring theme in the Quran, indicates that neither are absolute. For instance, just as other scriptures prescribe what type of food should and should not be consumed, the Quran too stipulates that an animal which dies of itself, blood, the flesh of swine as well as that upon which a name other than that of Allah has been invoked, should not be eaten. However, the difference between the two types of guides is that the Holy Quran recognizes there may arise instances in which absolute obedience to this prescribed behaviour is not required; for we are subsequently told:

"Then whoever is driven by necessity, not desiring, nor exceeding the limit, no sin is upon him. Surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." (2:173)

This built-in-exception to the rule is not to be found in similar scriptural injunctions. The case of Jehovah's Witnesses parents refraining from allowing their child to receive blood transfusions due to the biblical injunction on consuming blood, even though such forbearance would result in their child's

death, is commonly reported. The Islamic position seems to support the very nature and definition of behaviour by perceiving reasonable limitations to hard and fast rules. Strict observance to prescribed behaviour would amount to a denial of the possibility of change of circumstances and of competing interests. For the consumption of blood is normally attributed to uncleanness and thus harm to one's physical well-being, but in certain situations may be necessary to sustain life itself; furthermore, the observance of the injunction on consumption of blood may be perceived as being admirable, but it could very well be argued the saving of a life is of much greater value? It is for an equitable resolution to such moral dilemmas that Almighty Allah has paved the way for rational thought and responsibility to over-ride strict observance. And, as can be seen by the predicament which the Jehovah's Witnesses find themselves in, this opportunity given by our Lord is truly, as expressly stated in the provision itself, a Mercy from Allah.

Even more so than injunctions, limitations upon specific performances are explicitly stated throughout the Quran. Prayer and fasting have been enjoined on man; the importance of these duties is such that neglecting this practice, in its true spirit, can result in dissatisfaction in this life as well as destruction in the next. However, we are told in the Quran that exceptions to the prescribed behaviour of observance of prayer are warranted when one is on journey or when involved in war. Similarly, limitations on the prescribed behaviour of observance of fasting is justified for those who are ill, on journey or find it extremely difficult to bear. The prescribed pilgrimage to Mecca is also a duty to be adhered to by Muslims, but it has been clearly restricted to those who have the means to do so. Even the prescribed act of charity, which is repeatedly encouraged, is restricted to some extent as the Holy Quran states:

“Do not chain your hand to your neck (so that you are mean in spending), nor stretch it out to the utmost limit (so that you waste everything).” (17:29)

### Connection between Behaviour and Moral Conditions

These are all examples of exceptions and limitations to the general rules of observance of prescribed practices. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib has explained in his lecture *The Philosophy of the*

*Teachings of Islam* that moral conditions, which these prescribed practices are based on, are also not to be construed as being black or white but rather are also affected by the weighing and balancing of competing interests and surrounding circumstances. I quote Hazrat Mirza from page 77 of this book:

“The mere presence [of a moral quality] in a person, therefore, does not entitle him to any credit unless he shows us, **by its use on the right occasion**, that he possesses it as a moral quality. The distinction between natural and moral qualities should be clearly remembered. The innate or natural qualities are transformed into moral qualities when a person refrains from doing an act upon the **right occasion** and after **due consideration of the good or evil** that is likely to result from it. Many of the lower animals are quite harmless and do not resist when evil is done to them. A cow may be said to be innocent, and a lamb meek, but to neither do we attribute the high moral qualities which man aspires after, for they are not gifted with **reason**. It is the **occasion only upon which anything is done** that justifies or condemns a deed, and the Word of God has, therefore, imposed this condition upon every moral quality”.

It is for the simple reason that different forms of behaviour may be appropriate under different conditions that the Holy Quran routinely reveals alternative forms of conduct and opposing views. Some critics of Islam, who are not aware of the rational and balanced principles put forth in the Quran, wrongly interpret these opposing views as contradictions. However, when carefully analyzed, it is clear that far from contradicting itself, the Quran merely provides the opportunity for man to conduct himself in various ways depending on the circumstances he may find himself in and, thus, satisfy its claim to be a *Guide* to behaviour in its truest sense.

### Politeness vs. Telling the Truth

For example, the Holy Quran clearly emphasizes the need for the moral quality of politeness to be instilled in believers. From individuals simply finding faults in others, to the development of superiority complexes in groups of people — all forms of abuse and the very concept of impoliteness

is condemned. The following verse of the Quran summarizes this point sufficiently:

“And speak good (words) to (all) men” (2:83).

However, equally reminiscent throughout the Quran, if not more so, is the principle of stating the truth unequivocally. For the Quran states:

“And when you speak, be just, even though it be (against) a relative...” (6:153).

and

“And conceal not testimony. And whoever conceals it, his heart is surely sinful” (2:283).

Now, an expression of truth, as can be easily understood, may not always be considered the polite thing to do; as the common expression goes: “the truth hurts”! Thus, one may view the provision to tell the truth and the stipulation of avoidance of abuse as irreconcilable. However, Islam, being a religion of Balance, recognizes that the two types of behaviour are both appropriate under the right conditions. For instance, when verses of the Quran were revealed to our Holy Prophet in which harsh language was used in reference to the unbelievers, the Prophet’s Uncle, Abu Talib, had called the Holy Prophet and said:

“O my nephew, you have made the people furious by your abuse. They are about to kill you, and me as well. You have declared their wise men as fools, called their elders the worst of creatures, named their revered gods as the fuel of hell and the fuel of fire and generally called them all polluted, offspring of the devil and a filthy people. As a well-wisher, I advise you to hold your tongue and refrain from abusing them; otherwise, I do not have the strength to fight with the people”.

Our Beloved Prophet, who was the best exemplar of sublime morals, replied:

“O Uncle, this is not abuse but an expression of truth and a statement of facts exactly as it is needed”.

Thus, from the blessed tongue of the Holy Prophet himself, we are told that abuse is one thing, and stating the truth, even though it may be harsh or unpleasant, when done in the right circumstances of

need, is something totally different. What differentiates the two is the situation of the time and conditions surrounding it. Unnecessary name-calling is clearly abuse for its purpose is to hurt another’s feelings; establishing the truth to opposition, even while using harsh and stern language, cannot be so coined for its purpose is not to harm another, but rather to provide them the opportunity to become aware of their mistakes and, furthermore, improve themselves. Hazrat Mirza Sahib, commenting on the difference between verbal abuse and telling the truth, in his book *Izala Auham*, likened the harsh words of truth used by the prophets against their opponents to that of bitter medicine (i.e. although harsh, it was necessary for their spiritual condition and eventual improvement). He further reinforces the balanced view advocated in Islam when reconciling a specific duty (such as telling the truth) with the limitations and restrictions of a general provision (such as maintaining politeness), by stating:

“In fact, it is the binding duty of every preacher to use harsh words on the proper occasion [although] in accordance with necessity and wisdom”.

### Forgiveness vs. Punishment

Similar to the issue of determining the proper use of the behaviour of telling the truth, is the predicament of correct utilization of the act of forgiveness. In Islam, the person who has been wronged and sustains injury, has the right to redress by seeking legal remedies or by himself applying suitable punishment. Additionally, he who forgoes this right and forgives the offender, we are told, does a commendable act. As stated in the Quran:

“And the recompense of evil is punishment like it; but whoever forgives and amends, his reward is with Allah...” (42:40).

This verse, like all other rules of guidance in the Holy Quran, outlines the balance required for its proper use. The occasion and surrounding circumstances is what will determine the suitability of its employment. Hazrat Mirza explains the balance which is required in determining whether or not to forgive in the *Teachings of Islam*; he writes:

“The Quran does not teach unconditional forgiveness and non-resistance of evil on every occasion, nor does it inculcate that punishment is not to be given to the offender

under any circumstances. The principle which it lays down commends itself to every *reasonable* person. It requires the injured person to *exercise his judgement*, and see whether the *occasion* calls for punishment or forgiveness. The course which is calculated to improve matters should then be adopted. The offender would, under *certain circumstances*, benefit by forgiveness and mend his ways for the future. But on *other occasions* forgiveness may produce the contrary effect and embolden the culprit to do worse deeds. The Word of God does not, therefore, enjoin nor even permit that we should go on forgiving faults blindly. It requires us to consider what course is likely to lead to real good” (p. 76).

As way of illustration, Hazrat Mirza goes on to explain:

“Excess in mildness, like excess in vengeance, leads to dangerous consequences. The person who winks at gross immoralities or forbears an attack upon his honour or chastity may be said to forgive, but his forgiveness is a weakness that strikes at the root of nobility, chastity and self-respect. No sensible person could praise it as a high moral quality. It is for this reason that the Quran places limits of propriety even upon forgiveness and does not recognize every display of this quality as a moral quality unless it is shown upon the *right occasion*. The mere giving up of a claim to requital from an offender, whatever the *circumstances* and however serious the *nature* of the offence, is far from being a great moral quality to which men should aspire” (p. 77).

### Balancing Competing Interests

Islam is, thus, a religion in which strict observance of paradigms, such as “an eye for an eye” or “to turn the other cheek”, is not warranted. For, the use of paradigms constrains a person to act in a way that may not always result in the best possible solution and, moreover, goes against the very nature and definition of behaviour. This is why the Quran itself proclaims:

“Allah is He Who revealed the Book with truth, and *the Balance*” (42:17).

This verse seems to indicate that along with the principles put forth in the Quran, *the Balance*, or the qualities needed to put such principles into practice (such as: reasoning, logic, responsibility, etc.), has also been granted to man.

### Obeying Authorities vs. being Dutiful to Allah and His Messenger

Critics may argue that the Quran, contrary to this, acknowledges the importance of obedience to those in authority. However, the very verse that stipulates obedience to authorities, reveals the limitation upon this rule; it reads:

“O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger *and those in authority from among you*; then if you quarrel about any thing, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. This is best and more suitable to (achieve) the end” (4:59).

From this verse, it is revealed that far from unconditional obedience to those in authority (be they, employers, relatives, religious leaders, etc.), once again, Islam requires Balance to be found; that being, differences of opinion should be reconciled by referring it to Allah and His Messenger (i.e. the Quran and the Hadith).

Furthermore, the provision of obeying those in authority also must be balanced with other provisions in the Quran which clearly condemn the practice of blind faith, such as:

“And *follow not* that of which thou has no knowledge” (17:36).

Thus, it is up to each individual to balance one’s duty to follow those in authority with one’s duty to follow the principles put forth in the Quran and the examples found in Hadith. This position was always illustrated by the rightly guided leaders, such as Hazrat Abu Bakr, for when accepting his Khilafat he openly declared:

“Help me if I am in the right. Correct me if I am in the wrong. Obey me as long as I obey Allah and His Messenger; in case I disobey Allah and His Messenger, I have no right to obedience from you”.

### Spiritual Purpose of Life vs. Material Necessities

The Balance required in Islamic behaviour, as can be seen, is not limited to certain types of conduct, but

rather extends to all facets of life. The very purpose of man's existence can be seen as being balanced with competing interests. Man's object in this life is to serve Allah and develop Divine qualities within himself so that he is fit to live a life with God in the hereafter; the following verse highlights this objective:

“And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should serve Me” (51:56).

However, a strict application of this verse would suggest that one would be denied the opportunity to progress in other social fields and would have to embrace a life of total seclusion in which religious practices only are to be observed. The Quran explicitly denies such an application of fulfilling one's duty to God, for we are warned:

“And as for monkery, they (i.e. the Christians) innovated it — We did not prescribe it to them — only to seek Allah's pleasure, but they did not observe it with its due observance” (57:27).

Thus, although done with the purpose of seeking Allah's pleasure, such a manner of fulfilling one's duty to God is not correct. Furthermore, the earning of a livelihood in this material world is in fact prescribed by Allah, as we are told:

“And [Allah] made the day for seeking livelihood” (78:11).

Thus, although one's true object in life should be to serve God, in Islam one's duty to fellow-man as well as one's own well-being is also prescribed; a balance between the material and moral sides of life is what is required, as can be witnessed by the following verse:

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteous is the one who believes in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angels and the Book and the prophets, and gives away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask ...” (2:177).

One should reflect on how it would be possible to fulfill the duty of giving away of wealth if the opportunity of attaining wealth itself was denied.

### **Delicate Nature of the Freedom to Choose Behaviour**

It is clear from this short analysis of behaviour in Islam, that Islam encourages man to utilize the faculties of logic, reason, rationality, and above all, responsibility when contemplating what type of behaviour to employ. This is, in essence, a reflection of the high status given to man in Islam. Man is entrusted with the authority to reflect and ponder over the situation he may find himself in, and choose which course of action will lead to the most beneficial results, keeping in mind one's duty to be faithful, and ultimately answerable, to the Almighty. It is, therefore, futile for one to suggest to another that, as a Muslim, he is to conduct himself in a certain manner; it is the conditions and circumstances of the time which only can determine what is correct behaviour. Moreover, this freedom given by God to man to choose correct behaviour should not be used as a justification for inappropriate conduct; for the struggle in choosing correct behaviour should be viewed as a trial from Allah and its correct resolve a necessary means to spiritual advancement. The Quran testifies to this middle path being employed, as it is written:

“O you who believe, forbid not the good things which Allah has made lawful for you (such as telling the truth even if it displeases others, enforcing your right to punishment over forgiveness if it will be better for the offender, disagreeing with those in authority if their actions are against the teachings of the Quran and the practice of the Holy Prophet or earning a livelihood as opposed to isolating oneself from all social relations in search of pleasing God) and exceed not the limits (such as abusing the freedom God has granted you and unjustly legitimating one's faults by basing one's clearly inappropriate behaviour on the exceptions to the rules)” (5:87).

Behaviour in Islam is, thus, a constant struggle in finding the *Golden Mean*. This struggle is present in all facets of life and the correct utilization of which is necessary for the spiritual advancement of man. May Almighty Allah give all of us the strength and the courage to use this freedom to choose our behaviour in a responsible and just manner, and as asked of us by Allah in the Quran, “And keep up the balance with equity” (5:9). ■

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