

*“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 2008

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

◆ *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 worldwide branches of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam, Lahore.

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Editor: Fazeel S. Khan

Assistant Editor: Fatima Z. Rahman

Circulation: Mrs. Samina Malik.

Contact information:

'The Light', P.O. Box 3370, Dublin, Ohio 43016, U.S.A.

Phone: 614 – 873 1030 • Fax: 614 – 873 1022

E-mails: aaail@aol.com

Website: www.muslim.org

The main objective 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:

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

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.

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.

About the Special Commemorative Issue

By Fazeel S. Khan, Esq.



**Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad
(d. May 26, 1908)**

**Mujadid of the 14th Century Hijra,
Mahdi, Promised Messiah and
Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam**

This issue of *The Light and Islamic Review* (April – June 2008) contains three articles about Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the fourteenth century *Mujadid* (Reformer) and founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, who returned to his Maker one hundred years ago on May 26, 1908. *Inalillahi wa inalillahi rajiun* – “Surely we belong to Allah and certainly it is to Him that we all must return”.

The first article, titled “**The Goal of Spiritual Reform**”, introduces Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad by outlining the objective of his reform. The content of this article is a reproduction, with slight modifications, of the last chapter of the newly published first volume of *The Great Reformer*. *The Great Reformer* is a biography of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, translated into English by Dr. Hamid Rahman from the original written in Urdu by Dr. Basharat Ahmad. In this article, Dr. Bahsarat Ahmad describes the desperate plight of the Muslim nation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when western colonialism was in full force. To remedy the decline from the glory days when Muslims were the torchbearers of modern civilization, calls for the re-establishment of an Islamic empire were rampant. Notwithstanding, a voice from the distant and isolated village of Qadian in India offered an alternative solution: establishing God’s kingship within the hearts of men. Dr. Basharat

Ahmad explains how Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad provided a solution to the fallen stature of the Muslims based on spiritual, not material, grounds and explains that this objective was the sole purpose for the creation of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam.

The second article, titled “**Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and the Holy Quran**”, provides an overview of the basis underlying Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s goal of spiritual reformation. Mrs. Samina Malik explains that Hazrat Mirza’s passion for spiritually uplifting a fallen Muslim nation was based on his love for the Holy Quran. It was his recognition of its unique characteristics and his understanding of its deep insights and divine truths that caused Hazrat Mirza to boldly advance the Holy Quran as the cure to a suffering Muslim world. Accordingly, Mrs. Malik explains, the organization he created, the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, is founded on the principle of propagating the correct principles of Islam to the world so that the truth of Islam may become manifest and the Quran may once again bring about a spiritual transformation in the hearts of men just as it did in the time of the Holy Prophet.

The third article, titled “**One Hundred Years Later, His Teachings Still Needed**”, provides specific illustrations of the reforms advanced by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Dr. Zahid Aziz puts forward Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s explanations of the true significance of *Jihad* in Islam as a prime example of one of his reforms that is still sorely needed today. Dr. Aziz also relates Hazrat Mirza’s teachings on Muslims relations with non-Muslims as another example of one of his reforms of which the contemporary Muslim world is in dire need. Further, Dr. Aziz explains that the greatest of all reforms was Hazrat Mirza’s emphasis on the Quran being given the status as the highest authority in Islam, above all traditions and juristic opinions. The practical application of this reform itself, Dr. Aziz explains, provides the basis for remedying the various misconceptions concerning Islam, particularly relating to popular subjects such as jihad, freedom of religion, tolerance, apostasy, rights of women, etc.

As is quite evident to any objective observer, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a reformer *par excellence*. His reformatory work surfaced at a time when the Muslim world was experiencing its greatest trials and tribulations. While others viewed material progress as the remedy to the Muslim world’s political, social, military and religious decline, he called for the reformation of the soul of each member of the

Islamic nation as the cure for its prevailing ills. And this reformation was not based on strict and rigid applications of mundane rules. Rather, the reformation advanced by Hazrat Mirza was based on instilling the spirituality of the faith back into the hearts of the Muslims. Clearly, this need for a spiritual reformation, based on logic and reason, is as applicable today as it was one hundred years ago. This centenary death anniversary of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad provides a valuable opportunity for all to reassess the reforms proffered by this great reformer.

With this introduction, I hope you enjoy the three articles that make up this special commemorative issue of *The Light and Islamic Review*. ■

The Goal of Spiritual Reform

An excerpt of the newly published biography of
Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad,
“The Great Reformer”

Hazrat Mirza's advent took place at a time when Western colonialism was at its height. The dominant issue engaging the attention of nations and individuals in the colonized world was how to get rid of the colonial yoke and to establish their own realm. In the Muslim mind, too, the progress of Islam had become synonymous with the achievement of a kingdom. Accordingly, Muslims were disappointed, and perhaps even disgusted, when *Hazrat Mirza* stated that the emotive factors in the progress of Islam had historically always been reason, argument and its spirituality, and this would continue to be so in the future. The use of force in gaining adherents for Islam, he maintained, was totally absurd.

This disappointment and disgust was perhaps all the more severe because Muslims were under the mistaken notion that the mission of the Promised Messiah and the *Mahdi* was to convert infidels at the point of the sword and establish an Islamic kingdom. This wrong notion was a major reason why the Muslims at large saw no great benefit in accepting a Messiah and *Mahdi* who was not going to fight and win them a kingdom. If the intention was not to establish a kingdom, they asked, then what alternative goal was *Hazrat Mirza* setting for the Muslims? This is a valid question that deserves a full reply.

History repeats itself with respect to the two Messiahs

History sometimes has a strange way of repeating itself. A major hurdle for Muslims in accepting

Hazrat Mirza as the Messiah was the false notion that the Promised Messiah will win them a kingdom. They, therefore, reasoned that if he was genuinely the Messiah, why did he not establish for them a kingdom? This mistaken notion of Muslims was exactly akin to the mistaken notion of Israelites with respect to their Messiah. Jews also believed that, when the Messiah would come, he would restore to them the kingdom of David. However, when the Messiah came, he came only with a humble and mystic majesty, and not the worldly trappings and grandeur that the Israelites were expecting. The result was that the Israelite nation rejected him for they desired a Messiah who would set up a kingdom for them. In fact, when Jesus was being led to the site of crucifixion, they jeered him by placing a crown of thorns on his head and shouting, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.” Essentially, history repeated itself with the second Messiah. When Muslims saw that *Hazrat Mirza* was only advocating reason, arguments and spirituality as the means for advancing Islam, they rejected him because they desired a kingdom. Their argument was: “If *Mirza sahib* is the Messiah and the *Mahdi*, why does he not get us a kingdom?”

The example of Jesus

Before we delve into the strategy of *Hazrat Mirza*, it is instructive to consider the strategy of Jesus, with whom he claimed a likeness. Jesus came as a Messiah under exactly the same conditions as *Hazrat Mirza*, the second Messiah. Jesus came at a time when his nation was under Roman rule. He did not forthwith announce a jihad against the Roman Government but embarked on a strategy of moral uplift to rebuild his nation. His nation, however, was oblivious of its debased condition and depraved morals, and was just focused on one issue, i.e. how to obtain a kingdom. The fact is that no nation can acquire a kingdom unless it has the necessary qualities needed to attain one. However, Israelites were hasty in rejecting Jesus, and as a result, were cursed by a long period of enslavement. Did *Hazrat Mirza* not come under the same conditions as Jesus? His nation was living as the subject of the British, and like Jesus, he did not forthwith announce a jihad with the sword but embarked on a program of building the moral fiber of the nation. But the Muslims hastily rejected him just like the Jews had done earlier.

The goal of Messengers and Appointees of God

Those seeking to rebuild a nation always have a goal. For political leaders who seek only this world, the most important goal is to obtain a kingdom. But do

appointees of God and spiritual reformers also have the same goal? A glance at the history of Messengers and Appointees of God makes it abundantly clear that this is certainly not the case. As a matter of fact, to allege that they pursue such a goal is to insult them because, for them, the only goal worthy of pursuing is God; even to consider any other goal is tantamount to setting up an equal with God, and this runs against the grain of their strictly Unitarian beliefs. Their only goal in life is to see the name of God glorified in this world and to spread in it the teaching of “there is no god but Allah.” In other words, the kingdom they seek to establish is the kingdom of God and not the kingdom of man. This is the only political philosophy that can rightly be called an Islamic political philosophy.

The kingdom of God is established in the heart

It must be remembered that the kingdom of God is established in the hearts of men. It is superfluous to establish God’s kingdom physically because his kingship already encompasses the heavens and the earth, as clearly stated in the Quran, “His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth” (57:2). Jesus and his disciples supplicated earnestly for the kingdom of heaven to be established on earth but it was not until the time of the Holy Prophet, and through his efforts, that the kingdom of heaven, in its unparalleled splendor, was established on this earth. It was the kingship of God, in fact, that took hold of the hearts and minds of the Holy Prophet’s disciples, and their obeisance to God’s kingship and adherence to its laws was so perfect that it remains unrivalled in the annals of history. This Unity of God and his kingship is the goal of the prophets and messengers, and full obeisance to this goal is called *Al-Islam* (complete submission). It is this goal that is before them as they go about the task of rebuilding their nation.

The example of the Holy Prophet

Hazrat Mirza was the slave of and the caliph of the Holy Prophet and, as such, he could not have a goal other than that of his master. It needs to be determined then, what was the goal of the Holy Prophet? As mentioned above, the goal of all prophets and messengers is to establish “there is no god but Allah,” and all their efforts are directed at establishing the Unity and kingship of God. It is obvious, therefore, that the goal of the Holy Prophet could have been none other than this. It is true that certain inimical members of the Christian clergy and others have accused the Holy Prophet of coveting a worldly empire, but every researcher and student of history knows that this is a mere fabrication and a grave

calumny. The residents of Makkah offered him wealth, women and a kingdom, if only he abandoned the propagation of One God, but he rejected their offer with contempt, and did not abjure the goal of establishing the Unity of God and His kingship even for a moment. This goal is so lofty that it totally dwarfs all worldly goals.

All worldly goals are tainted to some degree by self-interest and desires, whether of an individual or a nation. Those who pursue such goals are never free from the bondage of their souls and that of Satan, even if they are successful in obtaining a worldly kingdom. However, pursuing the goal of propagating God’s Unity and His kingship releases a person completely from the bondage of the self and its desires. The rebuilding of the nation that takes place under these circumstances develops a national character that is so pure and lofty that no worldly program of nation-building can match it in excellence and perfection. By the same token, all worldly cultures and civilizations pale by comparison with the godly culture and civilization that emerges from following the goal of God’s Unity and His kingship.

Although those who seek to establish the kingship of God do not chase after worldly kingdoms, worldly kingdoms come looking for them, and prostrate themselves at their feet. The example of the Holy Prophet and his nation is before us. His sole objective was to glorify the Name of God in the world, and to establish His Unity and kingship in the hearts of men, but in the process, the change that took place in the character of the nation was truly amazing. An ignorant, iconoclastic, uncivilized and barbarous nation turned into a highly civilized and godly nation before which worldly kingdoms could not stand and kept collapsing at their feet. This success was the result of their character that gave them the Divinely ordained right to be the caliphs of God on earth in accordance with the Quranic verse: “...that my righteous servants will inherit the earth” (21:105). The meaning of the verse is that when a nation has been rebuilt and its character transformed, then it deserves to inherit God’s earth.

The Holy Prophet’s opponents allege that his aim was merely to obtain a worldly kingdom. Such an allegation is a clear insult and an utter misrepresentation. The goal of a God-fearing benevolent person cannot be so inferior. His heart is a temple in which God alone is worshipped and there is no place in it for the idol of a worldly kingdom. His goal is only to establish the Unity of God and His kingship in the hearts of men. However, when the kingship of God is

established in the hearts of men, an overt consequence of it is that worldly kingdoms also fall under the sway of such men. It is only if a kingdom is inhabited by such a nation that it can rightly be called the kingship of God on earth, and it is only such a kingdom that can be called an Islamic kingdom. In such a kingdom, the kingship of God and the sanctity of his laws are so sacrosanct in the hearts of its citizens that their obedience totally dominates any individualistic, expedient or political consideration. A Muslim ruler cannot be called an Islamic ruler unless he is obedient to the paramount kingship of God, and relegates considerations of expediency, politics and self to the sanctity and respect for the Divine laws.

The means for establishing the kingship of God

Thus, the real goal of all prophets, messengers, and of our Master, the Holy Prophet, was the establishment of God's kingship in the hearts of men. What is implied by 'God's kingship in the hearts of men?' The history of religions and our understanding of the Quran tell us that this means a belief in the living God, i.e. the creation of a conviction in the hearts of men that there is a God, Whose will dominates the affairs of men, and that success can only be achieved by following His guidance and laws. This living belief provides the emotive power for the actions of men, and as belief intensifies in the promises of God, the spirit of sacrifice and selflessness also intensifies within them. This is the essential process that shapes the national character. When the establishment of God's Oneness and His kingship becomes the goal of men, a necessary corollary of this lofty goal is a cessation of personal disputes and wrangling, and the development of real unity and discipline, which is the foundation of not only spiritual progress but also of material advancement. When the process of nation-building is complete, and a nation has developed national character, unity and discipline, empires of the world automatically become their destiny.

Hazrat Mirza's strategy for establishing God's kingship

It needs to be determined whether *Hazrat Mirza* followed the strategy of his Master, the Holy Prophet, for establishing the kingship of God and to what extent he used the above-mentioned means to build his nation. When *Hazrat Mirza* was appointed to the station of *Mujaddid* (reformer) and Messiah, the condition of Muslims was pathetic. The loss of faith in a living God had led to an erosion of a sterling national character, and a lack of confidence in the promises of God had resulted in a state of hopelessness. These

are conditions, which if they develop in a nation paralyze its will to climb out of the abyss of degradation and adversity, and ultimately result in its destruction. It is instructive to review in detail *Hazrat Mirza's* strategy to counter these traits.

1. Built national character by restoring faith in a living God

The term 'national character' here is synonymous with 'Islamic character'. The reason is that Islam is not confined to one geographical or ethnic nation and, in fact, it levels geographical and ethnic barriers to create a new nation of its own whose nationals are called Muslims, and whose citizenship is the world. Hence, the 'national character of Muslims' and 'Islamic character' are interchangeable terms.

Muslims were devoid of national character at the time of *Hazrat Mirza's* advent. This was a serious shortcoming, for without national character, a nation can obtain neither sovereignty nor respect in the eyes of other nations, let alone work for the spread of its religion. The common trait underlying the success of the western imperial nations and the great respect in which they were held was the spirit of their citizens to sacrifice everything for their country; these individuals could never be persuaded to do anything against the interest of their country. In sharp contrast, the price of an Indian Muslim's faith and integrity was no more than a few acres of land, an estate, a title or a position. There was no dearth of Muslims in any area of India willing to slit the throats of their brother Muslims for a paltry sum of money. Can such a nation ever hope to be free and self-governing, or command respect of others? To associate the noble ideas of freedom, governance and respect with such people is to insult these lofty ideals. Generally, the condition of Muslims even today is that they put their self before the interest of Islam; killing of Muslims and selling out their nation are commonplace and have become a means to accumulate wealth and prestige. Have the events of the recent past not shown that the most serious shortcoming among the Muslims is the absence of national character? Weren't many respectable members of the society exposed as dishonest, treacherous and self-serving when entrusted with power for a short period? Did not the hope created by various movements for instilling life and vigor in the nation dissipate like burst bubbles? And did the self not win every time whenever there was a clash of self versus the nation? This state of affairs results from a loss of genuine faith in God in the hearts of Muslims.

The foundation of the Muslim nation rests not on any geographical territory or ethnicity but on a religion – Islam, whose essence is obedience to the kingship of God. When Muslims' faith in God weakened, the importance of religion in their life diminished, their national cohesiveness came unglued, and their feeling of oneness and unity began to dissipate. The kingship of God lost its hold on their heart, and they became individuals motivated by desires and worldly objectives. The result was that their national, i.e. Islamic, character became badly mauled. The need of the hour was to strengthen the same foundation on which the Holy Prophet had built the edifice of the glorious Islamic nation fourteen centuries ago. The building block of this foundation was a living faith that cemented the kingship of God in the hearts of Muslims. Once the foundation was strengthened, the Islamic nation could be reeled in towards the culture and civilization necessary for the kingship of God to flourish and for the Islamic character to be nurtured. This national character is the distinctive feature of the Islamic nation and the emotive force in all aspects of its material and spiritual development.

It is only a living faith in God that establishes His kingship in the hearts of men, and results in complete obedience to His commands. Unless the rule of God is firmly entrenched in a person's heart, he is not likely to obey His commands. It was for this reason that the foremost thing *Hazrat Mirza* stressed in his public pronouncements was faith and conviction in the living God. He strongly emphasized that there is a God, and He is a living God Who even today, as He did in ancient times, provides evidence of His Being by speaking with humans, and provides proof of His dominant will by showing Heavenly signs. *Hazrat Mirza* claimed that he had personally experienced the veracity of this statement and gave glad tidings to all seekers of truth to come to him, and experience a connection with the living God that will refresh their faith, and make their life fruitful. Accordingly, the living God began to dwell in the hearts of those who heeded his call and established a connection with him, and the kingdom of God took hold of their hearts so firmly that they submitted completely to God and thereby joined the elite rank of His servants. Their pious actions and sacrifices were reminiscent of the early righteous Muslims, and distinguished them from their contemporary Muslims, who were sadly lacking in similar actions. It is this living faith that enables this party (*Ahmadiyya* Organization for the Propagation of Islam, Lahore) to forge ahead steadily despite its small size and stiff resistance from

the opposition. By the grace of God and by His power, every step that this party takes moves it forward and never backwards.

There is no doubt that acts of righteousness, and a spirit of sacrifice are corollaries of a living faith in a person's heart, but in order to make assurance doubly assure, *Hazrat Mirza* required every disciple to pledge, "I will give precedence to religion over matters of this world." In practical terms, this means that whenever there is a conflict between personal interests or desires and Islamic interests, the individual will sacrifice everything personal for the larger Islamic interests. It is this spirit of sacrifice that develops and sustains life in a nation; without it, the superstructure of a nation rests on a sand dune and is likely to collapse with a single gust of wind.

The origin of Muslim nationhood lies in religion, which must take precedence in a Muslim's life over his individual desires and wishes for things of this world. Given this premise, the national character that needs to be developed in the Muslim nation must be based on the envelopment of the heart with the kingship of God and on its corollary, "I will give precedence to religion over this world." This implies that every individual of the Muslim nation must stand ready to sacrifice personal desires and worldly aims in obedience to the dictates of God's kingship. In other words, a Muslim must have no hesitation to sacrifice this world for his religion. This was the pledge *Hazrat Mirza* took from his disciples and the one he wanted to take from all Muslims. He desired to drill this maxim into the minds of all Muslim men and women, young and old, so that their lost national or Islamic character – the character responsible for the birth and rise of nations both materially and spiritually - may once again be restored.

If Muslims had hearkened the call of this Heaven-appointed leader, the world would have seen the development of a magnificent national character among Muslims. Their lost respectability would have been restored and they would have become heir to kingdoms in a short period of time. If only Muslims had worked to develop this character, then the mighty naval armada, and the air prowess of the British would not have been any match for them; nor would the Congress and the Hindu *Mahasabah* have been able to harm a hair of their head. Gandhi had told the Indian nation to wear homespun cloth, and he would guarantee them self-rule. *Hazrat Mirza* presented a more elaborate code of conduct to the Muslims that fitted their peculiar situation better. He advised them

to develop an Islamic character and to wholeheartedly accept the kingship of God by giving Islam precedence over their person and self-interest or, in other words, to become true Muslims. If they made this transformation, then their lost respectability in the comity of nations would be restored and they would become heir to kingdoms. This was also the promise *Hazrat* Mirza had received from God in the following revelation:

As in the time of (Amir) Khusro,
The Muslim was made a Muslim again.

Alas! A majority of Muslims did not heed this call. They wanted to reach the roof but without a ladder; they desired a kingdom but without paying attention to the necessary means for its acquisition. They did not understand that a kingdom founded on the basis of national character is durable and a means of mercy and blessing, but one obtained by force is unstable and frequently a source of evil and misfortune for the world. A kingdom for the sake of kingdom is meaningless unless it is also good, and enhances the welfare of its citizens.

2. Strengthened the faith of Muslims and gave them news of the spiritual dominance of Islam and its great future at a time of Muslim political decline

In the period immediately preceding the advent of *Hazrat* Mirza, the Muslim political power had suffered a serious decline. Most of the Islamic kingdoms had been lost to the colonial powers one after the other or were in the process of being lost. In India, the Mughal Empire had ceased to exist, and had been replaced by British rule. Egypt, too, had passed into British hands. In Sudan, the British had quelled the revolt of the Sudanese *Mahdi* and annexed that country. The French had conquered large tracts of Northern Africa, including the countries of Algeria, Tunis and part of Morocco. Spain had occupied the rest of Morocco and Italy had taken over Tripoli. The Islamic kingdom of Zanzibar had been divided between Germany and Britain. Turkmenistan had been swallowed by Russia, and Iran was gasping in Russian clutches. Afghanistan had been reduced to a client state of the British, who had a stranglehold over its politics. The Ottoman Empire, which was the pride of Muslims and had the honor of being the guardian of the Two Sacred Mosques, was gasping like a sick person. Weakened by repeated Russian attacks and European political intrigues, political pundits predicted its demise in the near future. Sultan Tippu, the ruler of Mysore in Deccan - the only remaining Muslim

kingdom in India, bravely confronted the British in these difficult times, but he was defeated and martyred by the British. The kingdom of Mysore then passed into British and Hindu hands, and with it the decline of the Muslim power was complete. A British commentator wrote on this occasion: "The death of Sultan Tippu has effectively brought the Muslim power in the world to an end." The person who composed the eulogy for the tombstone of Sultan Tippu reflected the sentiments of all the Muslims when he wrote: "Today the greatness of India and Turkey has come to an end." In short, this was a period when the Muslim political power had hit its nadir and Muslims everywhere were in a state of despair.

Unfortunately, the Muslims of the time were laboring under the delusion that political power was an essential prerequisite for religious ascendancy. Since Muslims had lost political power, they felt there was no way Islam could be a dominant religion in the world again. A survey of contemporary literature, both prose and poetry, and the statements of Muslim leaders and scholars of the time bears ample testimony to the doom and gloom that enveloped the Muslim psyche. The general impression was that Islam had staged a last stand with the valiant but unsuccessful effort of Sultan Tippu, and his failure had closed all avenues for reemergence of Islam. *Maulana* Altaf Hussain Hali, a famous poet of India during this time, most poignantly portrayed this sense of hopelessness and despair in an elegy called *Musaddas Hali*. A reading of this elegy fills one with sorrow and brings tears to the eyes. A few verses of his poem are translated below:

You have heard the tales of the rich in full,
The ways of the intellectuals have also been
narrated in full.

The condition of the nobles is evident to you in full,
They are all sitting ready to stray at the lightest pull.

This dilapidated house, any moment could be falling,
The column below its center of gravity has shifted from its calling.

It is only a small sample, that which has transpired,
Of events in which our friends will be mired.

He who has fallen from his perch so high,
Is doomed by history in the dirt to lie.

Although not much remains in this nation so
totally stalled,
Tis not the end; it is going to be further mauled.

Confronted by a hostile world and finding no savior descending from heaven to assist them, many Muslims became disillusioned with their religion. The despair and hopelessness that gripped Muslims at this time had no comparable precedent in Islamic history; not even at the time of the devastation of the Ommeyyades, the destruction of the Abbassides and the decline of Muslim power in Spain had the Muslim nation felt so dejected. This sense of hopelessness was universal and, as any knowledgeable individual is aware, this condition is very dangerous because it paralyses the will, and stifles the motivation to act. Such persons or nations then have no expectation and continue in a state of limbo, waiting to die.

At a time like this, it was crucial for someone to appear who would dispel this pall of despair and restore the same faith, hope and conviction that had propelled the Muslims, bearing the message of God's Unity, from the desert of Arabia to Spain in the west and China in the east. This was a time when a heavenly reformer or a messiah was needed to diagnose the illnesses of Muslims and to prescribe appropriate remedies, and whose holy personality would breathe a new spiritual life into the dead hearts of Muslims. At this moment of universal doom and gloom, Allah, in accordance with His promise: "Surely We have revealed the Reminder, and surely We are its Guardian" (15:9), sent Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian as a *Mujaddid* at the head of the fourteenth century *hijri*. He immediately proceeded to reassure the Muslim nation, mired in despair, with the following message: Hearken! The God of Islam is a living God; He exists today as He did fourteen hundred years ago and, in fact, has existed forever. He is the same God Who revealed the Quran and chose Islam as the religion of humanity for all times to come. This same God has sent me so that I may demonstrate that this religion excels all others in accordance with the promise contained in the Quran - "He may make it (the religion of Islam) prevail over all religions" (48:28). Although the apparent political dominance of Islam is at an end, the moment has come for its spiritual dominance.

Hazrat Mirza focused his attention on establishing faith in the living God in the hearts of the Muslims so that the promise given in the Quran, "...and you will have the upper hand if you are believers" (3:139),

may be fulfilled. He gave Muslims the glad tidings of God's help and protection, and thereby lifted the pall of doom and gloom that had enveloped the hearts of Muslims; this restored their will to act. In order to convert faith into action and foster the spirit of sacrifice, he asked his disciples to take the pledge, "I will give precedence to religion over the affairs of this world." It is ideals like these that build national character, and provide the underpinnings of living nations. He called upon Muslims to forget sectarianism, and unite against the enemies of Islam under the banner of, "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His prophet." He urged them to focus, once again, on this ancient goal that had lost its central importance in Muslim life. A corollary of this goal was to wage jihad for the establishment of God's kingship, but *Hazrat Mirza* made it clear that the sword could not achieve this objective. While other Muslim religious and political leaders were paying lip service to jihad with the sword, *Hazrat Mirza* clearly saw the looming battle as a fight between Islamic and non-Islamic cultures where the weapon of choice would be the Quran on one side and western materialistic philosophies on the other. The West was bent upon settling all the old scores against Islam. It had almost totally annihilated the Islamic kingdoms, and was now determined to erase Islamic religion, culture and civilization from the face of this earth. The time had come to counter the western materialism with Islamic spiritualism, and this could only be accomplished by waging a mighty jihad with the Quran. The Holy Quran itself suggested this strategy in the verse "Strive against them a mighty striving with it (Quran)" (25:52).

Muslims at this critical juncture confronted a situation similar to that faced by Muslims in the Makkan period during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet.¹ The overwhelming superior power of the ruling infidels had been countered then with a policy of patience and prayer, and striving peacefully to take the message of Islam to the infidels. The need of the hour was to follow a similar policy. God willing, just as the weakness of the Makkan period had given place to spiritual and temporal dominance in the Madinan period, similar results may now follow.

Thus, *Hazrat Mirza* dissipated the pall of gloom that had enveloped Muslims and was dragging them down into a bottomless pit of degradation and despair. His statements and speeches and, above all, his momentous books portrayed such a beautiful face of Islam that hope, which had almost died, sprouted

again in the hearts of Muslim intellectuals that Islam would once more prevail in this world. The spirituality of Islam was acknowledged even by European writers as the following quotation from the book, *Wither Islam*, shows: “The current materialistic culture of Europe can only survive if it rectifies its shortcomings by blending with the spiritual culture of Islam.”

To summarize, Allah, the Most High, started a new period of Islam’s domination on the heels of a period in which the Muslim power had declined. This new period was initiated with the advent of a spiritual doctor who transformed the pall of doom and gloom into a new era of hope and assurance. The hearts of those who took the pledge at the hands of *Hazrat Mirza* were filled with such hope, assurance and certainty that they considered it a pleasure to bear all kinds of trials and tribulations for the fulfillment of this goal, and felt a spiritual joy in sacrificing their wealth and life for this purpose. This trait continues even now in the disciples of *Hazrat Mirza*. Physical hurdles do not deter them from carrying the message of Islam to every corner of the world. They do not tire or lose hope because of the faith and confidence that has been instilled in them by God through the *Mujaddid* of the time. And their faith and confidence is renewed by the assistance of Allah that comes to their succor from the most unexpected sources.

The fallout of the great Movement started by *Hazrat Mirza* benefited even those Muslims who did not establish a direct relationship with him by making them shed their sense of despondency and hopelessness. Thus, the impact of *Hazrat Mirza* was twofold. First, he produced the magnificent literature that caused Islam to prevail against all other religions, philosophies and atheistic doctrines in the world. This literature was published in the form of books, magazines, newspapers and posters, and was distributed throughout the east and the west. Second, as a result of the supplications and prayers of this man of God, the Muslim nation as a whole was able to replace its sense of despair and despondency by thoughts of Islamic renaissance and domination; this newfound optimism spread through the Muslim nation like a wildfire. Thus, the spiritual bounty of this Divinely ordained, religious mentor became the harbinger of God’s blessings or as the Quran puts it: “good news before His mercy” (25:48), which set in motion a wave of optimism about Islam’s future. The current sign of activity and striving among Muslims is the result of this newborn confidence. Thus, the

credit for pulling a nation out of despair and gloom, and setting it squarely on the path of nation-building rightly belongs to *Hazrat Mirza*, and this was by no means a small achievement. However, this was not an accidental result but one preordained by God for He had informed *Hazrat Mirza* in the following revelation that this was the objective of his advent:

March (ahead); for your time is nigh,
And the steps of the Muslims are firmly rooted
on the minaret most high.

Is this accomplishment not sufficient proof to convince men of intelligence of his genuineness?

Allah has provided a test in the Quran that can be used to test the genuineness of anyone claiming to be a caliph or successor of the Holy Prophet. This test is contained in the verse known as *Istakhlaf*, “...and that He will surely establish for them their religion, which he has chosen for them, and that He will surely give them security in exchange after their fear” (24:55). Thus, the Quran states that the distinctive sign of a true successor of the Holy Prophet is the establishment of religion, and the transformation of the state of fear into one of tranquility. The Caliphate of Abu Bakar first fulfilled this criterion of true succession in the early history of Islam, and *Hazrat Mirza* fulfilled it in this later period. Using this criterion, if *Hazrat Mirza* does not qualify as a caliph of the Holy Prophet, who else can? One may close one’s eyes to reality, but the fact is that all the signs of a true caliph of the Holy Prophet were fulfilled in their entirety.

3. United the nation by providing a lofty goal

In addition to hope and faith, the other essential ingredients for the ascendancy of a nation are unity and organization. *Hazrat Mirza* made it clear to Muslims that their goal was only, “There is no deity worthy of worship but Allah.” This implies the establishment of the kingship of God and His glorification by accepting the over-lordship of Allah in all matters. This is such a lofty goal that if Muslims start acting on it, all internecine quarrels and strife would come to an end, and the Muslim nation will become one and united. In the words of the Quran, they could then, “...fight in His way in ranks, as if they were a solid wall” (61:4). Those Muslims who took the pledge on *Hazrat Mirza*’s hand adopted the goal of establishing the kingship of God by engaging in jihad through preaching and propagation. Consequently, all their internecine differences disappeared and they all came together to form one brotherhood; forgotten

was the factionalism based on being *Shia* or *Sunni*, and *muqallid* (disciple) or *ghair-muqallid* (liberal or independent and not following anyone). This is the miracle of a true spiritual doctor. He diagnoses the disease correctly and prescribes such an efficacious remedy that it does not fail through the blessings of God.

The goal *Hazrat* Mirza prescribed for the Muslims can unite the whole nation and erase all schisms if it is acted upon. It can make them realize the absurdity of quarrelling over trivial matters when the real goal of establishing the kingship and grandeur of God is so grand by comparison. Differences of opinion on some secondary issues will persist until the end of this world, but such differences should not be used as a basis for badmouthing others and calling them infidels. The best way to handle these differences is to develop a healthy tolerance for other viewpoints, and to resolve issues through friendly discussion and debate. Against the enemies of Islam, Muslims should present a united and unanimous stand so that Islam may prevail. In this way, the curse of sectarianism, which keeps Muslims ready to slit each other's throats, can easily be eliminated. The present situation results from a loss of focus on the real objective and from the pursuit of multifarious inferior goals. Instead of glorifying the majesty and name of God in this world, Muslims by and large have started worshipping their own selves to such an extent that anyone who disagrees with them is immediately branded an infidel. The common belief of Muslims in One God, the same Quran, the same Messenger and the same Sacred Mosque of Makkah that they face in prayer, forms a strong basis for unity. It is really unfortunate, therefore, that Muslims call each other infidels because of differences on minor points, and this is the root cause of sectarianism, disunity and division among Muslims.

It was precisely for this reason that the Holy Prophet had stated in a *hadith* that if a Muslim calls another Muslim an infidel, then the charge of infidelity reverts back and applies to the caller.² This extreme penalty was instituted precisely so that Muslims may avoid the accursed habit of calling each other infidels, which results in disunity and division. But unfortunately, Muslims paid no heed to this warning of the Holy Prophet and had to suffer the consequences. When *Hazrat* Mirza put forward this lofty goal before Muslims and tried to establish unity and organization among Muslims, he enforced the implementation of this *hadith* as part of his policy

and ordered a boycott of Islamic relations with those who indulged in calling other Muslims infidels until such time they desisted from such behavior. *Hazrat* Mirza reiterated the opinion of *Imam* Abu Hanifa that if there are ninety-nine reasons for calling someone an infidel and only one for calling him a Muslim, even then such a person should not be called an infidel. The adoption of this opinion was meant to effectively put an end to the obnoxious practice of calling Muslims infidels. *Hazrat* Mirza sagaciously suggested the adoption of this principle as the only way to root out sectarianism in Islam. Had Muslims acted on this principle, there would neither be disunity nor division and the practice of calling Muslims as infidels would have come to an end.

The real reason for forming an organization

Given the above discussion, one can legitimately ask: Why did *Hazrat* Mirza form a separate party? The reason for forming this party was to wage the great jihad mentioned earlier for which *Hazrat* Mirza had invited all Muslims to gather under one flag, and present a united front against the enemies of Islam.³ Could such a jihad be waged without an organization? Has there ever been a jihad without an organization and a leader? Whether the jihad is of the sword or the pen, and whether for physical or spiritual domination, an organization is necessary. It is not possible to fight a war without an army. The establishment of an organization to wage this jihad cannot be classified as sectarianism. If this organization appears as a separate sect to people outside this party, it is only because their scholars have branded its members as infidels. If the notion that members of this party are infidels is dispensed with, then this party is not a separate sect for its members follow the beliefs of *Ahl Sunnat wal Jamaat* as announced repeatedly by *Hazrat* Mirza. Thus, it is only the critic's own prejudice that makes *Hazrat* Mirza's party appear as a separate sect to the critic. Undoubtedly, the soldiers of this party are equipped with all the latest armament of knowledge that is necessary to wage this spiritual, cultural and literary war. To be critical of this is akin to being critical of a Muslim army today that uses the modern armament of war like tanks, cannons, airplanes and guns instead of swords, shields, bows and arrows as used by the Muslim armies in the early days of Islam. If anyone accuses a party of *mujahideen* (holy warriors) as being sectarian, then the fault lies in the thinking of the accuser. Instead of joining this party of holy warriors, such a person is content with criticizing from the sidelines those who have joined the party. Is there any jihad that can be

waged without an army, whether it is for the physical or spiritual domination of Islam? And is there any missionary work that can be carried on without an organization? The Holy Quran itself ordains the forming of such a party: “And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. And these are they who are successful” (3:104). ■

- 1 A British commentator has expressed the same opinion in the well-known Christian magazine, *Muslim World*. His exact words are, “The early Meccan attitude has now become general in Islam.”
- 2 Imam Abu-l-Hussain ibn Al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim (Hadith)*, Vol. 1 *Kitab al-Iman* 1:25.
- 3 *Hazrat Mirza’s publication Fariad Dard (A Grief-stricken Plea)* may be perused for further details.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and the Holy Quran

Samina Malik

It is well known that Hazrat Mirza Sahib loved the Holy Quran more than anything else on earth. His entire life, even his very early years, reveals his adoration for the Quran. It is reported that while other children played sports, Hazrat Mirza Sahib attended the mosque and recited the Quran. Even in his youth, when it is normal for physical desires to dominate a person’s thoughts and actions, Hazrat Mirza would spend time in solitude studying the Quran. Dr. Basharat Ahmad writes in his monumental biography of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib, *Mujadid-i-Azam*, that:

Love for the Holy Quran was an integral part of Hazrat Mirza’s existence. He spent the greater part of the day and the night reciting the Quran. He recited it while sitting, standing and walking, and was frequently moved to tears by it. He prayed fervently to Allah to grant him understanding of the Quran, and beseeched the Lord for this while prostrating before Him. If he found some verse of the Quran difficult to understand, he focused on it and humbly prayed for knowledge about its real meaning until such time that revelation enlightened him. (p.34)

Hazrat Mirza’s Great Concern

This deep love for the Holy Quran, lead Hazrat Mirza to make many heartfelt statements concerning the populace’s lack of appreciation for this divine gift.

He once wrote in a poem:

The Holy Quran is a casket of jewels, but people are unaware of it.

He wrote in another poem:

Alas, the beauty and resplendence of the Quran no longer manifests itself; Nay, the fact is, it indeed still manifests itself but there is no one left to recognize it.

The Basis for this Love

These sincere supplications shed light on the true nature of Hazrat Mirza’s love for the Quran. His love for the Quran was not based simply on the fact that it was the religious scripture of the faith to which he belonged. Far from this type of superficial fancy, Hazrat Mirza Sahib’s total adoration for the Quran was based on his recognizing the unique attributes of the book and the unmatched values contained in it.

Human Nature

One of the unique features of the Holy Quran that contributed to Hazrat Mirza Sahib’s love for it is that its teachings and lessons are in accord with “human nature”. Hazrat Mirza Sahib explains this in *Braheen e Ahmadiyya*, as he writes:

Of all the revealed books, the Holy Quran is the only one in accord with human nature. Its doctrines are so perfect and sound that verifiable proofs bear witness to their validity ... It is replete throughout with the Unity of the Divine and does not tolerate any kind of deficiency or defect or unworthy attributes concerning the Creator. It does not impose any doctrine by mere authority, but rather provides reasons for the truth of that which it teaches ... and carries the mind to perfect certainty and full understanding ... Its teaching is straightforward, intense, and secure, as if it was a mirror of the law of nature. It is an enlightening sun for insight into the heart. (p. 81-82)

Comprehensiveness

Another distinctive feature of the Holy Quran that contributed to Hazrat Mirza’s adoration for it is the absolute “comprehensiveness” of its teachings. In *Kishti Nuh*, Hazrat Mirza states:

The ways of true and perfect salvation are provided for in the Quran and everything else is its reflection. Therefore, study the Holy Quran with care and hold it very dear with a love that

you have not for anything else. God has in fact said to me: “all types of good are contained in the Quran”. This is wholly true. Those people are to be pitied who prefer anything else to it. The fountain-head of all your prosperity and salvation is the Holy Quran. There is no religious need of yours that is not supplied by the Quran ... There is no other book under heaven beside the Quran that can furnish you with complete salvation. God has been very merciful towards you for bestowing upon you a book like the Quran. (p. 36-37)

Hazrat Mirza Sahib discusses the “comprehensiveness” of the Quran in more detail in *Braheen Ahmadiyya*. He writes:

Concerning the comprehensives of the Quran it is stated: *We have expounded in detail all matters* (17:13), meaning all knowledge of faith has been set out in detail in this Book and this complete knowledge can lead man not only to partial progress but to full development.

It is also stated: *We have sent down to thee this Book which is an exposition of every thing and guidance and mercy and good news to those who submit* (16:90), meaning that this Book has been revealed so that every religious verity is plainly stated and this perfect exposition can be the means of guidance and mercy for those who submit wholly to God.

It is further stated: *This is a Book that We have sent down to thee so that thou might bring people out of every type of darkness into light* (14:2), meaning that the Holy Quran removes every kind of doubt that passes through man’s mind and refutes all false notions, and bestows all the insights and truths that are needed for turning to God Almighty and believing in Him ...

This is a sign of its truth as it is beyond the power of man to produce knowledge so comprehensive that no verity or truth is left out. (p. 214-216)

Living Scripture

Another exceptional feature of the Quran recognized by Hazrat Mirza Sahib was that the Quran was a “living scripture”. And what is meant by this is that the Quran is not a book limited to the circumstances of a certain period; rather, it shows fresh signs in every age and is applicable to all times. Hazrat Mirza explains this in *Izala Auham*; he writes:

The clear miracle of the Holy Quran that manifests itself to all, and the presentation of which can silence every doubter, is the unlimited treasury of insights, truths and wisdom, that it reveals in every age according to its need ...

The wonders of the Quran will never cease. As the wonderful qualities of nature have never come to an end in any previous age, but appear ever fresh and new, the same is the case with this Holy Book, so that the word of God and the work of God should be proved to be in accord with one another ...

As the passage of time gives rise to new thoughts and views, it is necessary for the Holy Quran to manifest itself in ever new forms and to disclose new knowledge, so that innovations and novelties may be refuted. (p. 364-365)

Certainty

Another exclusive attribute of the Holy Quran comprehended by Hazrat Mirza is that the Quran provides such “certainty” of faith that man is able to truly

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know God. Hazrat Mirza Sahib explains this point in *Chasma e Marifat*, by stating:

In the Torah, stories serve the purpose of stories, but in the Holy Quran each story is actually a prophecy concerning the Holy Prophet and Islam and these prophecies have been very clearly fulfilled. The Holy Quran is an ocean of truths, insights and prophecies. It is not possible that a person should believe fully in God Almighty except through the Holy Quran. For this characteristic is special to the Holy Quran; that is, by following it perfectly all obstacles between man and God are removed. Followers of other faiths make mention of the name of God as an anecdote or a legend, but the Holy Quran makes God a reality, and makes true certainty of God enter the heart of man. God, Who is hidden from the whole world, becomes firmly established through the Quran. (p. 259-260)

Spiritual Effect

Yet another inimitable quality of the Holy Quran appreciated by Hazrat Mirza Sahib, thereby contributing to his love for the Quran, is the “spiritual effect” the Quran has on a true follower. Hazrat Mirza explains this in *Braheen Ahmadiyya*; he writes:

When a person truly obeys the Holy Quran, and commits himself wholly to its commandments, and reflects upon its guidance with perfect love and sincerity, and does not hold back in any respect, then he is bestowed with a certain light, and he is gifted with a delicate sense of reason whereby he is informed of wonderful fine points of Divine knowledge, which are hidden in the work of God, and subtle insights descend upon his heart like heavy rain. These fine insights is what is referred to as “wisdom” in the Holy Quran ... This distinct knowledge and understanding ... is like a vast ocean which is bestowed upon the followers of the Divine word. (p. 510)

Beauty

The overall unparalleled beauty of the Holy Quran, no doubt, also generated a deep love for the Quran in Hazrat Mirza’s heart. Using *Surah Fatiha* as an illustration, he points out the unrivaled magnificence and splendor of the Quran in *Braheen Ahmadiyya*. Commenting on both the external composition and the inner-spiritual benefits, he writes:

It should now be understood that these elements

of unparalleled greatness are to be found in the *Surah Fatihah* ...

First, observe its external form and appreciate its colorful diction and beautiful exposition and sequence and other qualities which are essential for proper composition and which manifest themselves throughout the *Surah Fatihah*, a manifestation that cannot be matched and which is free from every type of unsophisticated idiom. Every phrase is most eloquent, and every form of expression has its proper place, and every type of quality which enhances the beauty of its composition is found in it. The highest grade of eloquence that can be imagined is found in it in perfection and it provides all that is needed to make its meaning clear. With all these good qualities it is filled with the fragrance of truth ... Its beauty is not like that of the poets, which is based on exaggerations and full of idle boasts. Rather, the Quran’s composition is full of the delicate fragrance of truth ...

From the point of view of its internal qualities, the *Surah Fatihah* comprises remedies for great spiritual ills, and makes provision for the perfection of intellectual power and the power of action. It reforms great disorders and sets forth great insights and fine points which have been hidden from the eyes of thinkers and philosophers. The heart of a seeker is strengthened by its perusal and is healed of the ills of doubt, suspicion and error. Many high verities and fine realities which are needed for the perfection of the soul are furnished by its contents. Obviously these excellences are such that they cannot be combined in the writing or speech of any human being. This impossibility is not mere inference, but is transparent. God Almighty has manifested the perfection of its external and internal qualities by setting out in eloquent words the fine points and high insights at the time of their need and in accordance with the requirements of truth. (p. 373-374)

Restoring the Faith through this Love

It was this deep insight into the unique characteristics of the Quran and full understanding of the Quran’s true nature that developed such expansive love for the Holy Quran in Hazrat Mirza Sahib’s heart. And it was this love for the Quran that generated Hazrat Mirza’s unrivaled passion for teaching the Quran to the world. In fact, there is a prophecy concerning this in *Sahih Muslim*; it is stated:

Even if faith ascends to the Pleiades, a man of Persian descent will bring it down.

What is meant is that the Messiah will appear at a time when knowledge of the Quran would be lost and ignorance would prevail, and it is he who will restore the faith by means of explaining the truths and deep knowledge of the Quran.

Similarly, it is reported in reliable *hadith* that the Messiah would distribute “wealth” throughout the world, so much that all people will have their fill and no one will be left short. Clearly this prophecy does not refer to material wealth. What is meant is that the Messiah would make available to the world the riches of the knowledge of the Quran and all people will be able to prosper from it.

Love for the Quran is the foundation of the Ahmadiyya Jamaat

And it was this passion for the spread of the true teachings of the book he held so dear that lead Hazrat Mirza Sahib to form a group that would dedicate it’s self to the propagation of the Holy Quran. He relates in a poem:

I see everyone so engrossed in their own sorrow; unfortunately, there is no room left in anyone’s heart to sorrow over the propagation of the Quran.

This Jamaat was created to fill that void; to restore the Islamic faith through love for the Holy Quran; to present the wealth of the Quran to the world; and to sorrow, day and night, over the propagation of the Quran.

Maulana Muhammad Ali elaborates on this point in a *Jumma Khutba* on April 14, 1944 which was published in *Paigham Sulh*; he said:

Hazrat Mirza Sahib had tremendous love for the Quran, but when we people read his writings we pay little attention for creating the same passion within us as that ruled over his heart.

My dear brothers and sisters, it is our duty as members of this Jamaat to spread the Quran with the Messiah’s teachings, as incorporated into Maulana Muhammad Ali’s translation and commentary, throughout the world so that others may fall in love with it and benefit from its spiritual effect in their lives.

And now I would like to give you the good news of how this is being done ... ■

One Hundred Years Later, His Teachings Still Needed

By Dr. Zahid Aziz

As we mark the passage of a complete century since the departure from this world of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, events and circumstances around us plainly demonstrate that the key points of his teachings — his view of what Islam is and its role in the world and what Muslims ought to do — are all confirmed as absolutely correct and vitally needed. Let us consider some of these points.

Throughout his writings, Hazrat Mirza sahib sought to dissociate Islam from any connection whatsoever with the teaching of violence, bloodshed and coercion in the name of religion. The *Jihad* taught by Islam was, according to him, not at all the waging of a war of aggression and conquest as the common perception of Muslims and non-Muslims held it to be. It had never been so, even in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The permanent meaning of *jihad* was the struggle against one’s own self to do right and refrain from wrong, and also the striving to take and present the message of Islam to others, leaving it up to them whether to accept or reject it. In the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, *jihad* included the struggle waged by him and his followers to repel the armed attacks of their enemies so that Muslims could continue to practise and preach their religion in peace. Such a *jihad* was no longer required in these times. The army raised by Hazrat Mirza sahib was one of peace, as he wrote:

“Those who join my army, I order them to give up these ideas [of a *jihad* of war], and to purify their hearts, develop and nurture their feelings of mercy towards all humankind and be helpers of those in distress and suffering. They should spread peace on the earth, as this is how their religion will spread.”? (*Government Angrezi aur Jihad*, p. 15)

The evil fruits of acting upon the wrong concept of *jihad* are evident before the world now. Both non-Muslims and Muslims are suffering loss of innocent lives and injuries in the East and the West, and the world at large has developed a detestation and aversion towards the religion of Islam. Orthodox Muslim leaders are now starting to advocate exactly the same concept of *jihad* as that presented by Hazrat Mirza

sahib. Moreover, Muslims in the West are pledging to be loyal citizens of the non-Muslim rule under which they live, just as he did. But he is denounced as *kafir* and traitor to Islam for his similar declarations. It is Divine recompense that anti-Ahmadiyya *ulama* in Britain are now declaring themselves and their followers to be loyal citizens of the British state.

Hazrat Mirza sahib foresaw the world coming together and becoming more akin to one country and community due to modern inventions which accelerate the speed of communications and travel to hitherto unimaginable levels. This point is made by him in his books from the early work *Barahin Ahmadiyya* to the last published in his lifetime, *Chashma-i Ma'rifat*. According to him, Islam shall have its greatest success in such an age of fast communications between distant countries. Directly after the quotation given above, he explains over the course of

the next page that just as God has created the modern inventions of the present times for the physical needs of man, similarly He will meet the spiritual needs of mankind by causing the light and the message of truth to spread widely and far by means of these very same ways of communication and transport.

Therefore he presented Islam in a way which shows that only this religion provides guidance for such a situation. This is why he emphasised that Islam requires its followers to acknowledge and believe in the prophets and founding religious sages of each and every nation. This belief broadens a Muslim's sympathies, making him look upon human beings everywhere as equally the creation of God, and recipients of His guidance, mercy and favours. The strands of truth found in different nations and religions, he taught, meet at last in Islam as brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

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He also appealed to followers of other faiths, and in particular the Hindu religion, to return the Muslim acceptance of their religious scriptures and great figures by acknowledging that the Prophet Muhammad was at least a true person and to cease vituperations against him. The Muslims too, he offered in his *Message of Peace*, must avoid offending Hindu religious sentiments. To improve the relationship between Muslims and Hindus in India was critical to peace and harmony in the land. In his *Message of Peace* he appears to forewarn of the terrible communal catastrophe that befell in India some forty years later. He wrote that if either community, Muslim or Hindu, fails to follow the liberal teaching of God to show sympathy to its neighbours belonging to the other community, then the consequences will be that:

“...that nation shall soon be destroyed, and not only itself but will invite destruction upon its unborn generations as well.”

“Hindus and Muslims are two communities about whom it is impossible to imagine that either of them can, at any time, turn the other out of the country.”

This is just what happened at the partition of India in 1947. The Promised Messiah must have been informed by God of those inter-communal atrocities and the slaughter to come, and wrote this booklet to avert them. Even though the Hindus and a large part of the Muslims separated into two different countries, the mutual hatred, suspicion and prejudice then led to wars between these countries, as well as the ever-present threat of war. The principles laid down by Hazrat Mirza sahib in his *Message of Peace* can still be employed to lessen that hatred and replace war by peace.

Hazrat Mirza sahib proclaimed, on the basis of the real teachings of Islam, that everyone should be free to adopt whichever religion they wish. They should apply the test of reason and evidence to decide which creed is true. It is no good declaring your faith unless you believe it in your heart to be true. It is of no avail performing the formal duties of a religion unless these bring a change for the better in your character and behaviour that other people can recognise. More and more thinking people now agree with this, and those religious leaders who display a false piety and a show of religiousness no longer impress people.

Hazrat Mirza sahib informed the modern world that science and human discoveries in the physical world cannot lead man to the discovery of God nor to his

moral reform. That has been confirmed in the past 100 years, as modern man has been unable to contain his base desires and has used the enormous power of technology for the greatest destruction ever seen. He informed the Muslim world that the solution of its underlying problems lay neither in secular politics, nor in setting up a so-called Islamic state, nor in the observance of empty religious rituals. It lay in bringing about a true change within the heart of man by a living contact with God, which should make man give up his lower desires and regard himself accountable before God. The history of Muslim countries over the past 100 years bears testimony that all systems tried in Muslim countries, whether capitalism, socialism, communism, or so-called Islamic, have failed because the people operating them were corrupt and self-seeking. In fact, establishing an “Islamic” system has been used merely as a cover to gain political power and to manipulate the Muslim masses most cynically.

Vituperation and abusive writings against the Holy Prophet of Islam were at their notorious height and quite commonplace in the time of Hazrat Mirza sahib. He undertook to refute all the allegations, but he was opposed to Muslim calls for banning such publications. His view was as follows. Firstly, as such writings have already been circulated on a great scale it is impossible to suppress their contents. Secondly, if a book is banned we lose the right of replying to it. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the objections against Islam that are expressed scurrilously in these books still remain within people’s hearts and they cause doubts even in the hearts of Muslims. He also proposed ways in which religious discussions and controversies could be conducted, and objections raised against any religion, in a civil and polite way without recourse to abusive or offensive language. In the light of recent events that occur with regularity, we need hardly say that his approach to this issue is more than ever relevant and required today.

Hazrat Mirza sahib greatly deplored that a person should show prejudice and bigotry against another on the basis of religion. He required his own followers to extend their sympathy to all human beings, regardless of their religion, and, when fulfilling their worldly contractual obligations, to regard everyone equally without distinction of belief or religion. In his time there was terrible religious bigotry all over the world, but in our time every decent person in the world rejects such narrow mindedness. When Dr Mirza Yaqub Baig qualified as a medical doctor, Hazrat Mirza sahib gave him this advice: “You are a physician of the body, not of the

soul, so you must treat everyone equally, whether Muslim, Hindu or Christian. To you, the man who prays five times a day and the man who doesn't believe in God should both be equal in your dealings”.

Lastly, there is the greatest gift of Hazrat Mirza sahib to the Muslim world, which is that he emphasised that the Holy Quran must be given precedence over all other authorities in Islam, such as Hadith reports and rulings of *fiqh*. This principle clears up several misinterpretations of Islamic teachings, particularly relating to subjects on which there is much criticism of Islam, such as *jihad*, freedom of religion, tolerance, punishments for apostasy and blasphemy, and the rights of women. Muslim scholars are increasingly accepting this principle. Applying it, we find that *jihad* is not at all the same as a battle with weapons, Islam allows war only in self-defence, it grants complete freedom of religion, and it prescribes no punishment whatsoever for apostasy or for committing so-called blasphemy.

One hundred years ago, understanding the Quran was generally considered by Muslims as unnecessary since its blessings were obtained, they believed, by reciting it in Arabic or by honouring its printed pages and copies as sacred. For understanding it, they believed it was sufficient simply to look up its ancient commentaries, which were the final authority on the Quran. No pondering or reflection on the Quran itself was required. Many *ulama* had declared it an unlawful act in Islam to translate the Quran into other languages. The followers of Hazrat Mirza sahib undertook this task a hundred years ago, and after the publication of Maulana Muhammad Ali's English translation for the first time in 1917, the door seemed to have opened to further translations by others. It is unimaginable now that any Muslim could consider that translating the Quran is an unlawful act or that the knowledge of the Quran should be gained solely from reading the ancient commentaries.

According to the latest books of Hazrat Mirza sahib, God has given the world **one Prophet and one Book and one religion** and they are acknowledged by accepting **one kalima**:

“God used to send a separate prophet and messenger for each country, and did not regard just one book as sufficient. ... Then the time came to remove national divisiveness and to bring everyone under one book. Then God sent **only one Prophet for the whole world** that He may unite all nations on one faith...”¹

The words printed in bold above are in bold in the original Urdu book. In the same book he writes:

Then God sent **one Book** for all countries and He commanded in that Book that in whichever age this Book reaches various countries, it will be their duty to accept it and to believe in it, and:

that book is the Quran²

Again, in the original Urdu book the words printed in bold above are in bold and the words “that book is the Quran” are laid out, as above, in a large bold size on a separate line.

In *Haqiqat-ul-Wahy*, he wrote:

“If all the books of God the Most High are looked into closely, it will be found that **all prophets** have been teaching: believe God the Most High to be One without partner and along with it also believe in our *risalat* (messenger-ship). It was for this reason that the **summary** of the teachings of Islam was taught to the entire *Umma* in these two sentences: *La ilaha ill-Allah, Muhammad-ur Rasul-ullah* (There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah).”³

Clearly, according to this statement published in May 1907, every prophet who came required people to declare belief in him, along with belief in God. But with the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, a permanent declaration in the form of the Islamic *Kalima* has been established, and thus no prophet can arise after him as he would necessarily introduce a new *kalima*. ■

1 *Chashma-i Ma'rifat*, published in May 1908, p. 136.

2 *Chashma-i Ma'rifat*, p. 67.

3 *Haqiqat-ul-Wahy*, published May 1907, p. 111.

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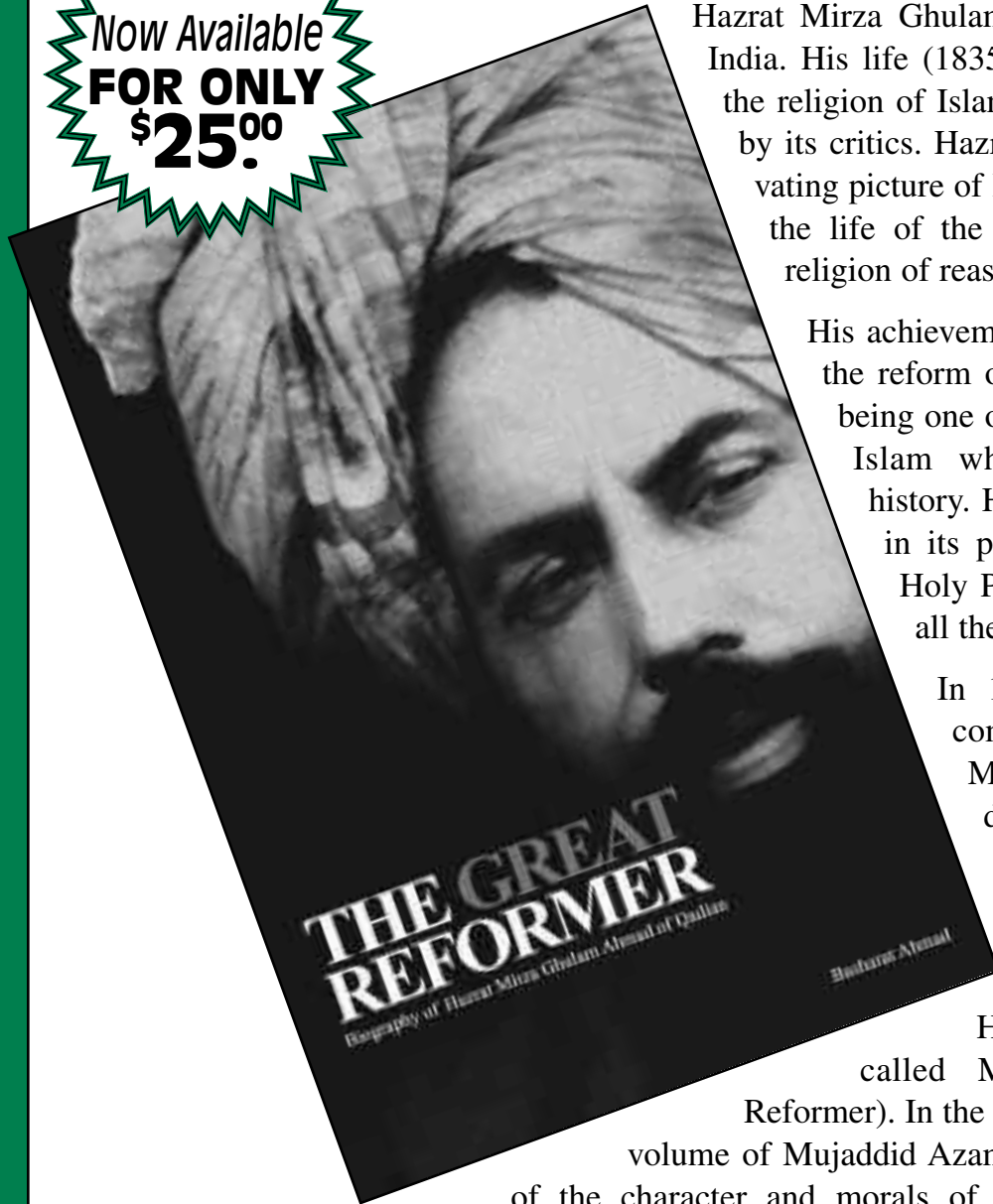
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