

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

The Light **AND** **ISLAMIC REVIEW**

**Exponent of Islam and the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement
for over eighty years**

April – June 2005

In the spirit of the above-cited verse, this periodical attempts to dispel misunderstandings about the religion of Islam and endeavors to facilitate inter-faith dialogue based on reason and rationality.

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احمدیہ انجمن اشاعت اسلام لاہور

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The Light was founded in 1921 as the organ of the AHMADIYYA ANJUMAN ISHA'AT ISLAM (Ahmadiyya Association for the Propagation of Islam) of Lahore, Pakistan. *The Islamic Review* was published in England from 1913 for over 50 years, and in the U.S.A. from 1980 to 1991. The present periodical represents the beliefs of the worldwide 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 *La ilaha ill-Allah, Muhammad-ur rasul-ullah* (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 many countries including:

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U.K.	Canada
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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.

History:

1889: Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founds 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.

1996–2002: Prof. Dr Asghar Hameed, a distinguished retired University Professor of Mathematics, and learned Islamic scholar, served as Head.

2002: Prof. Dr Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha elected Head.

Dutch Holy Quran Opening Speech

By Dr. Noman Malik

[This article was presented at the momentous occasion of the Opening of the Dutch translation of the Holy Quran, based on the English translation by Maulana Muhammad Ali on March 10, 2005 in The Hague, Netherlands. It presents an insightful look into the need for the Quran in contemporary society in the languages of the Western world.]

Value of Translations of the Holy Quran

Honorable Madame Minister Verdonk and distinguished guests, it gives us great pleasure that you have come here to share in our joy and happiness on this day of the Opening of the Dutch Holy Quran. This is truly a historic moment. Muslim populations of Western Europe are growing at a rapid rate. Many Muslims are now of second or even third generation Westerners and identify more with the countries of birth rather than with their ethnic origins. Unfortunately, due to centuries of armed conflict between Muslim and Christian nations, racial bigotry in Europe, the catastrophic events of 9/11 and the rise of terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaida justifying their violent attacks on civilians in the name of Islam, the western public has, generally, a very negative opinion of Islam.

Islam is frequently viewed as an intolerant and violent religion which is incompatible with democratic principles accepted by modern, civilized nations. These negative ideas many times translate into discriminatory acts against Muslims. Muslims, who themselves abhor the violent acts committed by terrorist organizations in the name of Islam, are frustrated and angered by this prejudice and discrimination directed against them. This is especially true for young Muslims who consider themselves as nationals of the countries of their birth and are much less inclined to accept discrimination than their immigrant parents. The resulting tension and conflict disturbs the peace of society.

Islam is fortunate in that it does not have any ecclesiastical authority or priesthood which defines its spiritual values. The Holy *Quran* is the paramount source of spiritual values and moral behavior in Islam. The *Hadith* (the sayings and practices of the Holy Prophet), the opinions of the Jurists and the general consensus of the Muslim community are the other sources, listed in their order of importance. The Holy *Quran*, however, takes precedence over the other three in all matters.

Many Muslims, however, do not understand Arabic, the language of the Holy *Quran*. Hence the value of translations such as this Dutch translation which allows Muslims to access first hand the teachings of the Holy *Quran* about any subject. It also make them much less vulnerable to

propaganda by extremist organizations, who, taking advantage of the ignorance of the *Quran* by the Muslims, try to convert them to their own violent philosophies. Another great advantage of these translations is that they will enable non-Muslim readers to appreciate the message of peace and tolerance preached by the *Quran* which should result in mutual respect and understanding between Muslims and persons of other faiths.

Concept of the Divine Being: Basis of Correcting Misconceptions

Perhaps the most common misconception about Islam is that it is an intolerant, violent religion which espouses "holy war" to forcibly convert non-Muslims to Islam. Before dealing with this specific misconception, I would like to give a short over-view of the general attitude which the Holy *Quran* inculcates in Muslims which should guide them in any and all situations they may face. This general attitude is based on the concept of the *Divine Being* as given in the Holy *Quran*. The soul of all men regardless of their religious persuasion or ethnicity is the spirit of God which he breathes into all men as stated in the following verse:

So when I have made him complete and
breathed into him of My spirit, fall down making
obeisance to Him (15:29).

The object of Man's existence is to develop those divine qualities within him by deeds so that he may attain closeness to God in this life as well as in the next:

And the soul and its perfection!
So He reveals to it its way of evil and its way
of good;
He is indeed successful who causes it to grow
And he indeed fails who buries it (91:7-10).

As man's soul is the Spirit of God which has been breathed into him, his conduct and behavior towards his fellow man will be determined by his developing the attributes of God within himself. Therefore, it is very important that we understand the attributes of God. The best description of the Divine Being and His attributes are found in the first chapter of the Holy *Quran*, the *Fatihah*:

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds,
The Beneficent, the Merciful,
Master of the day of Requital.
Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for
help.
Guide us on the right path,
The path of those upon whom Thou hast
bestowed favours,
Not those upon whom wrath is brought down,
nor those who go astray.

Allah is the proper name of God and means "the Being Who exists necessarily by Himself, comprising all the attrib-

utes of perfection". Three of these attributes are mentioned in this prayer and these serve as the prime attributes from which all other attributes are derived. The first of these is *Rabb* which is translated as *Lord*, but which actually means "one who creates and then nurtures from a lower state to a higher state any thing or affair by set laws until it reaches its state of perfection". *Nourisher unto perfection* would be the closest translation of the word *Rabb*. The word translated as *worlds* also means *nations*. Thus, God is the *Nourisher unto perfection* of all nations and not only of Muslims. Never once does God limit himself by calling himself the *Lord of Muslims* or *Arabs*. He always refers to Himself as the *Lord of mankind*. He exercises this attribute of being *Lord* or *Rabb* through His *rahma* which is translated as *mercy* but which actually means *to have so much love or tenderness for a thing that one must do good to it*. God, in his role as *Beneficent (Rahman)*, provides for men out of love everything needed for their development, material or spiritual without their having done anything to deserve it. And then if men follow God's rules and guidance, He, the *Merciful (Rahim)*, rewards them immeasurably. This attribute of Mercy is the only attribute Allah has made binding upon himself and shows his immeasurable love for mankind:

Say: To whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth? Say: To Allah. He has ordained mercy on Himself...(6:12).

If sometimes circumstances arise that nations or individuals violate God's commandments and try to destroy that which is good, then He judges them, and punishes them if needed, by His attribute of being *Master of the day of requital* or *judgment*. The punishment is never in the spirit of vengeance, but is always intended to bring about reform of an individual or nation, or to save the good from destruction. In his capacity as judge, He is mentioned approximately 300 times as the "Forgiving" and only 4 times as the "Lord of Retribution" which shows the preponderance of Forgiveness in the Divine Being. Therefore, these three basic attributes are the ones by which humanity and the whole of creation are brought to perfection. Such a broad concept of God is unrivalled among the world's scriptures.

Muslims are expected to imbibe these attributes and display them in their everyday lives. This means that just as God is *Lord* or *Nourisher unto Perfection* of men, irrespective of their religious beliefs or racial origin, so too must Muslims help in the development (physical and spiritual) of humanity without any discrimination against any group. In the same way as God does good to all of mankind through his love for humanity (i.e. His *Rahma* or *Mercy*), so too must Muslims provide for their fellow human beings out of love for them. And if Muslims are placed in a position where they have to sit in judgment and mete out punishment, forgiveness should preponderate in their decision just as it preponderates in the Divine Being. And if they have to

punish, they should do so, not in a spirit of vengeance, but rather with the intention of reforming the individual.

The *Sura Fatihah*, which contains this message, is said about thirty times a day in the congregational prayers held five times every day. When Muslims stand shoulder to shoulder and prostrate in unison before God thirty times a day and reiterate the perfect attributes of God, the Divine becomes a living force in a Muslim's life not only on an individual level, but also on a collective scale, thereby becoming a powerful impetus to serve humanity.

These are the general tenets of behavior taught by the Holy *Quran* which should govern Muslim conduct in any situation or circumstance. These general principles of action themselves should be enough of an answer to the main criticism leveled against Islam that it preaches intolerance and espouses the use of force in its spread, and that it is incompatible with democracy and dictates the oppression of women. The Holy *Quran* not only rejects such behavior, but rather on the contrary, lays down specific rules and codes of conduct which proactively move the Muslims towards tolerance, the freedom of religious choice, government by counsel, and the liberation of the oppressed.

Equality: the Natural Antidote to Religious Intolerance

The Holy *Quran* demolishes the root causes of religious intolerance by declaring that, spiritually, all people are equal as they have all the same soul, which is the spirit of God breathed into man. It states the founders of all religions are Messengers from God sent for the guidance and reform of mankind whether they are mentioned in the Holy *Quran* or not:

Surely We have sent thee with the Truth as a bearer of good news and a warner. And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them (35:24).

And (We sent) messengers We have mentioned to thee before and messengers We have not mentioned to thee...(4:164).

According to the *Quran*, the founders of all religions are one community and the Prophet Muhammad is the last in this list of messengers with the final message, the Holy *Quran*, which contains all that is good in the previous scriptures. Hence, Muslims are duty bound to respect the founder and scripture of all other religions.

According to the Holy *Quran*, spiritual development is possible for adherents of all religions and the means to attain it is the same for every one.

Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day

and does good, they have their reward with their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve (2:62).

Furthermore, the Holy Quran unequivocally acknowledge the presence of good people in all religions:

They are not all alike. Of the People of the Book there is an upright party who recite Allah's messages in the night-time and they adore (Him).

They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and they enjoin good and forbid evil and vie one with another in good deeds. And those are among the righteous.

And whatever good they do, they will not be denied it. And Allah knows those who keep their duty. (3:113-115).

In no religious scripture is freedom of religion stated more emphatically and forcefully than in 2:256 of the Holy Quran:

There is no compulsion in religion, the right way is indeed clearly distinct from error...

These are only a few of the many like verses in the Holy *Quran*. One would turn the pages of other scriptures in vain to find statements of tolerance such as these, expressed so frequently and in such a clear and forceful manner. Perhaps nowhere is the tolerant attitude more beautifully summed up than in the last section of chapter 2 of the Holy Quran where states:

The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. They all believe in God and His angels and His Books and His messengers. We make no difference between any of His messengers. And they say: We hear and obey; our Lord, Thy forgiveness (do we crave), and to Thee is the eventual course (2:285).

Misunderstanding the Concept of Jihad: an Obstacle to Understanding Islam

Closely related to the misconception that Islam is an intolerant religion is the subject of *Jihad*. *Jihad* is mistakenly understood by the majority of the western public as meaning aggressive war undertaken by Muslims to convert non-Muslims to Islam. The foregoing discussion effectively refutes the idea that forceful conversion is permitted in Islam. In fact verse 2:156 positively forbids it.

The word *Jihad* is derived from the Arabic word "*Jahd*" which means *ability, exertion* or *power*. One authority defines it as *the exertion of one's utmost power; efforts, endeavors* or *ability in dealing with an object of disappro-*

bation. Jihad, in accordance with this definition, can be applied in one of three ways; namely: against a visible enemy, against the devil and against one's self. *Jihad* as war to spread Islam is unknown equally to the Arabic Language and to the teachings of the Holy *Quran*. That the primary significance of *Jihad* is not fighting is proven by the fact that the word *jihad* is used in the Makkan revelations when even the thought of fighting had not occurred. To give two examples from the many places where the word is used in the Makkan revelations, one may view the following:

And strive hard for Allah with due striving...(22:78).

So obey not the disbelievers and strive against them a mighty striving with it (25:52).

In the former it says "And strive hard (*jahidu*) for God with due striving (*jihad*)" which means to struggle to attain nearness to God by struggling with one's passions and subduing them. In the latter verse it says "So obey not the disbelievers and strive (*jahid*) against them a mighty *striving* (*jihadan*) with it (i.e. with the Quran).

Later when the Muslims were attacked in Medina, permission to fight was given but only as defensive measure as it says in verse:

Permission (to fight) is given to those on whom war is made, because they are oppressed. And surely Allah is Able to assist them - Those who are driven from their homes without a just cause except that they say: Our Lord is Allah. (22:39,40).

Furthermore, 2:190 states:

And fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you but be not aggressive. Surely Allah loves not the aggressors.

It should be noted that in this verse, the word used for fighting is *Qital* and not *jihad*.

Fighting in these cases were always in self-defense. When one is attacked and oppressed and when the object of the enemy is to destroy Islam, then indeed fighting in such a case is also *jihad* as it is a struggle against evil. Aggressive warfare, however, is forbidden in Islam. The *Quran* clearly says that God does not love the aggressors. There are no injunctions, as in the Bible for example, to fight people and conquer their land. Not only does the *Quran* only permit defensive war, it specifically encourages peace by making its acceptance mandatory even if it is suspected that the enemy is offering peace just as a deceptive measure as stated in the following verses:

And if they incline to peace, incline thou also to it, and trust in Allah. Surely He is the Hearer, the Knower.

And if they intend to deceive thee, then surely Allah is sufficient for thee. He it is Who strengthened thee with His help and with the believers (8:61,62).

Neither in the earlier revelations of the Holy *Quran* nor in the later revelations is there the slightest indication of any injunction to propagate Islam by the sword. On the other hand, war was clearly allowed as a measure of self-defense till the end. There is not a single case of any non-Muslim being forced to accept Islam during the life of Holy Prophet.

Democracy in Islam

Closely related to the above topic is the great misconception that not only is Islam incompatible with democracy but it encourages dictatorial forms of government. You may judge and make up your own minds from the quotations of the Holy *Quran* I will cite in dealing with this topic. As I had stated in the beginning, the mind set engendered by the Holy *Quran*, by which Muslims are to be guided in any and all situations, is that stated in the *Sura Fatihah*. Whatever form of government Muslims create, according to the spirit of the *sura fatihah*, it must be a benign, beneficent, merciful and just government.

Before dealing with the form of government, I would like to quote the Holy *Quran* on what constitutes a nation or state. The *Quran* unequivocally declares the whole of mankind as a single nation and thus does away with ethnic and linguistic divisions which have wreaked so much havoc and atrocities in human history. The *Quran* declares an end to these ethnic conflicts with a single verse:

Mankind is a single nation...(2:213).

The *Quran* lays down the rule that the only criteria for worthiness is moral and spiritual excellence:

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

The form of government presented in the Holy *Quran* is clearly stated to be democratic, that is a government "by counsel".

And those who respond to their Lord and keep up prayer, and whose affairs are (decided) by counsel among themselves, and who spend out of what We have given them. (42:38).

In other words, the state apparatus has to be such that governmental decisions have to be taken by mutual consultation between the ruler and the ruled. There cannot be any dictatorship. The Holy Prophet Muhammad himself pro-

vides a practical example of this at the time of the battle of Uhud. The Holy Prophet was of the opinion that rather than fight the enemy in the open field, the Muslims should fortify Medina and fight a defensive battle. The majority of the Muslims wanted to meet the enemy on the battleground and the Prophet assented to the majority opinion. The Muslims, although not defeated in battle, suffered heavy casualties because of this decision. But even then the Holy Prophet was advised in the Holy *Quran* to adhere to the principle of forming a majority decision even if it led to a reverse:

Thus it is by Allah's mercy that thou art gentle to them. And hadst thou been rough, hard-hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around thee. So pardon them and ask protection for them, and consult them in (important) matters. But when thou hast determined, put thy trust in Allah. Surely Allah loves those who trust (in Him). (3:159).

This background firmly establishes the democratic principle of majority rule in Islam.

After laying down the principle for the form of government, the Holy *Quran* deals with the issue of selection of a leader. In 4:58 it states:

Surely Allah commands you to make over trusts to those worthy of them, and that when you judge between people, you judge with justice. Surely Allah admonishes you with what is excellent. Surely Allah is ever Hearing, Seeing. (4:58).

Note that it is the *people* who make over the trust. It is the people who choose the leader. There is no room for hereditary kingship or dictatorship in Islam.

The first four successors to the Holy Prophet, the righteous caliphs, demonstrated this practically. Hazrat Abubakr the first caliph was elected by majority vote. Another companion of the Holy Prophet, a respected *Ansar* from Madinah who was also a candidate for leader of the Muslims had given a speech giving reasons why he should be leader. Hazrat Abubakr then stood up and gave a speech as to why he should be chosen as leader instead. The assembly decided in favour of Hazrat Abubakr as Caliph. The companion who had stood as the other candidate unhesitatingly accepted Hazrat Abubakr as the caliph. This gives lie to the canard that Muslim leaders are taught by the Holy *Quran* to try to grab power at all cost and never to accept defeat. The other three caliphs, Hazrat Umar, Hazrat Uthman and Hazrat Ali were all elected by a council comprised of important companions of the Holy Prophet with unimpeachable characters.

The elections of a head of state should be based on wisdom, clear judgment and knowledge of affairs, as it is stated:

Bear patiently what they say, and remember Our servant David, the possessor of power. He ever turned (to Allah).

Truly We made the mountains subject to him, glorifying (Allah) at nightfall and sunrise, And the birds gathered together. All were obedient to him.

And We strengthened his kingdom and We gave him wisdom and a clear judgment. (38:17-20).

And their prophet said to them: Surely Allah has raised Saul to be a king over you. They said: How can he have kingdom over us while we have a greater right to kingdom than he, and he has not been granted abundance of wealth? He said: Surely Allah has chosen him above you, and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and physique. And Allah grants His kingdom to whom He pleases. And Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing. (2:247).

This will necessitate the development of a mechanism for evaluating candidates such as a free press in modern times. Furthermore, justice should form the basis of government, as is explained in the following verse:

O David, surely We have made thee a ruler in the land; so judge between men justly and follow not desire, lest it lead thee astray from the path of Allah. Those who go astray from the path of Allah, for them is surely a severe chastisement because they forgot the day of Reckoning. (38:26)

The head of state in Islam should not be above the law and may be removed for misconduct. Thus, some mechanism should be in place, such as an independent judiciary, to carry out such a function. This principle is set forth in the following way:

And do not gain access to judges thereby. (2:188).

As a practical example of this, the Caliph Umar himself had to appear as defendant in court in a civil case against him.

Conclusion

To conclude, the need for a correct understanding of Islam, by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, in modern times, is essential to the peaceful co-existence of humanity. It is, ultimately, only through the proliferation of the *Quran* that people can truly understand and appreciate this world religion and its value to civilized society. We pray that this publication of the Holy *Quran* in the Dutch language is a meaningful contribution to that end. ■

Human Rights in Islam

By Dr. Ayesha Saliha Khan

[This article was presented at the Symposium on Islam and World Peace in conjunction with the Annual Convention of the USA branch of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement held in Columbus, Ohio in August of 2004.]

Introduction

Almost 2 years ago, on September 11, 2002, a professor in my medical school stated to the class that he would like to a few minutes at the end of his biochemistry lecture to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the tragedy that devastated our country. Of course, most of the students agreed that a few moments to remember the lives of those that were lost was appropriate. Unfortunately, however, the professor's "commemoration" consisted of a 20 minute attack on Islam as a religion and the people who follow it. His talk on the attacks of 9/11, complete with power point slides, explained that the reason the attacks occurred was that the un-evolved and uncivilized nature of the average Muslim mindlessly followed the example of a barbaric prophet who (God forbid) did such things as kill the infants of mothers who dared to voice an opinion against him. He explained that the genetic make-up of the Muslim people largely predisposed them to such violent tendencies and even the very few who could be educated to overcome this, could not mount an effective response to the radicalized fundamentalists because the very Book of Islam supported the militant actions. Were this a senseless tirade, one could easily dismiss it as the crazy rant of a bigot; unfortunately, however, the professor threw up slide after slide of hard evidence in the form of the countless human rights violations and ruthless killings that go on in the many "Islamic states" that scatter the globe. He also referred the class to a website called secularislam.org so that they could see for themselves what an evil religion Islam was.

This website, www.secularislam.org, which I have briefly researched since the incident, is supposedly created by a former Muslim who has denounced Islam. The thrust of the website is in outlining Islam as a barbaric religion through the many human rights violations that occur in Islamic states. It uses some quotes from the Quran that have been quite deliberately misinterpreted to further back the proof of Islam as barbaric; but mainly, the practices of the modern *ummah* are given as proof of the moral corruptness of Islam as a religion. This tactic is not a new one as many, including the media, have used the human rights violations that occur in Islamic countries to attack Islam as a religion. As such, I feel it is important to address this issue of human rights and their relation to the religion of

Islam. In doing so, I feel that it is necessary to stick to the guide we have been given as the primary sources of behavior, as stipulated in the Quran; that is, first the Quran and then the traditions of the Holy Prophet. In addition, since the first truly Islamic State was formed under the four early caliphs, and these caliphs were *sahibaan* of the prophet and rightly guided by his example, I will use their model of an Islamic state to guide my discussion as well.

The Development of the Modern Concept of “Human Rights”

First and foremost, it is necessary to realize where this idea of codified human rights came about. This word actually started being bandied about in response to the horrible atrocities committed against humankind during the world wars. The early 20th century imperialism brought with it the dehumanization of many peoples that were different. Entire peoples were placed into the category of being closer to animals than humans and subsequently were stripped of their respect, dignity, and in more cases than not, their lives. Simultaneously, in Europe, a feeling of nationalism was rising and nations were pitted against each other in a desire to prove supremacy. Evil itself was paraded as a virtue as long as it wore the cloak of nationalism. These tensions, as you know, finally clashed in the form of World War II, and once this war was over with, mankind stood in shock of what it had done. In response, the United Nations was developed in an attempt to foster friendship between nations and in 1948 this body codified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As the declaration states in its preamble, it was developed to prevent the “barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind.” Of course, in the more than fifty years that have passed, the world has done a miserable job of living up to its promises. An article on human rights written at the Ramsey Colloquium states:

The subsequent fifty years have not been lacking in barbarous acts that outrage the conscience of mankind. After the demise of Soviet Communism in 1989-91, it was hoped that the Universal Declaration might be universally affirmed with greater clarity and persuasive force. That has not happened. Instead, the end of the Cold War has witnessed other distortions in the understanding of human rights.

We must frankly recognize that, in both theory and practice, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is today under attack.

This article goes on to make the very valid point that these rights need a moral grounding in order for them to be accepted and effective. That is, people will not respect

these rights unless they have come to recognize or abide by a moral way of life and part of their moral code, part of their beliefs, is to place the dignity of the human being, above any other worldly pursuit. Because, in the end, it is only when one realizes he/she will be accountable for every action he/she does that one is consistent in leading a moral life. While most religions recognize the dignity of the human person a delicate balance must be struck in order to develop a practical way of life for the average human so that the society one creates around oneself respects freedom of others while not allowing so much laxity as to send the community into a spiral of corruption. At the same time, one must not be so constrictive so as to trample upon the liberties of their fellow human beings. Unfortunately, the two major religions of the West err in this manner; neither provides a complete way of life that is practical to follow for all people. Largely, the reason why people have abandoned religion in the west is for its impracticality in modern life. However, when one studies Islam, one finds that not only is every aspect of the universal declaration of human rights provided for within its teachings, but also the blueprints for a practical, functional society that recognizes that, “. . . the inherent dignity and . . . the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world” (Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

Personal Freedom of a Human Being

Rather than go through each article of the Declaration of Human Rights and compare it to the Islamic teachings on that subject, I have divided the articles into four general sections, each section encompassing a number of rights. The first of these that I wish to mention is one that I think Islam is greatly maligned for, and that is personal freedom. This section deals with freedom from persecution, freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience and religion; freedom to change religion or belief, and freedom, to manifest religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance; freedom of opinion and freedom to seek, receive and impart information. At the core of the allegations against Islam is that those who do not believe, or the *kufaar*, must be slain, simply for not being Muslim. However, the truth about religious freedom in Islam is clearly laid out for us in the verse which reads, “There is no compulsion in religion—the right way is indeed clearly distinct from error” (2:256). Furthermore, the Quran goes on to explain that not only does one have the right to choose their religion free of compulsion, but also that a person may not hurt the feelings of another person by baselessly insulting their religion: “And abuse not those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest, exceeding the limits, they abuse Allah through ignorance” (6:109). In addition

to the passive dictates of not forcing religion upon people or insulting religions, believers in Islam are directed to defend those being persecuted: “And fight against them until there is no more persecution, and all religions are for Allah” (8:30). Thus, clearly Islam lays out the principle of freedom from persecution.

Ironically, the one verse from the Quran most often used to malign Islam as a brutal religion in which non-believers are killed, actually is a command to defend freedom from persecution: “And kill them wherever you find them, and drive them out from where they drove you out, and persecution is worse than slaughter” (24:191). Opponents of Islam take the first two thirds of this verse and interpret it as meaning that Muslims are given free reign to kill non-believers willy-nilly. In fact, the “*them*” of “*kill them*” is a personal pronoun referring to the people in the previous verse who are the aggressors actively fighting against the Muslims at that time. As the last third of the verse, “persecution is worse than slaughter” clarifies, these aggressors were to be killed not because they were non-believers, but rather because they had started a war in order to persecute those who had peacefully accepted for themselves Islam as a religion. Thus Islam lays out that a person is free to choose their religion, they have the right not to be insulted for any reason but especially because of the religion they choose, and also, they have the right to live free of persecution under Muslim rule.

Finally, on the subject of religious freedom, an allegation levied against Islam is that while religious freedom is allowed, death is prescribed for apostasy, or reverting from Islam. In actuality, those who revert from Islam are spoken of in the Quran repeatedly but never stating that they should be killed or even punished. The following verses delineate this matter:

O you who believe, should one of you turn back from his religion, then surely Allah will bring a people whom He shall love and they too shall love Him (5:54).

Those who disbelief after their believing, then increase in disbelief, their repentance shall not be accepted, and these are they that go astray (3:89).

It should be noted that these verses simply stress the fact that whatever consequences the actions of reverting from Islam carry, it is God who will exact them. There is no punishment to be rendered at the hands of any human. I would also like to draw attention to the practical example that exists for us of an Islamic society devoid of persecution and entailing these freedoms under the rule of Prophet Muhammad and the early Caliphate. Under the Prophet Muhammad’s rule in Medina, many Jewish tribes lived free

from duress with all the rights of the State granted to them and the added freedom of being judged by their law rather than Muslim law in the event of wrong doing. The same rights and freedoms were granted to people of other religions living under the Islamic empire at the time of the first four caliphates. Various arguments are raised against Islam at this point. The first is that Islam spread because those conquered by the Islamic empire were given the choice of Islam or death. Clearly this cannot be true as many Jews and Christians as well as persons following other religions lived freely under the caliphate. Another argument is that though these various people lived under Islamic rule, they had to pay a special tax, called *jizyah*, by virtue of their being non-believers. In actuality, *jizyah* means “compensation” and this tax was levied against non-believers for the protection of life and property under Islamic law. In essence, the non-believers were free from the burden of compulsory inscription into the army; the Muslims bore the burden of military life and sacrificed their lives to defend the country in which Muslims and non-Muslims alike were abiding. Interestingly, the soldiers of the US army are exempt from many of the taxes the rest of the country’s citizens must pay—a similar concept to the one of *jizyah*. Furthermore, service in the army in lieu of *jizyah* was accepted. Also, not all non-believers had to pay this tax; exemptions were given to those under 20, over 50, women, the blind and the poor. Muslims, in addition, had to pay *zakat*, a tax that the non-believers were exempt from.

Freedom of expression, forming an opinion and then sharing it also falls into this category. There are two beautiful examples from the tradition of the Holy Prophet and his caliphs that dispel the notion that Islam stifles freedom of speech. The first entails Umar, the second caliph and a great friend of the Prophet, stipulating to the Muslim people that the *mehr*, or wedding gift given to the bride, should be decreased so as not to be extravagant. A woman from amongst the crowd of citizens spoke out against Umar by stating that he could not place a limit on what Allah had not limited. Umar considered what she said and seeing the truth of her statement replied that ‘the women of Mecca have more knowledge than I’. Though a simple incident, this delineates a very important precept: an average citizen was free to form an opinion and express it freely to the leader of the country. In return, the leader quite calmly considered her input and accepted it. Secondly, The Prophet is known to have stated, “The most excellent of jihad is the uttering of truth in the presence of an unjust ruler”. Thus not only does Islam allow freedom of independent opinions, it encourages them.

A related freedom is that of knowledge and conscience. The Quran repeatedly stresses the importance of using one’s mind and acquiring knowledge. The Quran repeatedly

orders a person to reflect, “reflect on the creation of the heavens and earth” (3:189). We are told in the Quran to pray, “*Rabbi- zidni ilma*” or “O my Lord, increase my knowledge” (20:114). The Quran further states, “And whoever is given knowledge is indeed given abundant wealth” (2:269). The Prophet said, “The seeking of knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim” (Bukhari-Msh.2). Practically, in the community of the Prophet, this translated into a system of compulsory education for all, young, old, male or female, rich or poor. Thus, not only is the right to free thought protected in Islam, an Islamic state provides for the education of all its citizens. I would be remiss if I did not mention that the reason for this great stress laid on education is because Islam itself is a religion to be accepted with full use of the human mind. As such it appeals to reason and logic and must be studied in order to satisfy the human mind that it is free of contradiction. For this reason, the intellectual development of mankind is given importance only second to the tenet of faith, as recorded by Bukhari.

Social Life of a Human Being

I would like to now move on to the second section of rights and freedoms that I put under the general heading of rights related to the social life of a human being. First and foremost among these are equal rights in marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. “Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State” (UN Declaration of Human Rights). The Islamic requirement for a marriage is that, “each party should satisfy itself as to the desirability of choosing the other as a partner for life” (Muslim 40). Likewise both partners are equal if they should desire to end the marriage. However, much as the universal declaration of human rights states, Islam recognizes the family as the fundamental unit of society and as such defines roles for its members so that the family unit may function. Furthermore, while allowing divorce by the husband or wife, it discourages it in favor of preservation of the family unit. Also, just as the declaration calls for the protection of the family unit by the State, Islam provides for this practically by allocating a portion of State funds to those families that cannot provide for themselves. We have before us the practical example of Hazart Umar who personally saw to the welfare of the bereaved families who had lost members in the great plague of Syria by making arrangements regarding their property and children. The declaration of human rights also calls for the special protection of the mother and child. Numerous instances enjoining special care of the mother and child can be seen in Islam. One in particular of note is that Aishah, the wife of the Prophet, gave up her last date fruit to a mother and her two daughters.

Into this scope of social life also fall the UN articles regarding the right to work, that is free choice of employment and just working conditions, and the right to own property. In this regard, the Quran states, “For men is the benefit of what they earn. And for women is the benefit of what they earn” (4:32). Thus the idea of just and equal employment is laid down. The Prophet stated, “No one eats better food than that which he eats out of the work of his own hand”. The Prophet gave a great deal of respect to any honest work. He himself worked as a laborer during the day even while he was the ruler of the Islamic empire. He also established that the relation between a laborer and employer were of two equal parties in a contract; in essence this is the basis of organized labor (Muhammad Ali, *Religion of Islam*, 584,585).

Furthermore, the Quran states, “O you who believe, devour not your property among yourselves by illegal methods except that it be trading by your mutual consent” (4:29). In this verse, individual property is safeguarded from illegal means of acquisition. A fitting tenet of Islam that highlights the right to own property is shown in the concept of *mahr*. *Mahr* is the wedding gift given to a bride before marriage by her husband so that even if she does not work, she has her own independent property and as such is not dependent on him in case circumstances necessitate her to leave the marriage. Once again, it is clear that Islam provides a practical application of the ideas that yet remain theoretical in the declaration of human rights. Another great contribution of Islam to social life concerns what the declaration calls “just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family.” In other words, the declaration calls for a kind of social welfare that raises the standard of living for those who cannot provide for themselves an existence worthy of human dignity. Unfortunately, this is just one of the many aspects of the declaration that have not been fulfilled in most countries. Even in the United States, a country of not only adequate means but excess means, people live in a state of poverty. Indeed, many of those in the inner city or rural country do not lead existences worthy of human dignity. Many women, girls, and boys are forced to degrade themselves simply to provide basic necessities for themselves or their families. In the society laid down in the Quran, however, such discrepancies in ways of life should not exist. There are numerous times that the Quran encourages voluntary charity, a sampling of which is as follows:

And give 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 and to set slaves free (2:177).

If you manifest charity, how excellent it is! And if you hide it and give it to the poor, it is good for you (2:271).

And what will make thee comprehend what the uphill road is? (It is) . . .to feed in a day of hunger an orphan nearly related, Or the poor man lying in the dust (90:13-16).

In addition to this charity, however, there is an obligatory charity or *zakat* that a Muslim is required to pay. Chapter 51 verse 19 of the Holy Quran states, “And in their wealth there was a due share for the beggar and for one who is denied (good)”. *Zakat* in its simplest terms, is a practical means for the State to provide funds to those in need. However, there is a far more beneficence in this act than first realized. The word *zakat* actually means “it grew”, which alludes to the fact that the wealth of a society grows by providing for the poorest members. Not only are they given individual means, but they are also given opportunity to rise as productive members of society and contribute back to it. Thus this system benefits the community as a whole. (Muhammad Ali, *Religion of Islam*, 342, 343). I think it is important to note, however, that Islam very much recognizes the benefits of a capitalist system while allowing for the ideals of a socialist system; that is, it allows mankind to benefit from what they earn while still setting a 2.5% obligatory charity rate to benefit society. It thus provides for the dignity of every member of society while keeping in motion the wheels of a functioning economic system.

Personal Liberties and Protection of Rights

The third section I would like to move onto includes the rights of life, liberty, security of person, right to due process of law and freedom from cruel punishment. Although much of these subjects has been or will be covered in other speeches, I want to hit upon the one example often used to paint Islam as a cruel religion. Specifically, it is the idea that in Islam adultery is punishable by stoning to death of the offender. The Quran clearly states, “The adulteress and the adulterer, flog each of them with a hundred stripes” (24:2). Some continue to argue this point and state that flogging is too cruel a punishment but it must be further noticed that at the time of the Prophet, these floggings were meant more to embarrass than to torture. As such, flogging was not carried out by a whip, nor was the person required to take light clothes off for the flogging. As previously stated, Islam is a very practical religion, and to maintain the family unit, prevent the destruction of household peace, and prevent innocent children of the dep-

rivation of their parents, surely mild flogging is not too a cruel a punishment. In addition, such a strict requirement is demanded to establish a charge of adultery on a person that the risk of wrongful conviction is virtually zero (24:4). I also want to mention in this section the idea of security of person. Islamically, a person is not only secure from the injustices of others, but also from the interference of others into the person’s life. The Quran lays down a concept that was very novel to the people of the 7th century when it states, “O you who believe, enter not houses other than your own houses, until you have asked permission and saluted their inmates” (24:27). Thus the sanctity of the family is guarded against the intrusion of others and the basis for the “right to privacy” was established.

Equality of Human Beings

The fourth of my four sections deals with equality of all human beings. The greatest charge brought against Islam in this regard is of women not being given equal standing as men. I will leave the details of this topic to the next speech which deals solely with this issue and will instead point out the generalities of equality in Islam. I have left this section for the end because it is the crux of the need for a declaration of human rights. In an unbalanced society, the majority is in no need for protection of their rights. It is the minority: the weak, the poor, the oppressed race or ethnic group, the persecuted religion or class—these are the people in need of protection. Besides safeguarding the rights of these minorities in the ways I have outlined, Islam, at the very outset sought to erase the differences that distinguished these minorities and established equality amongst all the people of the community. The Quran simply declares, “All men are a single nation” (2:213). Distinction between people is only on the basis of their righteousness. The Quran states, “O mankind, surely We have created you from a male and a female, and made you tribes that you may know each other. Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful of you” (49:13). During his life, the Prophet Muhammad took specific actions to erase ideas of difference amongst his people. Firstly, he bestowed upon Bilal, an African and a slave, the high honor of being the first to recite the *Adhan* (call to prayer) and appointed him to this office; this position constituted second highest bearer of the mosque after himself. Secondly, he set the example that in prayer, people of all walks of life, regardless of color or socioeconomic status were to stand side by side, in equal ranks before their Creator. Furthermore, Islam also eliminated the idea of differences due to nationality. A radical concept was introduced by unifying people not on the basis of this nation or that, but rather on the basis of humanity. Maulana Muhammad Ali in his world-renowned treatise *The Religion of Islam* states:

Thus Islam laid the basis of a unification of humanity which no other religion has ever dreamed of; a brotherhood of man which knows no bounds of color, race, country, language or even of rank; of a unity of human race beyond which human conception cannot go. It recognizes the equality not only of the civil and political rights of men but also of their spiritual rights (9,10).

The Quran notes this unity by stating, “. . . be not dis-united. And remember Allah’s favor to you when you were enemies, then he united your hearts so by His favor you became brethren” (3:102). In addition to equality before Allah, Islam insists on treating every person equitably, “. . . let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably” (5:8). Some argue that because the Quran recognizes slavery, Islam accepts the institution of slavery and is, as such, an unequal religion. Even a cursory glance at the Quran or the practice of the Prophet shows that this is not true. For, in the Quran, Muslims are commanded to set slaves free and even buy slaves from others for the purpose of setting them free. There is great virtue in this act: “And what will make thee comprehend what the uphill road is? (It is) to set free a slave, Or to feed in a day of hunger an orphan nearly related, or the poor man lying in the dust” (90:13-16). The truth is that the Quran does recognize slavery just as it recognizes the poor and orphans in this above verse. These are the conditions that people were in at the time of the Prophet. Recognizing their existence is far from allowing or encouraging them. In principle and in practice, Islam establishes that all people are equal, regardless of sex, wealth, status, or nationality. Even in this great country, not all people are stated to be equal for non-Americans are largely regarded as inferior to Americans. Often one hears on the news that 20 people were killed, one of them American. As though the tragedy is the loss of an American life and the millions of others lives lost are not equal to that one American life. Islam erases these artificially drawn lines and establishes that all people are one nation.

Conclusion

In the end, I would like to draw special attention to the last article of the declaration: “In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.” This last article makes so clear a fundamental truth that so many seem to forget today. When all is said and done, the complaint so many people have against Islam is that it is an unduly restrictive religion. It stifles

humanity; does not allow them to live freely. However, there is nothing in Islam that is restrictive for no reason. It is not a religion of empty rituals to be performed for the pleasure of a vengeful God. To the contrary, it is an extremely plastic religion, easily applied to so many cultures. Every single act a Muslim performs has a distinct reason and all those reasons aim to advance the spiritual condition of mankind, to harvest those qualities in mankind that are beautiful and divine; for it is by developing these qualities in ourselves that we draw closer to the source of those qualities. The Quran actually challenges humans to try and find contradiction in its mandates, to try and find something that goes against reason: “Thou seest no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent. Then look again: Can thou see any disorder? Then turn thy eye again and again—thy look will return to thee confused, while it is fatigued” (67:3,4). So no limitation is exacted without reason. And these are those limitations that secure the rights and freedoms of others and meet the requirements of morality. The many Muslims in the world today show that Muslims can easily adapt to so many ways of life, from the far east to the US, and this is because of the great amount of freedom allowed between the commandments given. Again, Maulana Muhammad Ali in *The Religion of Islam* clarifies, “Anything not expressly forbidden is allowed.” This simple truth actually makes Islam a very easy religion to follow, preserving personal freedom and securing the freedom of others. It also lays the basis of Islam—revelation and reason. Islam is the only religion that does not ask people to disregard their God given mind and accept religion blindly.

The last article states: Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein. Similarly, Islam is not just a set of rules and regulations. It is a spirit of being—it is peace. What an injustice we commit when we pervert the teachings of our beautiful, peaceful religion for political gain or worldly supremacy?! The story I shared with you in the beginning was the time in my life when I was truly struck by the need for our movement. I have always known that there are many in this country who oppose Islam but I was still surprised to see a professor in a medical school systematically attack an entire people. What truly shocked me, however, was the complete inability of the dozen or so Muslims scattered throughout the class to defend their religion with even a semblance of an intelligent argument. To the contrary, they actually believed that Islam does indeed call for the ruthless violation of human rights in many circumstances! So how can we blame the western world for maligning our religion? It is the Muslim world who forgets

that, “Allah loves the doers of good (to others).” Some nurture hatred in their heart for transgressions committed against them and take up the sword for that reason. Some use religion to manipulate the masses for their own gain. But the reason this can occur is that those truly educated in the way of Islam are few and far between and often remain silent. We are so blessed to have an insight into our religion given to us by the Reformer of the 14th century Hijrah, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad; but we have a great responsibility too. We are the ones who have to answer back when professors, friends, media, government officials attack our religion, because we are the ones who have the tools to fight their attacks. So I would like to end with the prayer of Prophet Moses who asked Allah for strength when going before the Pharaoh in the following words: “My Lord, expand my breast for me. And ease my affair for me. And loose the not from my tongue, (That) they may understand my word” (20:25-28). ■

A Commentary on Mirza Masroor Ahmad’s khutba dealing with the “ever-lasting” Qadiani khilafat

By Dr. Zahid Aziz

[This article comments on a khutba delivered by the Khalifa (religious head) of the Qadian Section of the Ahmadiyya Movement, with particular emphasis on the sources cited therein and the inferences drawn therefrom. Dr. Zahid Aziz establishes a clear case of misrepresentation on the part of the Qadiani Khalifa pertaining to his analysis of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s writings and directs attention to the deep sense of anxiety exhibited by the Qadiani Khalifa about his Jamaat’s own elder’s views.]

Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the *Khalifa* of the Qadian/Rabwah Section of the Ahmadiyya Movement, delivered a Friday *khutba* in London on 27 May 2005 on the topic of their concept of *khilafat*. This is the day every year when they celebrate the establishment of their *khilafat*. The original Urdu text of the *khutba* is published in their weekly Urdu organ *Al-Fazl International* for its issue dated 10 June, available on their website www.alislam.org.

The main thrust of his speech was that their *khilafat* is an institution that will last forever. He informs us at the outset that a specific reason for delivering this *khutba* is that some unknown person in their movement has been circulating an article written some years ago by Mirza Bashir

Ahmad, younger brother of the second *khalifa* Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, in which the author argued that the *khilafat* in their Jamaat will not remain in its pure form forever, but will degenerate into a hereditary institution after the first four *khalifas*. Apparently, Mirza Bashir Ahmad drew a parallel with the history of the early *khalifas* of Islam, when after the first four *khalifas*, who were truly worthy of holding this office, the headship deteriorated into a worldly monarchy in which succession was by descent, and not by the true Islamic worth of a person.

As Mirza Masroor Ahmad is the fifth *khalifa* of his movement, he is naturally anxious to dispel any such suggestion about the decay of their *khilafat*. He says that this was a personal view of Mirza Bashir Ahmad, and that Mirza Mahmud Ahmad had, at the time this article was published, issued a clarification that there is no Divine law that a *khilafat* must always suffer the same fate that befell the early Islamic *khilafat* after the four righteous *khalifas*. Whatever explanation of the comments of Mirza Bashir Ahmad may be given, the fact remains that a senior-most figure in the Qadian/Rabwah Jamaat believed that their *khilafat* institution would not endure in an uncorrupted form beyond four *khalifas*.

According to Mirza Masroor Ahmad, and also according to the clarification by Mirza Mahmud Ahmad as quoted in this *khutba*, the decline of the early Islamic *khilafat* after four *khalifas* is not a general law but was particular to the circumstances and conditions of that time. Otherwise, true *khilafat* continues to exist as long as the community remains on the right path. Explaining the meaning of the verse 24:55 of the Holy Quran, Mirza Masroor Ahmad declares:

God’s promise of establishing a *khilafat* is with those people who are strong in faith and are doing good deeds. When believers are setting such a standard, Allah will continue the institution of *khilafat* according to His promises. Through a *khalifa* after the death of a prophet, and through the next *khalifa* after the death of every *khalifa*, the state of fear will be changed into a state of security. We have been witnessing this for the past one hundred years. But the condition is that the people must be worshippers of the One God and must not be involved in *shirk* due to the lure of the attractions of this world. If they are ungrateful, neglectful of worship, and prefer materialistic considerations over the commands of Allah, then due to this disobedience they will be deprived of this blessing. (pages 5,6, *Al-Fazl International*, 10 June 2005).

Later, after giving examples of the devotion shown towards the institution of *khilafat* by his followers in Africa, Masroor *sahib* says:

Inshallah, these good deeds and this sincerity will always be the basis for the establishment of the *khilafat* in the Ahmadiyya community. *Inshallah*, those who do good deeds will always continue to be produced and the institution of *khilafat* shall go on forever. It is a misgiving to say that, because there have been four *khalifas* as there were four *khalifas* in the early *khilafat*, therefore this has come to an end, and that Allah had only this much power that after bestowing the blessing of *khilafat* for a period three times longer than that of the early righteous *khilafat*, His powers have been exhausted.? (page 7, col. 1).

According to Mirza Masroor Ahmad's interpretation, his present-day community of followers is adhering to such a high standard of religious faith and practice that *khilafat* continues to be bestowed upon them as a reward, but the early Muslims had fallen below the same standard just thirty years after the Holy Prophet Muhammad's death so that Allah withdrew from them the blessings of the institution of *khilafat*. Thirty years after the Holy Prophet's death many of his distinguished companions were still alive, eminent persons such as his wife Aisha were still alive, and the highly-esteemed *tabi'in* (those belonging to the next generation after the companions) were yet reaching their prime. But according to the Qadiani stance, those people were not a good enough Muslim community as compared to today's Qadiani Jamaat and hence they were punished by having the blessing of *khilafat* withdrawn from them, the same blessing which is still with the Qadiani Jamaat and will continue with it forever! In terms of verse 24:55, the Muslim community thirty years after the Holy Prophet had degenerated into a group of ungrateful sinners (*fasiqs*) while today's Qadiani Jamaat has true faith and does good deeds. Nothing could be further from the truth than this patently absurd, false and outrageous claim.

Misrepresentation of the Promised Messiah

Just before the extract quoted above, Mirza Masroor Ahmad puts forward the following statement from the Promised Messiahs book *Shahadat-ul-Quran* to claim that he had written that the *khilafat* in the Ahmadiyya Movement will last forever:

Now it should be remembered that although there are many verses of this kind in the Holy Quran, giving the glad tidings of an ever-lasting *khilafat* in this *Umma*, and Hadith is full of reports about this as well, for the moment this much will suffice for those who accept proven facts like a great treasure. There could be no worse misgiving about Islam than to consider it to be a dead religion and to believe its blessings to be limited only to the first generation. (*Ruhani Khazain*, v. 6, p. 355).

A reading of the book *Shahadat-ul-Quran* will show that to present the words "an ever-lasting *khilafat* in this *Umma*" as referring to the so-called *khilafat* in the Ahmadiyya Movement after the Promised Messiah is nothing but deceit and distortion. What he is discussing at length in this book is that the *khilafat* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad did not end after the four righteous *khalifas*, as believed by many Muslims, but that it continued throughout the history of Islam in the form of the appearance of *mujaddids* and saints, and that he is one of those *mujaddids* and saints. Leaving aside the rest of the book, if we simply continue the above statement, it reads as follows:

Does the Book (i.e. the Quran) which opens the door to ever-lasting blessings teach the disheartening lesson that there is no blessing or *khilafat* to look forward to, but that all has been left behind? **Prophets certainly cannot arise in this *Umma***, but if *khalifas* of the Holy Prophet do not come either, showing the marvels of spiritual life from time to time, then the spirituality of Islam comes to an end. In that case, such a faith can bear no comparison to the spiritual power and glory of the Mosaic religion in which thousands of spiritual *khalifas* continued to arise over a period of fourteen centuries. (p. 355,356).

He says that because "prophets certainly cannot arise in this *Umma*", hence in their place *khalifas to the Holy Prophet* have been coming throughout all the centuries of Islam, not just for the first thirty years, and he himself is the *khalifa* of his time. But Mirza Masroor Ahmad says the *opposite*: that the institution of *khilafat* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad was closed after the first thirty years, and it was restarted only after the appearance of the next prophet, namely, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

Similarly, only a few lines before the statement quoted by Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the Promised Messiah writes:

Given that God had explained by use of an analogy that He would raise *khalifas* in this *Umma* in the same manner as He raised *khalifas* after Moses, one should see what course did God follow after the death of Moses: did He send *khalifas* for only thirty years, or did He extend this series for fourteen hundred years? The grace of God upon our Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, was far greater than that which was upon Moses, how could it be that the series of successors of Moses should be continued for fourteen hundred years, but here the *khilafat* terminate after a mere thirty years? (p. 354,355).

It is absolutely crystal clear from a reading of *Shahadat-ul-Quran*, without the least doubt whatsoever, that the ever-lasting *khilafat* that the Promised Messiah is writing about is the coming of the *mujaddids* and *auliya* throughout the history of Islam, of which he himself is one, and there is no mention whatsoever in this book that it refers to a *khilafat* to be established after the alleged prophet Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

Mirza Masroor Ahmad, explaining the meaning of a hadith, says:

The Holy Prophet Muhammad has declared the institution of *khilafat* after the Promised Messiah to be forever? (p. 6, col. 1).

But the position outlined in the book *Shahadat-ul-Quran* can be expressed as follows:

The Promised Messiah has declared the institution of *khilafat* after the Holy Prophet Muhammad to be forever.

Observe the contrast between these positions. In this book Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has discussed at length the *khilafat* verse of the Quran (24:55), the verse ever being repeated by Mirza Masroor Ahmad and his Jamaat. The explanation given by the Promised Messiah is that in this verse it is promised that just as after Moses God instituted “a long chain of temporal as well as spiritual *khilafat*, by way of reward and favour, which continued for about fourteen hundred years, and ended with Jesus” (p. 322), by analogy the same would happen after the Holy Prophet Muhammad:

For fourteen hundred years, Moses was granted servants of the law who were messengers of God and His inspired ones; and this series ended with a messenger who invited to the truth, not with the sword, but merely by mercy and good morals. Therefore, so it was that our Holy Prophet was also granted servants of the law who, in accordance with the hadith “The learned ones among my followers are like the prophets of the Israelites”, were Divinely inspired (*mulham*) and recipients of Divine communication (*muhaddas*). And just as in the last era of the Mosaic law was sent Jesus who, not with the sword, but with good morals and mercy invited to the truth, likewise for this law God sent the Promised Messiah so that he too should invite to the right path only by good morals, mercy and heavenly lights. Thus the dispensation of Muhammad attained complete analogy with the dispensation of Moses.

If it is said that in the Mosaic order those who were raised for the advocacy of the faith were

prophets, and Jesus was also a prophet, the reply is that the prophet (*nabi*) and the saint (*muhaddas*) are on a par in terms of being sent (*mursal*). Just as God has called prophets as *mursal*, so has He termed saints as *mursal*. As our Master and Messenger, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, is the *Khatam-ul-anbiya*, and after him no prophet can come, for this reason saints (*muhaddas*) have been substituted for prophets in this religious system. It is proved conclusively that the saints (*muhaddas*) of this *Umma*, in terms of their number and the length of their order, are equal to the apostles of the Israelites. In fact, another verse to the same effect is as follows. (p. 323,324).

Then he quotes the *khilafat* verse, 24:55, indicating that this is the explanation of that verse.

The Promised Messiah claims that he himself has come as a *muhaddas* and a *mujaddid* in fulfilment of the promise in the above verse to raise *khalifas* to the Holy Prophet Muhammad:

Now it has been proved from the Holy Quran that in this blessed *Umma* a system of ever-lasting *khilafat* has been established in the manner and likeness of the one which was established in the dispensation of Moses, and there is merely a verbal difference to the effect that at that time, for the support of the Mosaic religion, there used to arise prophets, but now saints (*muhaddas*) come. This proof implies the acceptance of the proposition that just as in the last days of the Mosaic law a prophet arose named Jesus, similarly it is necessary that in this *Umma* too there should arise a *muhaddas*, in the likeness of that prophet and of his time. (p. 356,357).

Secondly, the perfect and complete likeness between the *khilafat* to the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the successorship to Moses renders imperative the coming of the Promised Messiah, as is understood from the following verse: “God has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will surely make them *khalifas* in the earth as He made those before them to be *khalifa*” (24:55). This clearly conveys that a *mujaddid* must come bearing the name of the Messiah in the fourteenth century, because the Muhammadi *khilafat* can only attain the most complete and total likeness to the Mosaic successorship if the first and the last respective phases have a high degree of mutual conformity. (p. 363,364).

Thus it is Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who was raised

as *khalifa* according to the promise in verse 24:55, and not the so-called *khalifas* of the Messiah after him.

Qadiani Jamaat disagrees with beliefs in Shahadat-ul-Quran

While Mirza Masroor Ahmad quotes from *Shahadat-ul-Quran*, yet he and his Jamaat hold totally the opposite beliefs to the beliefs expressed by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in this book about his claims. We list these differences below:

1. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad writes that the Holy Prophet Muhammad being the *Khatam-ul-anbiya* means that no prophet can come after him (p. 323?324), and ?prophets certainly cannot arise in this *Umma*? (p. 355). The Qadiani Jama?at holds that prophets can most certainly arise in this *Umma* despite the Holy Prophet Muhammad being the *Khatam-ul-anbiya*.

2. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad writes that the *khilafat* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad has **continued** throughout the history of Islam after the righteous *khilafat* of the first thirty years (p. 323). The Qadiani Jama?at holds that the *khilafat* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad **came to an end** after the righteous *khilafat* of the first thirty years, and was only re-established after Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in the form of *khilafat* to the Promised Messiah.

3. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad writes that the Messiah to arise among Muslims should be a saint (*muhaddas*) and reformer (*mujaddid*) of this *Umma*, and not a prophet. The Qadiani Jama?at holds that *muhaddas* and *mujaddid* is not a sufficiently high rank for the Promised Messiah and he must be a prophet.

4. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad writes that he has come in fulfilment of the *khilafat* verse of the Holy Quran as a *khalifa* of the Holy Prophet. The Qadiani Jamaat holds that he is not a part of the *khilafat* of the Holy Prophet but is himself a prophet who establishes a *khilafat* after him.

If Qadiani khilafat is ever-lasting, no prophet can come in future

If the so-called Qadiani *khilafat* is considered by its adherents as ever-lasting, then this contradicts their own vociferous belief that the door of prophethood is open for all time after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. For, if a prophet arose in future his own *khilafat* would be established after him. On the other hand, the same Qadiani Jamaat has been vigorously proclaiming for ninety years that, according to the Quran and Hadith, prophethood continues after the Holy Prophet Muhammad and prophets will always be arising among Muslims. In his book *Anwar-i Khilafat*, published in 1916, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad argued as follows against those who believe in the finality of prophethood:

Likewise they say that however much a person may advance in virtue and goodness, but God

will never make him a prophet, never raise him to that dignity. Their thinking thus is due to not assigning to Allah the attributes due to Him; otherwise, to say nothing of one prophet, *I say there shall be thousands of prophets*. They question the prophethood of the Promised Messiah, *but I say, even now there can be a prophet*. (p. 62; p. 124 of the online edition; emphasis is ours).

I ask, is prophethood a mercy or a curse? If it is a mercy, then why has it come to an end after the Holy Prophet Muhammad? It should have increased all the more after him. He was a prophet of a very great status. Therefore a prophet who comes after him must also be of a great status, not that no one could at all become a prophet. (p. 64; p. 126 of the online edition).

Even if someone placed a sword on my neck and told me to say that no prophet can come after the Holy Prophet, I would say to him: you are a liar, a great liar, prophets can come after the Holy Prophet, most certainly they can.? (p. 65; p. 127 of the online edition)

(The online edition of *Anwar-i Khilafat* is on the Qadiani Jamaat website at the address: <http://www.alislam.org/urdu/au/AU3-5.pdf>. The page numbers for that edition have been indicated above.)

Mirza Masroor Ahmad needs to explain what would happen to the *khilafat* in his Jamaat if one of these many prophets arose, who can come according to Mirza Mahmud Ahmad.

Does a khalifa know beforehand that he will be elected?

Mirza Masroor Ahmad answers an objection of someone who wrote to him saying: you have become a *khalifa* by a great deal of pre-planning. Within his reply he also mentions:

Often outsiders ask me this question. I always give them the reply given by the third *khalifa*. Someone also asked him: Did you know that you would be chosen as *khalifa*? His reply was: Even the thought of that would not occur to any person having any sense. (page 6, col. 1).

According to Mirza Nasir Ahmad's reply, even the thought of becoming *khalifa* had not occurred to him. For the interest of our readers, I refer to an article in *Paigham Sulh* by the Lahore Ahmadi missionary Sayyid Akhtar Husain Gilani, published in 1944, some 21 years before Mirza Nasir Ahmad became *khalifa*. It is written in it:

Mirza Mahmud Ahmad has prepared his son Nasir Ahmad for the *khilafat*. Mirza Nasir

Ahmad is the president of Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya etc. The young are being instructed to render obedience to him, and in every way he is being put forward for the *khilafat* in various ways. It is definite that the *khilafat* will pass down as an inheritance in the family of Mirza Mahmud Ahmad. Its foundation is being laid on concepts such as the promised progeny, and it is impossible now that a non-related person could become *khalifa*. (*Paigham Sulh*, 31 May 1944, p. 13).

It appears that it was being publicly discussed for years before Mirza Nasir Ahmad became *khalifa* that he was being prepared for this office, and yet it is claimed that even this thought had never occurred to him!

In connection with whether a non-related person would be eligible for becoming *khalifa*, Mirza Masroor Ahmad seems to have given an indication of this in his *khutba*:

So, instead of being crafty and cunning, you should become righteous and remain engaged in prayer so that this gift of *khilafat* continues among you forever. To preserve this honour, which for the past 97 years has been bestowed upon people of a certain country or upon the family of the Promised Messiah, what is required is prayers and good deeds. Whichever nation excels in sincerity, devotion and piety, will be the one which holds aloft this banner because it is the promise of God with the Promised Messiah that this power is eternal. (p. 6, 7).

Mirza Masroor Ahmad should clarify more explicitly whether he means by this statement that any person belonging to any nation, and far from being related to the Promised Messiahs family, is eligible for becoming *khalifa* on the sole basis of righteousness, sincerity and doing of good deeds.

Whose fear?

We are repeatedly told, as Mirza Masroor Ahmad also says in his *khutba*, that a *khalifa* arises when the community is in a state of desperate fear and anxiety, and he changes their fear into security. However, from his *khutba* the reverse appears to be the case. Here it is the *khalifa* who is in a state of deep apprehension about his position and he appeals to his community to change *his fear* into security by stopping criticising him and accepting him as worthy of his office. Those who are truly appointed by Allah, whether a prophet or a *mujaddid* such as Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, do not rely on, or ask for, or even care for, the support of any human beings in order to remain in their Divinely-appointed office. ■

Certainty In Faith

By Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

[This article deals with the very basis of a living religion; that is, certainty in faith. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad discusses this issue, ever so eloquently, proving that it is only by certainty in faith that one may abstain from wrongdoing and the achievement of this state can only be attained through the means of prayer. This article was originally published in the May 1903 edition of the "Review of Religions".]

Seekers after truth! Open your ears and listen to the words which I speak that there is no wealth in the world equal to certainty in faith. It is certainty which breaks the shackles of sin. It is certainty that gives you the owner of doing deeds of virtue. It is certainty, and certainty alone, which makes a man a true and sincere lover of God. Can you keep from sin without certainty? Have you the power to overcome the passions of flesh without witnessing a manifestation of certainty? Do you think that our lives can be transformed to purity unaided by the light of certainty? Is it possible for you to attain to true happiness without certainty? Does there exist under heaven any redemption or atonement which can take away your sins? Has the son of Mary the power to release you from the bondage of sin with his supposed blood? Speak not a lie at which the earth might cleave asunder, for Jesus himself stood in need of certainty for his own salvation. To him it was granted and therefore he was saved. Woe to the Christians who deceive the world by saying that they have been purified of their sins by the blood of Jesus, whereas they are soaked in sin from head to feet. They do not know who their God is. They are drunk with wine but the pure intoxication which descends from heaven is not known to them. They do not lead their lives in the service of the Master and are, therefore, devoid of the spiritual blessings granted to the pure in life.

Remember that except by the light of certainty you cannot come out of a life of darkness nor can the holy spirit descend upon you. Blessed are they who have found the wealth of certainty for they shall see God. Blessed are they whose doubts are set at rest for they shall be delivered from sin. Blessed are you when the wealth of certainty is given to you for then you shall cease to sin. Sin vanishes away when certainty finds an entrance. Can you thrust your hand into a hole in which you see a poisonous serpent or stand in a place where a volcano is raining stones, or where lightning is falling or which is the vault of a ferocious lion or where destructive plague prevails? If you have the same certainty about the destructive nature of sin as about the destruction which volcanic matter or a plague works, it is impossible that you should disobey God's commandments and go against His will or break off the connection of sincerity and love with Him.

Ye people that have been invited to virtue and righteousness, know it for certain that the Divine attraction cannot be generated in you nor the impure stain of sin washed off from your faces until your hearts flow with certainty. If you think that your lifeless traditional belief gives you certainty, it is nothing but an elusion. Had you the desired certainty, you would not have been destitute of its consequences. You do not keep back from sin, you do not eschew evil, you do not take the forward step that you ought to take and you do not fear God as you ought to fear Him. Where is your certainty then? Do you ever thrust your hand into a hole when you are certain that it has a poisonous snake? Can you take a single morsel of a food which you certainly know to be poisoned? Or can you go inadvertently and unguarded into a jungle which you certainly know to be the abode of man-eaters? How is it then that your hands, and your feet, and your eyes, and your ears are bold in the commission of sin, notwithstanding your alleged certainty in relation to God and the reward and punishment of good and evil deeds? Sin cannot overcome certainty. How can you throw yourselves into burning and consuming fire when you see it with your eyes? The citadels of certainty rise high to heaven, and Satan cannot ascend them. If any one has been purified, it is through certainty that he has found this blessing.

Certainty gives the power to meet every hardship, so much so that it makes the monarch throw away the royal scepter and don the garments of a *dervish*. Certainty lightens the labor and smoothes the path. Certainty enables a man to see God. Every atonement is false and every redemption vain, for to righteousness there is no other way but certainty. It is certainty which releases a man from the bondage of sin, carries him to God and makes him surpass even the angels in his sincerity and perseverance. The religion that has not the means to bring about a certainty, is false. The religion which has nothing but idle tales of the marvels of the past, is false. The eternal and unchangeable God is even now as He was in the past ages, and His wonderful powers are the same as they were before now, and He has the same might to show His wonderful signs as He had at any previous time. Why then trust in tales and not seek the living manifestations of the power of God? That religion is nothing but the way to perdition whose miracles and prophecies are stories and those people are ruined to whom God has not revealed Himself and who have not been purified by the hand of God through certainty. As a man is drawn to indulgence in his carnal passions on account of the animal gratification which he feels in them, similarly he is attracted to God with a mighty magnetism when he has once tasted the heavenly bliss. His beauty then so enchants him that all else besides Him is naught to him. No man is ever freed from the slavery of sin unless he has a certain knowledge of God and His power and of the reward and punishment of good and evil deeds.

The root from which every insolence grows is the lack of certainty, and the person who has any access to a certain knowledge regarding the Divine Being, dare not go against His will. If the owner of the house knows that a heavy flood is sure to sweep away his house or that it has caught fire and a very small space is left, he cannot stay in the house. How do you then, notwithstanding your pretensions to certainty as to the reward and punishment of good and evil deeds, remain in the dangerous condition in which you are? Open your eyes and consider the Divine laws which you see working in the world. Be not the rats which go downwards but be the pigeons which fly upwards and ascend into the height of the heaven. Do not turn to sin after you have sworn repentance and be not like the serpent which after stripping off its skin is still the same old serpent. Remember death for it is coming nearer you and you are unaware of its approach. Try to purify yourselves for no one who is not himself purified can see the Holy One.

But how can you find this blessing? Almighty God Himself has said: "Seek the assistance of God through patience and prayer". Prayer must be addressed to God with true humbleness of heart and must contain the praise and sanctification of God, *istighfar* and the invoking of Divine blessings on the Holy Prophet. When you say your prayers, do not like the ignorant deem it a sin to utter words in your prayer in any but the sacred language. Their *istighfar* and prayers are only lifeless ceremonies. Therefore, when you say your prayers, address you supplications to God with humility and submissiveness in your own language, reciting the passages of the Holy Quran which is the Word of God and the prayers taught by the Holy Prophet in the Arabic language, for when you pray to God in your own language, your words have a greater efficacy and your hearts, as they realize the depth of the meaning of these words, bow down before God with greater submission. ■

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