

“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
eighty
years
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& Islamic Review

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Presents
Islam as:
PEACEFUL
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احمدیہ انجمن اشاعت اسلام لاہور

◆ Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam Lahore Inc., U.S.A. ◆
P.O. Box 3370, Dublin, Ohio 43016, 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.

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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 many countries including:

U.S.A.	Australia
U.K.	Canada
Holland	Fiji
Indonesia	Germany
Suriname	India
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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, including French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, Chinese, and Arabic.

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.

Twelve steps and beyond

For recovery from drug addiction

by Dr Mohammad Ahmad, Columbus, Ohio

Chemical dependency in the form of alcoholism and abuse of other drugs, is a universal epidemic. Quoting U.S. based statistics, alcohol is found in the offender, victim or both in half of all homicides and serious assaults, as well as a high percentage of sex related crimes, robberies, and domestic violence. Alcohol related problems are disproportionately found among juvenile and adult criminal offenders.

One of the most effective programs to treat chemical dependency is the twelve-step program. The basic principles of the twelve-step program are borrowed mainly from the fields of religion and medicine, along with the experiences of those who suffered from chemical dependency. After admitting their powerlessness over the intoxicant, and recognizing chemical dependency as a physical and spiritual illness, the participants in the program are advised to turn to a Higher Power to restore their sanity. They are advised to shed the yoke of gods they had hitherto believed in. These may include the worship of their desires, materialism, intellectual superiority, self-righteousness, or the tendency to conform to the shell rather than the true substance of their organized religious philosophy. A conscious decision is then made to turn over their lives and will to the care of God. This dependency on the Divine is considered as a means of gaining true spiritual freedom.

Each individual then takes a personal moral inventory. It is pointed out that man's spiritual illness is linked to his unrestrained natural desires. Seven sins including pride, greed, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth are identified. Pride is identified as the root of all human difficulties, as it leads to self-justification spurred by conscious or unconscious fear. Confession of one's sins to God or to another person is enjoined at this stage, followed by willingness to have God remove all these defects of character. It is suggested that one ought to be ready to aim towards perfection in this matter. Humility before God is considered the corner stone of this onward spiritual journey. To practically demonstrate his humility in dealing with fellow

human beings, amends where possible, and not harmful, are made to those who have suffered from the actions of the chemically dependent person. An ongoing conscious evaluation of one's actions is advised, including the prompt admission of one's faults. Development of self-restraint is a prime objective in this struggle, and painful experiences are considered a touchstone of spiritual progress. Conscious contact with God is sought through prayer and meditation, which is considered the sustenance of the soul. Having achieved a spiritual awakening through these measures, the participants are then advised to inculcate these principles in their daily life, and carry this message to other sufferers.

It is quite evident from a review of these twelve steps that the program is meant to rejuvenate and strengthen the spirit of man by establishing a relationship with God, and thereby liberate him from an addiction. Historically Islam is the only religion which has been successful in eradicating drinking and gambling, also a form of addiction, from a society strongly under their influence. We shall study how Islam was able to achieve this, and how this Divinely ordained program can bring about a similar change in our modern society, which no doubt is suffering greatly from the ill effects of these maladies. Islam not only encompasses most of the principles outlined in the summary above, but also provides the spiritual wayfarer with a Divinely ordained program to achieve this goal of spiritual development and progress. Above and beyond the twelve steps, Islam enables man to continue his spiritual journey on the straight path towards his ultimate destination, which is communion with God. This should not come as a surprise to the reader. It was pointed out in the summary of the twelve steps program that most of the material discussed therein is derived from religious and medical sources. Islam claims to be the perfect and complete guidance for mankind as stated in the verse: "This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor to you and chosen for you Islam as a religion" (The Holy Quran, 5:3). The logical conclusion of this claim is that the program of spiritual development Islam provides should also be complete and free of pitfalls. In order to make an independent judgment of this, I request the reader to study this way of life, to borrow a phrase from the twelve steps program, 'with an open mind and true humility, for that only can lead us to true faith.'

Intoxicating liquors and games of chance

Use of intoxicating liquors and gambling are the two most dangerous illnesses that confront the welfare of modern society. Let us see how the cure for this illness was effectively provided by Islam and its Holy Scripture, the Quran, over fourteen hundred years ago. History backs up the remarkable success of this treatment. Pre-Islamic Arab society was much like the present day Western society. Drinking and gambling were a way of life. The constant fighting of Arab tribes amongst themselves had made the habit of drink second nature to the Arab. Wine was one of the very few objects which could furnish a topic to the mind of an Arab poet. Intoxicating liquors were the chief feature of their feasts, and the habit of drink was not looked upon as an evil, nor had there ever been a temperance movement among them. The followers of Judaism and Christianity, the two religions that had attempted reform movements in the Arabian Peninsula, were themselves addicted to this evil.

Human experience with regard to the habit of drink is that of all the evils, it is the most difficult to be uprooted. The word of the Holy Quran was, however, sufficient to blot out all traces of it from a whole nation, and afterwards from the whole of the country as it came under the fold of Islam. History cannot present another instance of a wonderful transformation of this magnitude brought about so easily, yet so thoroughly. Divine Wisdom brought about this transformation gradually by strengthening the spiritual condition of man, which is the key to its success. Let us study the Quranic verses dealing with this subject to understand their meaning, and the message conveyed by them.

Three stages of prohibition

Intoxicating liquors are first spoken of in deprecatory terms towards the close of the Makkah period:

“And of the fruits of the palms and the grapes, you obtain from them intoxicants and goodly provision” (16:67).

Intoxicants are here spoken of in contrast to goodly provision. The prohibition against their use, however, belongs to the Madinah period, and the earliest revelation on this point is that contained in the first long chapter revealed at Madinah:

“They ask thee about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: In both of them is great sin (Arabic word, *ithm* — a particularly intentional act with unwholesome consequences), and some advantage for men, and their sin is greater than their advantage” (2:219).

The use of the word *ithm* indicates that both the use

Role of alcohol and games of chance in war and war atrocities

of intoxicants and gambling are behavioral choices leading to unwholesome consequences, that men make intentionally. The question referred to in this verse was asked by the companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and the verse was revealed at a time when the small group of Muslims were preparing to defend themselves against a powerful enemy bent upon their annihilation. It was customary for the Arabs to boost their fighting spirits with the use of *alcohol* and to finance their wars with money collected through *games of chance*. They as Muslims were now advised that although there may be some advantage to these practices, their disadvantages in terms of adverse consequences were much greater. The apparent bravado of fighting men under the influence of alcohol is not true courage, and leads to butchery and unnecessary bloodshed, so commonly observed under these circumstances. True courage is generated in man by facing the hour of crisis without the help of intoxicants, thereby leading to his spiritual development. This Divine scheme of spiritual development through trials and tribulations is mentioned in another verse:

“And We shall certainly try you with something of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits. And give good news to the patient” (2:155).

The war funds raised through games of chance incite greed in human nature, and war becomes a means of acquisition of wealth and property by use of force. All kinds of lotteries and games etc., involving a stake, however small the sum involved, fall within the definition of games of chance, and are, therefore,

prohibited by Islam. They not only promote habits of indolence, and are thus a negation of honest labor, but also reduce some members of society to penury while others prosper at their expense.

The Muslims were advised to spend for their defensive war effort, "Say: What you can spare," (2:219), i.e., what they could sacrifice of their wealth and property above their minimal needs. This practice inevitably leads to the fostering of the true spirit of sacrifice. True courage and the spirit of sacrifice were needed to combat alcoholism and gambling, and firm foundations for reform were thus laid. It may also be pointed out that in the context of modern society, the truth of the Quranic statement, "Say: In both of them is great sin and some advantage for men, and their sin is greater than their advantage," is also fully evident. Today also, we hear loud voices proclaiming the economic advantages that the manufacture of alcohol and gambling enterprises may have; also touted are the cardiovascular and social benefits of moderate drinking. However, the death toll from highway accidents and various crime statistics provide undeniable evidence in support of this Divine statement. This was the first stage in the prohibition of intoxicating liquors enjoined by the Holy Quran, but it was more of a recommendatory nature, as it only says that the disadvantages of drinking and gambling surpass their advantages.

The next stage was that in which the Muslims were prohibited from coming to mosques while intoxicated:

"O you who believe, go not near prayer when you are intoxicated until you know what you say" (4:43).

In this verse, while making it more difficult for the Muslims to continue use of intoxicating liquors, they are also reminded of the most effective weapon they have in fighting this habit, i.e., prayer. It is pointed out that for prayer to be beneficial, one has to have a clear mind. Only then can a person focus on the Divine attributes mentioned in the obligatory prayers. Focusing on these attributes, submitting humbly before God, and asking for His assistance leads to the acquisition of strength and guidance needed to abstain from this detrimental habit.

The final and complete prohibition came in the verses:

"O you who believe, intoxicants (*khamr*) and games of chance and (sacrificing to) stones set up and (dividing by) arrows are only an uncleanness, the devil's work; so shun it that you may succeed" (5:90).

These three stages of the prohibition of alcohol are clearly mentioned in Hadith (*Musnad Ahmad*, 11, p. 351). On the last of these occasions, a proclamation was made by command of the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) that alcohol was prohibited, and people who heard the proclamation emptied their stores of wine immediately, so that wine flowed in the streets of Madinah. (*Bukhari*, 74:2; 46:21 and *Musnad Ahmad*, 111, p. 217).

The broader definition of intoxicants (*khamr*)

We will now discuss the meaning of the word *khamr*, used for intoxicants in the Holy Quran. *Khamr* is differently explained as meaning *what intoxicates, of the expressed juice of grapes, or the juice of grapes when it has effervesced and thrown up froth, and become freed there from and still*, or it has common application to intoxicating expressed juice of anything, or any intoxicating thing that clouds or obscures the intellect (Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon). And it is added: "The general application is the more correct, because *khamr* was forbidden when there was not any *khamr* of grapes, the beverage of its inhabitants being prepared only from dates in Madinah ... it is sometimes prepared from grains" (*ibid*). The wider sense of *khamr*, as prepared from other things besides grapes, is borne out by the verses of the Holy Quran quoted above, and in the discussion that follows. According to Umar, wine when prohibited was made of five things: grapes, dates, wheat, barley and honey (*Bukhari*, 74:4). Hence *khamr* is intoxicating liquor prepared from anything.

As wine is prohibited on account of its intoxication, it is stated in Hadith that every intoxicant is prohibited (*kullu muskir-in haram-un* — *Bukhari*, 64:62). Herbs and drugs taken for their intoxicating effect, and all other intoxicating things are, therefore, also forbidden; only a drink that does not intoxicate is allowed. The question whether a very small quantity may be given as medicine is quite different. It is true that there is a report according to which Tariq ibn Suwaid was ordered by the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) not to make wine, and when he said that he made it to be used as medicine, the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) replied that it was not medicine

(*dawa*), but a disease (*da*). It is interesting to note that the Messenger of Allah called alcoholism a disease over fourteen hundred years ago, something that is accepted as a medical truth today. But this prohibition was, in all likelihood, directed only against the making of wine; and as Nawawi, the famous commentator of *Muslim*, explains, in a serious case when life was in danger, wine could be used to save life, for even carrion and flesh of swine could be used in such a case. It may be added here that trading in wine was also prohibited by the Holy Prophet (*Bukhari*, 34:24), and indeed it was necessary to prohibit both the preparing of wine and trading in it when the use of it was no longer permitted.

It would be appropriate at this stage to mention a few words about nicotine, another very commonly used drug in our modern society. The first general rule regarding all consumable products is mentioned in the verse:

“O people, eat the lawful and good things from what is in the earth, and follow not the footsteps of the devil. Surely he is an open enemy to you” (2:168).

By the good things is clearly meant consumable items which are good both for the body and the soul. This is clarified by adding the words *follow not the footsteps of the devil*. The Holy Quran recognizes some sort of relation between the physical and spiritual conditions of man. There is not the least doubt that food plays an important part in the formation of character and the heart and brain-powers are clearly affected by the quality of food. The same law is seen working in the whole of the animal kingdom. As the Holy Quran is meant for all stages of the development of human society, it contains rules and regulations for the betterment of the physical and the spiritual conditions of man. There is no doubt that tobacco consumption has many harmful effects on the human body including the cardiovascular and the respiratory systems. It also causes oral cancer, increases the incidence and severity of ulcer disease, and affects the health of the unborn. It has been calculated that a person's life is shortened by fourteen minutes with every cigarette he smokes. Nicotine, the main ingredient of cigarette smoke, is one of the most toxic drugs known to man, and has no known therapeutic uses. It shares with *khamr* the property of being an addicting substance and does nothing but harm to the body. Human

behavior and spiritual values are also affected in subtle ways. A person addicted to cigarette smoking is not only oblivious to the harm it does to his own health, but also ignores the potential harm to other persons due to secondary smoke, even in case of the pregnant mother to her unborn child. It has been commonly observed that a person addicted to smoking cigarettes displays signs of anger and restlessness when unable to fulfill his habit. It may also act as a vehicle to introduce a person to higher grades of intoxicants. Cigarette smoking, therefore, definitely cannot be included in the consumable items termed as ‘good’ under the Quranic injunction mentioned above and should therefore be avoided.

The wisdom of Divine injunction of prohibition

In the verse, “O you who believe, intoxicants and games of chance and (sacrificing to) stones set up and (dividing by) arrows are only an uncleanness, the devil's work (*amal ash-shaitan*); so shun it that you may succeed (*tuflihoon*)” (5:90). Intoxicants, games of chance, and dividing by arrows (the Arabs played with such arrows for division of the flesh of a slaughtered camel bought on credit), are included in the same category as sacrificing to, or worship of idols. Stone idols are not worshipped in most societies in this day and age. Instead their place has been taken by the worship of one's low desires. The Holy Quran refers to this in the verse:

“Hast thou seen him who takes his low desires for his god?” (25:43).

All of this leads one away from the higher moral values and its source, the Divine Being. It causes retardation of spiritual growth and lowering of self-esteem and self-expression. This has been called the uncleanness of spirit, “the devil's (*shaitan*) work”, and complete avoidance is recommended in order to succeed (*tuflihoon*). In order to fully understand this verse, it is essential to understand the Quranic concept of the devil, and the meaning of the Arabic word *falah*, the root form of the word *tuflihoon* used in this verse.

Quranic concept of the devil

The Arabic words *shaitan* and *iblis* are used in the Holy Quran to describe the various roles of the devil. *Iblis* is not one of the angels. The Holy Quran states:

“He was of the *jinn* so he transgressed” (18:50).

Jinn means any creation that is hidden from the eyes. The word *Iblis* is used when the evil one's evil is limited to himself, and *shaitan* when his evil affects others besides himself; or *Iblis* is the proud one ("He refused and was proud" — 2:34), and *shaitan* is the deceiver. *Iblis* is derived from the root *balasa*, meaning he despaired, and *shaitan* from *shatana* meaning he became distant, or remote, or *sheet* meaning death. The same entity is thus mentioned under two different names; he is called *Iblis* because he despairs of the mercy of God, and *shaitan* (Satan) because he allures others to commit deeds which make them despair of Divine mercy, ultimately leading to their spiritual demise. *Iblis* works through the lower desires, in particular his pride and ego, which keeps man from bowing before God and seeking His mercy. He then acts as a tool of the *shaitan*, and leads others away from the path of rectitude.

Man is a composite of animal instincts and spiritual values. On the one hand he has the animal instincts, such as love and anger and all their different branches. This is the part of him which motivates all his actions. On the other hand, are his intellect, conscience, and higher moral values, which create within him understanding of good and evil, and a sense of responsibility for his actions. The animal instincts provide motive power for the engine of human life while intellect, conscience and higher moral values regulate this engine. The hidden element, or creation, that motivates human desire, is called a *jinn*. The Quran tells us that it is created from fire, therefore keeping the human desires warm, in other words motivating them. As a result of this drive, man participates in the activities of daily living. The creation which regulates this engine and applies brakes to it when it is over speeding is called angel (*malak*) in the Holy Quran. This creation appeals to the higher moral values, human conscience and intellect, and keeps the engine of human desires in control. Periodically it regulates and applies brakes to it, directing it towards the straight path so that it may not over speed and run on the wrong track leading to spiritual demise. When the hidden creation, or *jinn*, which provides motive power for the engine of human desires, instigates these desires to run out of control, it is called the *shaitan* (Satan). There is a saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) according to which every human being has a *jinn* accompanying him. When asked by his companions if this was also true

in his case, his reply was yes, except that Allah had given him power over his *jinn* and it had become obedient; indicating that man has power over Satan.

Spiritual uncleanness and its treatment

The Arabic word *shaitan* is used for the devil in relation to intoxicating liquors, gambling and idols because they lead man away from righteousness. The devil uses the intoxicant as a tool to inhibit the higher faculties. He instigates human self-pride and greed beyond control. In this way he smothers the human spirit with uncleanness and low self-esteem, driving it away from God, the source of spiritual life, and making it despair of His mercy. Mankind is advised to shun these devices of the devil in order to succeed, abstinence being the first step in this direction. The Arabic word *tuflihoon*, used in this verse ("so shun it that *you may succeed*") to indicate success, is the verb form of *aflaha*, which means, 'he attained to success,' and includes both the good of this life and the Hereafter. The Arabic word *falah* in the literal sense means to unfold something in order to reveal its intrinsic properties i.e., self-expression (which will be discussed in detail later). This word is also used for tilling the earth by means of a plow. That is why a farmer is also called a *falah*. A farmer by removing the bushes and brambles from the earth, plowing it up and using his other God given resources, with a little hard work, can manifest its hidden treasures in the form of a fruitful harvest. A person recovering from any form of addiction can set a similar sequence of spiritual rejuvenation in motion, by removing the uncleanness heaped upon his spirit by resolving to shun the devil. Prayer and remembrance of Allah are the key elements in this path of spiritual success as stated in the verse:

"The devil desires only to create enmity and hatred among you by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you back from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. Will you then keep back?" (5:91).

It is interesting to note that the Arabic word *falah* used here for success is the same word used in the Muslim Call for Prayer i.e., "come towards success (*falah*)."¹ This verse also sheds light upon the harmful effects of gambling and intoxicants towards society in general. They lead to enmity and hatred amongst men. We see a graphic illustration of this in the rampant ills of our society today. In the pursuit and worship of his low desires, and the idols

mentioned earlier, man forgets the remembrance of Allah, the source of all goodness and strength. Prayer is enjoined to keep this remembrance alive. By means of prayer man is able to reflect on the attributes of Allah, and reflect Divine coloring in his own daily conduct; remembrance of Allah thus having a direct positive influence on his daily conduct. After presenting the detrimental effect to his person and society in general, and pointing the way out of this predicament, man's intellect is appealed to with the question, "Will you then keep back?" i.e., keep back from repentance and true reform, through the remembrance of Allah and prayer.

Quranic concept of repentance

Before we discuss further the verses regarding intoxicants, it is important to be aware of the Quranic concept of repentance. This is described in the following verses:

"But the devil made them slip from it, and caused them to depart from the state in which they were. And We said: Go forth, some of you are the enemies of others. And there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time. Then Adam received (revealed) words from his Lord, and He turned to him (mercifully). Surely He is Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful" (2:36, 37).

In these verses with reference to Adam and Eve, the Holy Quran describes the downfall of man in general from a state of serenity by listening to the advise of the devil. The remedy for this is given in following the revealed Word of God, Who then turns mercifully towards the repentant soul. The Arabic word *taubah* (repentance) gives us in fact the philosophy of repentance. *Taba* originally means *he returned*. In religious terminology the word *taubah* comes to mean the *returning to a state of obedience*. Thus *taubah* implies a perfect change in the course of one's life, and this is repentance according to the Holy Quran. It is not an utterance of certain words, but an actual *change* for the better. The same word *taba* is used to express the Divine act of the acceptance of repentance, with reference again to the original meaning of the word, because in this case the Divine Being deals with man mercifully. Repentance is, therefore, between man and his Creator, implying a perfect change in the course of

one's life. The idea of confession of sins before a priest is alien to Islam.

Having thus led man away from spiritual demise towards spiritual success, the path for true success is shown:

"And obey Allah and obey the Messenger and be cautious. But if you turn back then know that the duty of Our Messenger is only a clear deliverance of the message" (5:92).

This is clearly the path of Islam. Caution is to be exercised in not falling back towards the designs of the Satan, for which every human being, in particular a recovering addict, has to watch out. This

*Addictions to drugs,
alcohol and gambling
afflict all sections of
society in the whole of
mankind*

verse warns against the danger of relapse, against which a chemically dependent person has to continue an ongoing struggle. A clear warning is given to alert him to such danger, and also at the same time he is held responsible for his actions as indicated by the words:

"But if you turn back then know that the duty of Our Messenger is only a clear deliverance."

In summary, intoxicants and games of chance are akin to worship of idols, in this case those set up by the Satan who motivates the human desires out of control. The path to recovery is abstinence, turning back to and recognition of the Divine Being and awareness of His attributes through prayer. As mentioned earlier, addiction is a worldwide problem. It involves Muslim and Non-Muslim societies, the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' with equal vengeance. It is my belief that rehabilitation programs modeled on the twelve steps formula with incorporation of the Quranic wisdom can be a very effective tool in getting rid of this menace. This can be of particular benefits to Muslim families, children and societies that are also suffering enormously from the adverse consequences of various addictions. ■

Vain desires are the opposite of practical action

Mirza Mahmud Ahmad's dream does not provide any basis for his claim

Friday Khutba by Maulana Muhammad Ali, on 4 February 1944, Lahore

[This is a translation of the first Khutba delivered by Maulana Muhammad Ali commenting on the claim made by Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, the head of the Qadiani group, in an announcement a few days earlier, to be the Muslim Mau'ud or Promised Reformer foretold by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The Khutba was published in Paigham Sulh dated 9 February 1944. In this English translation, done by myself in December 2001, a few paragraphs, mostly at the end, have been omitted for brevity. — Editor.]

“It will not be in accordance with your vain desires nor the vain desires of the People of the Book. Whoever does evil, will be requited for it and will not find for himself besides Allah a friend or a helper. And whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, and is a believer, these will enter the Garden, and they will not be dealt with a whit unjustly.” The Holy Quran, 4:123–124

Law of God the Most High

In these two verses Allah the Most High has set out a general law of His, which applies to Muslims and unbelievers equally. “It will not be in accordance with your vain desires (*amāniy*)”, there cannot be any outcome based on your mere desires; “nor the vain desires of the People of the Book” who deny this Quran, nothing will be earned according to their desires. The Divine law is that “whoever does evil” will meet its bad consequence and “whoever does good deeds, whether male or female” will receive the reward. This really is a deep point that was fully understood by the Muslims of the early times.

What are desires?

What are *amāniy* or desires? These are the desires that keep on arising in a person's heart. This is why false claims are also known as *amāniy*, as the Holy Quran says in another place [in 2:111, regarding the respective claims of the Jews and the Christians to exclusive salvation]: “And they say: None shall

enter the Garden except he who is a Jew or the Christians. These are their vain desires (*amāniy*)” or false claims. This is why it then says: “Bring your proof if you are right”. As opposed to *amāniy* there is practical action or ‘*amal*’.

Early Muslims understood this

The early Muslims understood this point. Shunning vain desires, they showed an unparalleled example of *the power of action*, the like of which cannot be found anywhere else even though you search for it. Such was their power of action that whichever way they turned they were victorious and triumphant. If they went to the field of battle, then powerful, highly organised empires crumbled before them. If they turned to the field of knowledge, they expanded learning so widely that they spread it in the entire world, the light of their knowledge even illuminating Europe. In the field of righteousness and devotion to God, their falling in prayer before the Almighty and shedding tears at the Divine threshold will probably remain unequalled in human history forever. The like of it cannot be found among monks, ascetics or recluses.

Vain desires and practical action are the complete opposites of each other. Those who become involved in practical works do not indulge in vain desires, and those who go after vain desires lose their strength for action.

Lack of action by Muslims and the Imam of the present age

The condition of the Muslims today is that they utterly lack the faculty of strength of action. Vain desires and wishful thinking are running rampant. All these conferences that are held and the resolutions that are passed are nothing but *amāniy*. In this age the Imam who was sent by Allah the Most High for the guidance of the Muslims came for the very purpose of creating the power of action. He created enormous power of action among his followers. His personal power of action was tremendous too. The whole world opposed him but he moved not from his position one inch; facing the most bitter opposition he did his work and left behind a strong community.

Qadiani Jama‘at in the grip of vain desires

It must be said with regret that today his followers in Qadian have bid farewell to action and fallen prey to the disease of vain desires. These days an *out of*

season eid has come to Qadian. Telegrams of congratulation are being showered, schools and offices are closed for celebration, and public meetings are being held, all for a festival. And what is that festival? It too is a desire, which appeared as a dream. But what is being celebrated with joy is not in that dream. The celebration is that the Mian sahib (Mirza Mahmud Ahmad) has become the *Muslih Mau'ud* (Promised Reformer). He was already the *Muslih Mau'ud* in the eyes of his followers even before, but now he has said that God has informed him that he is the *Muslih Mau'ud*.

The dream

I have said that this is a desire, so let me first make this point clear. The dream is very long. In these times dreams have become lengthy, just as the means of writing and propaganda have become extensive. This dream of the Mian sahib consists of three to four thousand words.

The basis of the dream is that the Mian sahib saw some people riding upon idols of stone that were floating in a lake. The Mian sahib too got on one of these floating idols in this lake and started to preach to the idol-worshippers.

Who is greater of the two?

The Mian sahib says that during this speech when he was preaching the messengership of the Holy Prophet Muhammad to the people:

“it seemed as if Allah had granted the Holy Prophet himself the privilege (*taufiq*) to speak from my tongue [original urdu: *Rasulullah ko meri zobaan se bolne ki taufiq di hai*], and he said: I am Muhammad, the servant and messenger of Allah.”

So the Holy Prophet Muhammad was granted *taufiq* to speak from the tongue of Mirza Mahmud Ahmad. Which of the two of them is the greater then?

The Promised Messiah speaks

After this the Promised Messiah came, and he too spoke from the mouth of the Mian sahib saying: I am the Promised Messiah.

Basis of claim of Mirza Mahmud Ahmad

After this, the third turn is that of the Mian sahib himself, perhaps because it is futile to believe in the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the Promised Messiah

unless you also believe in the Mian sahib. The Mian sahib said [in the dream]: *Ana al-Masih al-Mau'ud, mathili-hi wa khalifa*, meaning: “I too am the Promised Messiah, that is to say, his like and his *khalifa*”. This is the meaning he has himself given, that these words denote that he is the like of the Promised Messiah and his *khalifa*. It is on this basis that he has laid the foundation that God has told him that he is the *Muslih Mau'ud*.

This is only his desire

In fact, this is only his desire. The word *Mau'ud* (promised) is not found here, nor are the words *Muslih Mau'ud* (Promised Reformer) or *Pisr Mau'ud* (promised son) found here. As to *khalifa*, there can be hundreds of these. The Holy Prophet Muhammad had many *khalifas*. As to the ‘like of’, there can also be hundreds. Hazrat Mirza sahib has himself written that there can be thousands of ‘likes’ of the Messiah. But the promised one is only one. How can it be concluded from the above words that the Mian sahib is the promised one? It is asserted that in this dream he has been declared as *Muslih Mau'ud*. But there is no mention of *Muslih Mau'ud* in the dream. This is merely a desire in his heart. Why did it arise and how did it arise? The dream was only seen recently on the night between January 5th and 6th, 1944. There are earlier events which are its cause.

Three phases of this issue

There have been three phases that have passed over the Mian sahib. As soon as he ascended to the seat of headship [in 1914], an article by Pir Manzur Muhammad appeared in Mian sahib’s magazine *Tashhiz-ul-Azhan* to prove that he was the *Muslih Mau'ud*. At that time when people asked him about it, the Mian sahib replied, and kept on saying for a long time, that he could not say whether he was *Muslih Mau'ud* or not. This was one phase.

The second phase

Then came the second phase when he started saying that he was the *Muslih Mau'ud* but that he was not making the claim. He said that he fulfilled the prophecy of being *Muslih Mau'ud* even without directly claiming to be so.

The third phase

Now the third stage has arrived. He now says that God has informed him that he is the *Muslih Mau'ud*.

At this announcement Qadian has burst into celebration and telegrams of congratulations have started arriving from other places despite the fact that the entire Jama'at already believed him to be *Muslih Mau'ud* and he too had been saying that he was the *Muslih Mau'ud*. What is new, then? He has made a claim which was not necessary to make.

What is the cause of rejoicing?

A man sees a dream and he makes himself the *Muslih Mau'ud*. But the Qadiani Jama'at already believed him to hold this position. What are they rejoicing about? It does not make me laugh, it makes me cry. Is there any previous instance that when God appointed someone to a position, celebrations of this kind were held? Hazrat Mirza sahib was made Promised Messiah in our time. Did his followers hold festivities that day? Even if someone became *Muslih Mau'ud*, is this an occasion for celebration and messages of congratulations?

An element of trial

I believe that this prophecy has an element of a trial in it. *Muslih Mau'ud* means one who brings about reform. A reformer is required at a time when there is some mischief or evil to be rectified.

Calling Muslims as *kafir* is a major evil

I believe that after the death of Hazrat Mirza sahib a major mischief arose, namely, that from Qadian the call was raised declaring Muslims as *kafir* and the *kalima* as being abrogated. If the *Muslih Mau'ud* is to come to repel this mischief, then this can only light up our eyes and make our hearts happy. If, however, the *Muslih Mau'ud* is to come to counter some other mischief then that mischief must have existed since before the Promised Messiah's time, and the Qadianis will have to admit that the Promised Messiah failed to correct that mischief! The mischief of calling Muslims as *kafir* is indeed a very major evil created by Mirza Mahmud Ahmad.

Every member of Lahore Jama'at is a *Muslih Mau'ud*

If this evil requires to be corrected then I consider that each and every member of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Jama'at is a *Muslih Mau'ud*, and would be right in making that claim. God the Most High has Himself testified to this in the revelation of the Promised Messiah: "Our purified members are in Lahore".

However, those who have created the evil of calling Muslims as *kafir* cannot claim to be *Muslih Mau'ud*. When we call them to debate on their beliefs of declaring Muslims as *kafir* or abrogating the *kalima*, they reply that we are trying to humiliate them in front of the Muslims. But why have they adopted a belief which they are too embarrassed to mention in public? As to when the *Muslih Mau'ud* will come, Allah knows best, but if a promised mischief-maker had to come then certainly the Mian sahib can make this claim.

Two arguments out of four are wrong

Apart from this dream, if you look at his proofs they are even more bewildering. It is a long story and I cannot discuss the prophecy of the Promised Messiah in detail within a Friday *khutba*, but this prophecy contains the sign that he will "turn three into four". The Mian sahib has laid much stress on this sign and given some proofs of it, but he has himself declared one of the proofs to be wrong.

Look at another proof. He says that the prophecy was made in 1886, and after the passage of the three years 1886, 1887 and 1888, he was born in 1889. So he says he turned three into four. I need not say how ridiculous is this proof. But the strange thing is that in their own original article in *Tashhiz-ul-Azhan* they wrote that Hazrat Mirza sahib made this prophecy two years before 1886, that is in 1884. So five years passed and the Mian sahib was born in the sixth year. Hazrat Mirza sahib has himself also written that this prophecy really belongs to 1884. So this argument is also wrong. Will the Mian sahib admit that two out of his four proofs are clearly in error?

If the Mian sahib asked for my advice, I would tell him to put forward the argument that there are already three claimants to the title of *Muslih Mau'ud* and he is the one who makes these three into four.

Mockery of religion

I assure you that this is a mockery being made of religion. There are many signs of the *Muslih Mau'ud*: many nations will find guidance through him, a large number of people will embrace Islam, and Hazrat Mirza sahib writes in *Al-Wasiyya* that God will distinguish him with His revelation and nearness. If nations are to find guidance in the way in which the Mian sahib saw in his dream that idol-worshippers became Muslims, then this is simply a vain desire.

Show something practical

If you are going to do something then show it by doing it. If you say that whatever will be achieved after the time of the Mian sahib will also be ascribed to him, then I say that whatever will be achieved in the future it will be regarded as the doing of the Promised Messiah, not of Mahmud or Nur-ud-Din, or of Muhammad Ali.

People will laugh

Besides this, the Mian sahib also says in this dream: "I am the one for whom virgins have been waiting for 19 centuries on the shore of this sea". Then he says: "Virgins came running and greeted me, and ran their hands over my garments". To put forward such things is to make people laugh. I regret that this will make people laugh at the Promised Messiah.

Refuting an absurd claim

I have told you all this because there are many people who are easily impressed by hearing the word 'claim'. I have seen quite well-educated people who say that if such and such a man has made a claim, we must not oppose him in the slightest. But it is an act of courage to contradict those who make absurd claims. If the *Muslih Mau'ud* was to be the kind of person that he has claimed to be, then religion would be a game.

Status of the Promised Messiah

How far above these people was the rank of the Promised Messiah! In his time the Muslims were thoroughly despondent. Their political power had become decrepit and their civilisation was facing its worst decline. Even their greatest leaders could not imagine that the Western rulers could become Muslims. It was only the Mirza to whom the idea occurred that these nations shall accept Islam.

His claim and basis of work

As soon as he claimed to be the Promised Messiah he laid the foundations of the propagation of Islam in the West. He wrote that the Western countries which had, since antiquity, been engrossed in the darkness of unbelief and error shall be illuminated with the sun of truth, and will receive their share of Islam. Then he also wrote in *Izala Auham* that translations and commentaries of the Holy Quran and other Islamic literature should be taken to these nations.

Don't rely on dreams

Those who make claims should show practical work. Dreams can be true, sometimes desires take the form of dreams, and sometimes dreams are also from the devil. Do not take dreams as your basis but rest your foundations on the Holy Quran.

Religion and the power of action

Religion comes to create in humans a strong power of action. If you cannot display an example of this power of action then it is futile to make claims. Remember it well, that a true religion creates within you the power to act; remember that each one of you has that power. Put that power to work and see how a great transformation takes place in the world. ■

Islam, the religion of light, and the Hindu festival of Divali

by the Editor

I gave a talk to the British branch of the AAIIIL in London on Sunday 4th November 2001, having selected as my topic the mention of 'light' (*nur*) in the Holy Quran to describe the guidance that has been revealed by Allah. In particular I dealt with the passage of the Holy Quran beginning: "Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth" (Ch. 24, v. 35).

The Hindu festival of Divali was due to take place in a few days time after my talk and it struck me that this is known as the 'festival of lights'. I collected some facts about this festival and realized that the above verses of the Holy Quran are like a commentary on the ideas behind Divali. It appears as if these verses are, quite directly, correcting certain misconceptions about God and His relationship with human beings which form the basis of Divali (the worship of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth).

I should explain here that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has set forth certain principles for the study of the Quran which have opened new doors to the understanding of this holy Book. Some of his contemporary followers, by acting on those principles, dived into the ocean of Quranic knowledge and brought out new and precious pearls and gems

out of it. These followers included Maulana Muhammad Ali, Dr. Basharat Ahmad and Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi. Maulana Vidyarthi writes:

“... if Hazrat Mirza sahib had exhausted the knowledge of the Holy Quran and the arguments on the truth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, he would have deprived us of the pleasure of research and investigation, and even closed the way for us to express our love for the Holy Prophet. But these reformers do not come in order to close down human thinking and reflection; rather, they come to make these mental faculties even sharper and more radiant.”

One of these principles taught by Hazrat Mirza sahib is that the Holy Quran comments upon and corrects the wrong doctrines of not only the religions which were known to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (the Jewish and Christian religions), *but also of the religions that the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the people of his country knew nothing about*. Thus the Holy Quran, when studied properly, can be seen to comment on the teachings of Buddhism and Hinduism, even though the Holy Prophet and his society were most probably entirely unaware of what these religions were. This is a strong evidence of the Divine origin, and not human origin, of the Quran, and proof of this Book being sent for all humankind. As Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote:

“The fact is that **except the Quran** there is no book at present on the face of the earth, believed to be revealed, which considers God to possess all the perfect attributes and to be free from every shortcoming and defect.” (*Chashma Ma'rifa*, pp. 107-108)

The ‘light’ verses of the Quran contrasted with concepts behind Divali

On the next page we show, in a table, on the left hand side the passage 24:35–38 of the Holy Quran (this chapter 24 being entitled *An-Nur* or ‘The Light’), and on the right hand side the chief ideas behind the festival of Divali. The connecting points between this passage and Divali are:

- light,
- people’s homes into which God enters,
- wealth and its acquisition, and accounting.

Below we make some general comments about the meaning of this passage and also point out its reference to Divali.

1. According to the Quran, light comes from God to guide human beings, to bring them out of darkness. In Divali, however, lamps are used in the belief that *a god requires light from human beings in order to be guided to their homes*.

2. The light of God is described here in the Quran as being like light from a lamp shining like a star, placed at a high place, so that the light can reach everywhere. It is not like the small, man-made lamps of Divali.

3. The “flame” of the light of God is protected, just like a lamp is protected in a glass enclosure. In other words, the teachings of Islam sent by God are protected from being extinguished.

4. The “fuel” of that light comes from a “blessed olive tree, neither eastern nor western”, meaning that the teachings of Islam are based on *peace* (olive branch), and do not unduly favour either the east or the west, but are fair to the whole of humanity. Note that the olive branch is an ancient and universal symbol of peace.

5. While physical lights burn fuel and get hot, the light from Allah is not accompanied by any heat. Man himself has always been striving to invent more ‘efficient’ sources of light that generate as little heat as possible, since the heat produced by a lamp is wasted energy. The fuel of the light of Allah produces pure light, without burning, without heat. Usually religion has a considerable amount of *heat* associated with it, examples of which are: *fiery* speeches by preachers, *heated* arguments between followers of different faiths, and *easily enflamed, quickly outraged* religious sentiments. But Islamic teachings are *light without the heat*. So we ought to try spreading *light* but without *generating heat*.

6. “Light upon light”: it keeps on giving you light and then more light. There is no end to how far you can go on progressing, getting more and more guidance from the light of Allah.

7. Verse 36 speaks of the light which comes from God appearing in those houses where He is remembered, where His teachings are acted upon. It is in houses where there are persons “whom *neither merchandise nor selling* diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the paying of the poor-rate”.

In the celebration of Divali, people visualize Lakshmi, believed to be the goddess of *wealth*, entering into their houses and blessing their wealth for the coming year. In contrast, this passage of the Quran teaches that the light of God enters those houses where there are people who do not put earning wealth above their duty to God and their duty to fellow human beings. Wealth must not be made into a god to be worshipped; while making

money, we must keep uppermost in mind the remembrance of Allah (remembering His teachings of honesty, truth, and fair dealing), and our spiritual duties (prayer) and our duties of doing good to other human beings (charity).

8. “And Allah provides without measure (Arabic: *hisab*, or account) for whom He pleases.” One could take this as meaning that God does not need to be shown account books by us so that He

Comparing verses from ‘The Light’ chapter of the Holy Quran with the concepts behind Divali

Chapter 24: An-Nur, The Light

35 Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth.

A likeness of His light is as a pillar on which is a lamp — the lamp is in a glass, the glass is as it were a brightly shining star —

lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither eastern nor western, the oil whereof gives light, though fire touch it not — light upon light.

Allah guides to His light whom He pleases. And Allah sets forth parables for men, and Allah is Knower of all things,

36 (It is) in houses which Allah has permitted to be exalted and His name to be remembered therein. Therein do glorify Him, in the mornings and the evenings,

37 Men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the paying of the poor-rate — they fear a day in which the hearts and the eyes will turn about,

38 That Allah may give them the best reward for what they did, and give them more out of His grace. And Allah provides without measure for whom He pleases.

Hindu Festival of Divali

This is the most important Hindu festival, also known as the Festival of *Lights*.

Divali (or fully, Dipavali) means *a line or row of lamps*.

“Every home, the hut of the poor or the mansion of the rich, is alit with the orange glow of twinkling *diyas* — small earthen lamps — to welcome Lakshmi, *Goddess of wealth and prosperity*.”

“oil lamps (*deep*) are burned throughout the night.”

“it is the most important festival for *merchants, bankers, and businessmen*, because the main religious event *is the worship of Lakshmi*”.

“it is the end of the financial year. Old accounts are settled, new books are opened. *Account books are worshipped* in an elaborate ceremony. All the business people start new business calendars and celebrate their New Year. They worship Goddess Lakshmi to bless their new account books”.

“Lakshmi is worshipped in every house. The house and its surrounds are illuminated with oil lamps so that Lakshmi *may see her way clearly*.”

Sources:

The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions.

Two websites on Divali:

<http://www.2camels.com/destination64.php3>

http://members.tripod.com/~jennifer_polan/diwali.html

can decide how much money to allocate to us in His destiny for us for the next year! While commanding us not to place wealth above our devotion to the duties of prayer to God and charity to fellow human beings, Islam does not neglect the importance of earning wealth. In fact, it teaches here that for those who view wealth in its correct perspective there is no limit to the material provisions that are bestowed upon them by God. The clever and sharp business men who never miss making a good deal, at the expense of missing their spiritual and moral duties, and who regard their account books as more important than the account of their deeds, in the end do not prosper even materially.

Islam is unique among world religions in recognizing that material wealth also comes from God. And what comes from God is limitless and infinite. We see that the worldly provisions available to humanity today are far beyond what anyone in the past could even have imagined. However, that wealth can only be a source of benefit if it is acquired by following the laws laid down by God.

Let us pray that our Hindu friends, neighbours and fellow-countrymen who light lamps on Divali also receive the light that comes from God to guide humanity. ■

From the English translation of Mujahid-i Kabir

Mujahid-i Kabir is the extensive Urdu biography of Maulana Muhammad Ali written by his son Mr. Muhammad Ahmad and Mr. Mumtaz Ahmad Faruqi, first published in 1962. A draft translation of the entire book into English was produced by Mrs. Akhtar Aziz of England in 1995. It is currently being revised, finalized and formatted for publication by me. As each chapter is finished it is being added to our website www.muslim.org. So far, 231 of the 411 pages of the Urdu biography have been published on the website. Starting in the column opposite, we reproduce from this translation the section of this book describing the great interest taken by Maulana Nur-ud-Din in Maulana Muhammad Ali's work of translating the Holy Quran into English which the latter had started in 1909 just after Maulana Nur-ud-Din became Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement.

Maulana Nur-ud-Din's interest in the work of translating the Holy Quran into English

Maulana Nur-ud-Din was a very great expositor of the Quran and Hadith, and a tremendous lover of the Quran. So Maulana Muhammad Ali used to read to him the translation that he did and take guidance and amendments from him. Maulana Nur-ud-Din's love for the Quran and his interest in Maulana Muhammad Ali's translation had reached such a height that when in January 1914, following the annual gathering of 1913, he fell very ill and was so weak that even speaking exhausted him, so that on medical advice he discontinued his teaching of the Quran, even then, in a state of the most serious illness, he would still send for Maulana Muhammad Ali daily to listen to his translation and notes and give advice.

The last days of the life of Maulana Nur-ud-Din were chronicled by Dr. Mirza Yaqub Baig who was staying in Qadian in those days to treat him. This diary used to be published at that time, in February and March 1914, in every issue of the newspaper *Paigham Sulh*. It was again published in *Paigham Sulh* in 1935. Some extracts from it are given here. These relate to Maulana Muhammad Ali and his work on the English translation of the Quran and show a glimpse of Maulana Nur-ud-Din's love of the Quran. Maulana Muhammad Ali himself, once speaking of these last days of Maulana Nur-ud-Din's life, said:

“It was my good fortune that even in those days I had the opportunity to learn the Quran from him. When he was on his death bed I used to read to him notes from my English translation of the Holy Quran. He was seriously ill and even in that state he used to be waiting for when Muhammad Ali would come. And when I came to his presence, that same critically ailing Nur-ud-Din would turn into a young man. The service of the Quran that I have done is just the result of his love for the Holy Quran.” (*Paigham Sulh*, 28 March 1943)

Here are some entries from the diary of Dr. Mirza Yaqub Baig:

“9 February 1914 — This evening we were feeding *Hazur* and he said to me: ‘I have learnt something from you too’. I replied: ‘But I have learnt much from you’. He said: ‘I only know the Quran and I can only teach you that’. I said: ‘May Allah grant you a long life so that we can learn the Holy Quran from you’. He said:

‘Ask Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib about my knowledge of the Quran. Having worked very hard Maulvi sahib comes with hundreds of pages and I abridge them. He sometimes says that my opinion is better than all research.’

Then he said: ‘Maulvi sahib has pleased me very much, I am so happy. What wonderful research has he done on Gog and Magog, companions of the cave and Dhu-l-Qarnain! He has searched through encyclopaedias. How clearly he has solved this problem! How excellent!’

(*Paigham Sulh*, 15 February 1914, 28 October 1935)

“Qadian, 11 February 1914 — When Hazrat Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib arrived to read to him the translation of the Holy Quran he said to him: Come that I may live!”

(*Paigham Sulh*, 26 February 1914)

“15 February 1914 — Maulvi Sher Ali sahib, Nawab sahib, Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib, Dr. Syed Muhammad Husain sahib, Marham Isa sahib and many other friends were present. He said:

‘The issue of *kufir* and Islam is a very subtle matter, which many people have not understood’.

Mian Mahmud Ahmad sahib and Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib were sitting near the Hazrat sahib. He pointed towards them and said: Our Mian has also not understood it.”

(*Paigham Sulh*, 3 November 1935)

“14 February 1914 — Hazrat sahib is still in a critical condition. His diarrhoea is better but he is getting weaker by the day. May Allah have mercy on him. He listens to Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib’s translation of the Quran daily. His courage and determination is very great and his love for the Quran is unequalled. He says: It is the Quran which is the source of my soul and life.”

(*Paigham Sulh*, 17 February 1914)

“16 February 1914 — Yesterday Hazrat sahib was relatively better though the weakness continues. He addressed me and Khalifa Rashid-ud-Din sahib, saying:

‘For fifteen days I have completely obeyed your orders (that is, taken diet and medication according to your instructions). I used to teach seven classes daily (meaning, teaching the Quran and Hadith), but now I don’t teach even one. Let me do something now.’

He wanted permission to teach classes in the Quran. I replied:

‘Sir, at the moment you are teaching Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib. When you are stronger then you can teach a class.’

... His love for the Quran is beyond description, so much that even in this state of extreme weakness all he can think of is giving classes in the Quran and his mind keeps working on the deep meanings of the Holy Quran.

When Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib comes to read the notes of the Holy Quran to him, sometimes even before he begins Hazrat sahib gives a discourse about the topic of the translation of the day and says that throughout the night he had been consulting books and thinking about it. (He does not mean that he actually reads books; what he means is that he keeps pondering over what is written in commentaries of the Quran and books of Hadith.) Sometimes he quotes from books of Hadith or the Bible, and does it perfectly accurately. He says again and

again that his mind is fully healthy and it never stops working on the Quran.”

(*Paigham Sulh*, 19 February 1914)

“18 February 1914 — Today Hazrat sahib was very weak and frail. Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib came as usual to read notes from the Holy Quran. Although he instructed him regarding certain verses of the Quran but due to weakness he spoke with pauses. ... Then he addressed Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib and said:

‘Seeing you every day is also food for my soul’.

Then he added: ‘Maulvi sahib, you are very dear to me. I found one useful weapon (meaning Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib), full of knowledge, it is God’s grace to you’.

Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib replied: ‘It is my good fortune that I can expound your ideas’.

Hazrat sahib said: ‘It is all the grace of God. What has happened is by His grace and what will happen will be by His grace’. ... Then he added: ‘This translation will *inshallah* be beneficial in Europe, America, Africa, China, Japan and Australia’.

(*Paigham Sulh*, 3 November 1935)

“21 February 1914 — Hazrat sahib asked Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib in for a discourse of the Quran. At that time Abdul Hayy’s mother [wife of Maulana Nur-ud-Din] was also present. After the discourse Hazrat sahib got hold of Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib’s hand and slowly took it towards himself and kissed it.”

(*Paigham Sulh*, 15 November 1935)

“22 February 1914 — He was very cheerful today. When told that Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib had come to read the [translation of the] Quran he said in Punjabi: ‘He is most welcome. Let him read it. Does my brain ever get tired of it?’ Then he pointed towards his bed and said to Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib: ‘Come near me’. Then added: ‘He is very dear to me’.”

(*Paigham Sulh*, 15 November 1935)

One day Maulana Muhammad Ali was delayed. Maulana Nur-ud-Din was very weak but said in that state: “Send for my dear son, send for my dear son”. People listening to him thought that he was asking for his son Abdul Hayy, but he said again: “Bring the food for my soul, bring the food for my soul”. And he was much pleased when Maulana Muhammad Ali arrived.¹

In short, these incidents show Maulana Nur-ud-Din’s love for Maulana Muhammad Ali and his interest in the translation of the Quran. During the time when the English translation was in progress, once Mir Nasir Nawab, father-in-law of the Promised Messiah, wanted to get work started on an Urdu translation and commentary of the Holy Quran and even collected some funds for it. But Maulana Nur-ud-Din stopped him and said that the Urdu translation on behalf of the Movement would also be done by Maulana Muhammad Ali, after he had completed the English translation. Maulana Muhammad Ali stated that he was in Murree due to his ill health when Maulana Nur-ud-Din wrote to him saying that as he has also to translate the Quran in Urdu after completing his English translation, he should start doing it along with the English. Hence, according to these instructions, he started doing the Urdu translation as well, little by little, and almost six parts were seen by Maulana Nur-ud-Din.

An announcement dated 3 March 1914, that is, eleven days before the death of Maulana Nur-ud-Din, regarding the English translation of the Quran was published as an appendix to the *Review of Religions*, February 1914 issue. On the first page there is a statement by Maulana Nur-ud-Din in which he says:

“I want to draw the attention of friends, by this announcement, towards raising funds for the English translation of the Holy Quran. Up to today I have listened to the notes of twenty-three parts, which is more than three-quarters of the work, and have also seen the Urdu translation of six parts. I hope by the grace of Allah that I will complete the rest. Even during my illness I

1. This incident is not reported in Dr. Mirza Yaqub Baig’s diary but was related to Maulana Muhammad Ali by one of those present.

have been listening to the notes and dictating as well. I have spent all my life, from childhood to old age, studying the Holy Quran and pondering over it, and Allah the Most High has given me the kind of understanding of His Holy Word that very few other people have. I have always adhered to the principles of simplicity, avoidance of unfounded stories and following the obvious meaning of the Quran, and I have tried to teach others on the same lines as well. In future times too, servants of the Quran will continue to arise according to the needs of the time.

Now I want to draw the attention of friends to the expenses of publishing the English translation, and after it the Urdu translation. I hope for grace from Allah that He will not let go to waste my efforts in the service of His Word. I am also sure that those people who have a connection with me and who love me have also been granted the zeal to serve the Quran. ... This translation will *inshallah* prove to be beneficial in Europe, Africa, America, China, Japan, Australia, etc.”

After this announcement there follows a statement by Maulana Muhammad Ali in which, among other things, he says:

“To translate the Holy Quran is a monumental work. The way in which the meanings of the word of Allah have been explained, in that respect I can say that this translation of the Holy Quran will not only remove numerous misconceptions in the West and among the English speaking nations, but at the same time it will *inshallah* show the resplendent picture of Islam in such a manner that at least among fair minded people those adverse views about Islam will be overturned which Westerners have been holding till today. All this will happen only by the grace of Allah. But my hopes rest on the fact that all the important explanations given in this translation have come from a man who has devoted his entire life, from childhood to the age of 80 years, to the study and service of the Holy Quran, and has read thousands of books only to gain insight into the meanings

of some verse or other, who is familiar with classical and modern thought and the old and the new sciences, and has studied all these branches of knowledge to bring them into the service of the Quran, who is not only the leader of the Ahmadiyya Movement but is one of those rare personalities who, because of their vast study and extensive knowledge, are entitled to be leaders of communities. He is a unique individual as regards his knowledge, learning, uprightness and faith in Allah. ...

The real objective of our movement is the propagation of Islam, and in that work the propagation of the Holy Quran holds the foremost place. ... I end my appeal on a verse of the Quran which is the last one in my notes of today: ‘Behold! you are those who are called upon to spend in Allah’s way, but among you are those who are niggardly, and whoever is niggardly is niggardly against his own soul; and Allah is self-sufficient and you have need (of Him), and if you turn back He will bring in your place another people, then they will not be like you’ (47:38).

Humbly, Muhammad Ali, Qadian, 3 March 1914.”

Underneath this announcement there are two notes as follows:

1. By the time this announcement was printed, the footnotes of 26 parts had been completed.
2. On 4 March Hazrat [Maulana Nur-ud-Din] said: ‘Our English translation has been accepted by Allah. This good news has come by Divine revelation’.

The good news (*basharat*) mentioned in this quotation was revealed to a holy man of the Ahmadiyya community, Mir Abid Ali Shah, who had in a vision, while praying, heard this glad tiding. He told it to Maulana Nur-ud-Din during his last illness in the presence of Maulana Muhammad Ali and a large number of other Ahmadis. Hearing this, Maulana Nur-ud-Din, Maulana Muhammad Ali and everyone else who was present at once fell in prostration in thanksgiving (*sajda shukr*). ■

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